

SIXTH EDITION

CITIES OF THE WORLD

A Compilation of Current Information
on Cultural, Geographic, and
Political Conditions in the Countries
and Cities of Six Continents, Based on
the Department of State's
"Post Reports"

In Four Volumes

**Volume 1:
Africa**

Cumulative Index Volumes 1-4





CITIES OF THE WORLD SIXTH EDITION

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PREFACE

Cities of the World represents a compilation of government reports and original research on the social, cultural, political, and industrial aspects of the nations and cities of the world. Most of the country profiles included here are based on official personnel briefings issued as *Post Reports* by the U.S. Department of State. The *Post Reports* are designed to acquaint embassy personnel with life in the host country. Consequently, the reports concentrate on cities in which the U.S. government has embassies or consulates. To increase coverage of other important cities, the editors have added information on a large number of cities—31 of which are new to this edition—not reported on by the Department of State.

Since the fifth edition of *Cities of the World*, the Department of State has issued 62 new or revised *Post Reports*, all of which have been incorporated into this sixth edition. Selected data in *Post Reports* not revised by the Department of State since the last edition of *Cities of the World* have been updated by the editors with revised statistics acquired through independent research. In addition, articles have been written on thirty-three countries for which no *Post Report* exists.

Readers familiar with the fourth edition of this publication will notice that with the fifth edition the page size was enlarged to accommodate more information. This sixth edition includes new photographs selected by the Gale editors. The photographs depict scenes found in a city and countryside and, in many cases, reveal the cultural flavor of the area as well. As in the prior edition, many chapters feature a map of that country's capital or major city, with a superimposed locator map indicating the nation's geographic location in relation to its regional neighbors.

Volumes in This Series

This series includes four volumes:

- Volume 1: Africa;
- Volume 2: The Western Hemisphere (exclusive of the United States);
- Volume 3: Europe and the Mediterranean Middle East;
- Volume 4: Asia, the Pacific, and the Asiatic Middle East.

In all, this set provides coverage of over 2,000 cities in 193 countries.

Format and Arrangement of Entries

Cities of the World is arranged alphabetically by country name. Its chapters are divided into two basic sections, Major Cities and Country Profile, each of these with several subdivisions. A Major City listing might comprise information on Education, Recreation, and Entertainment. Other Cities, smaller cities and towns which are designated as other than major, are discussed in brief paragraphs at the end of the Major City section. Country Profile sections are subdivided into: Geography and Climate; Population; Government; Arts, Science, Education; Commerce and Industry; Transportation; Communications; Health; Clothing and Services; Local Holidays; Recommended Reading; and Notes for Travelers. Thus, *Cities of the World* presents not only basic information, but also comprehensive data on local customs, political conditions, community services, and educational and commercial facilities.

Contents and Index

The Contents and Index in each volume provide easy access to these reports. Listed under each country in the Contents are the cities that appear in its Major Cities section, as well as listings for the Other Cities and Country Profile sections. A Cumulative Index, combining the four individual volumes is found at the end of each volume. The Index is arranged alphabetically by city name, including listings for both major and minor cities that are mentioned in each volume; as well as by country name with names of cities indented below.

Acknowledgments

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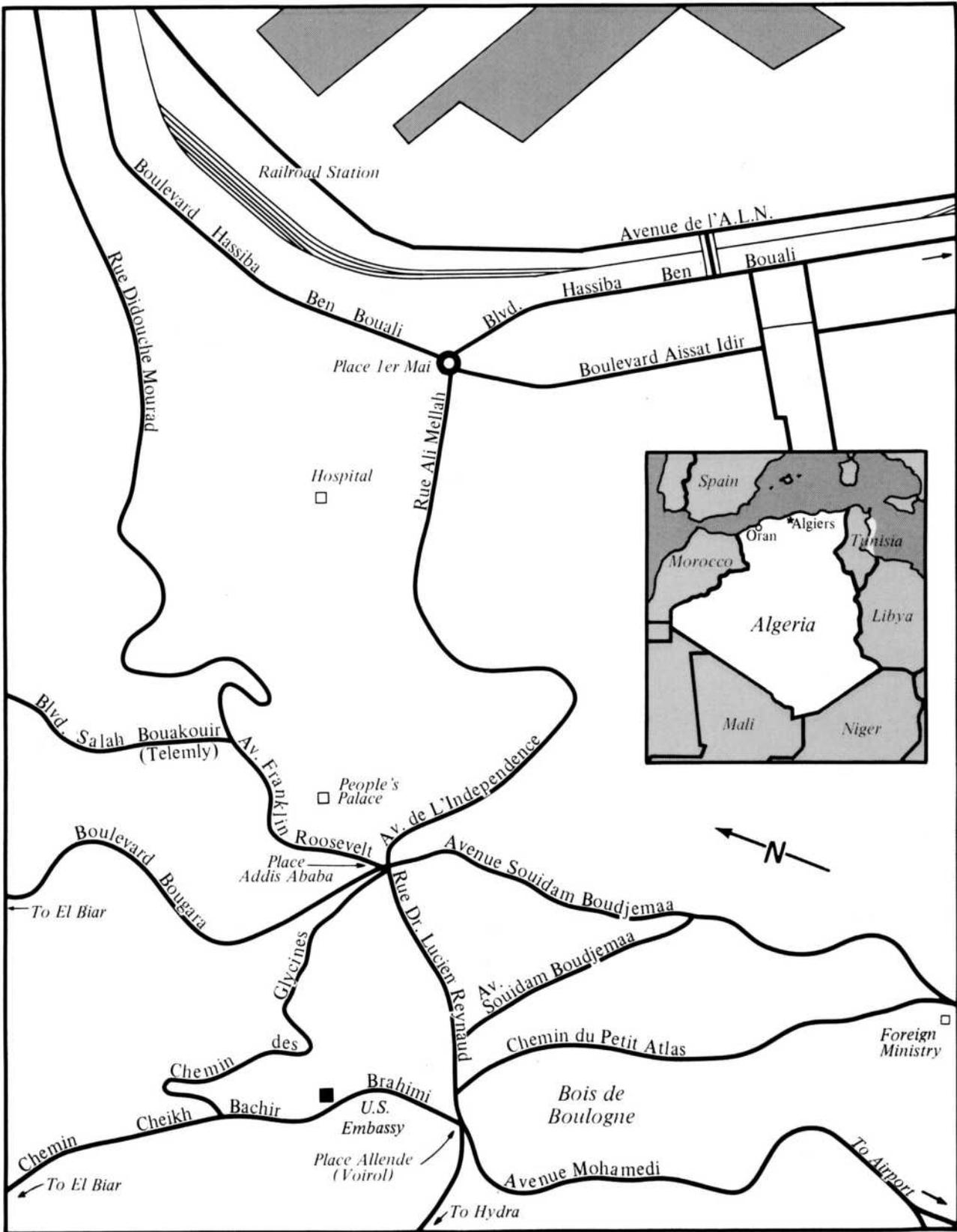
Suggestions Welcome

The editors invite comments and suggestions concerning *Cities of the World*. Please write to: Editors, *Cities of the World*, The Gale Group, Inc., 27500 Drake Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535; fax (248) 699-8074; or call toll-free (800) 877-4253.

CITIES OF THE WORLD

Volume 1:

Africa



Algiers, Algeria

ALGERIA

Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria

Major Cities:

Algiers, Oran, Annaba, Constantine

Other Cities:

Batna, Béchar, Bejaia, Biskra, Blida, Djelfa, I-n-Salah, Médéa, Ouargla, Saïda, Sétif, Sidi-Bel-Abbes, Skikda, Tamanrasset, Tiaret, Tindouf, Tlemcen, Touggourt

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 1999 for Algeria. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

ALGERIA, whose acknowledged history reaches back beyond 200 B.C., is the largest of the countries in northwest Africa which embody the Mahgreb, the area between the sea and the Sahara. Known to the ancient Romans as Numidia, it has been host to successive Mediterranean and African cultures, for which visible remains abound, from a Roman aqueduct in the capital city of Algiers, to the Phoenician ruins and Maurentian tomb just one hour's drive to the west. In recent times, it nurtured the first independence movement on the African continent, negotiated the release of American hostages from Iran, and has been a leader in regional diplomatic initiatives.

Algeria has produced cultural pathfinders, from St. Augustine to Albert Camus. It is a country of the traditional and the modern—one sister will wear the concealing *haik*, while another ventures out in jeans; a family returns to its digital television set after having sacrificed a lamb for tomorrow's feast.

This is a country of contrasts and contradictions. Arabic and French intermingle in language and traditions. The Tauregs of the desert, although Muslim, use the Maltese cross as their sign. Spectacular coastlines are in geographic counterpoint with the great desert expanses, and the inviting Kabylia foothills give way to the foreboding Atlas highlands.

MAJOR CITIES

Algiers

Algiers, capital of Algeria, is one of Africa's largest urban areas. Originally constructed for 750,000 people, its metropolitan area now teems with over four million inhabitants. It is situated on the Mediterranean coast of Africa, about midway between Tangier and Tunis and opposite the island of Majorca,

at latitude 36°36'N and longitude 3°04'E.

Algiers was founded by the Phoenicians as one of their numerous North African colonies. The town was also visited by the Carthaginians and Romans and later destroyed by the Vandals in the 5th century A.D. It was revived under a Berber dynasty in the 10th century as a commerce center. Algiers became a haven in the 16th century for Moors escaping persecution in Spain. Many of these settlers resorted to piracy against Spanish cargo vessels. These pirate attacks continued until roughly 1830, when the French captured the city. Algiers became a military and administrative headquarters for France's colonial empire in North and West Africa. During World War II, Algiers became the headquarters of Allied forces in North Africa. The city played a major role in Algeria's uprising against French rule. In 1962, after the country gained its independence, Algiers became the nation's capital.

From the sea, Algiers is a spectacular sight. The city rises sharply from the port area and business district to the residential areas along tree-covered hills. In sunlight, the white buildings of "Algér la Blanche" gleam against the blue Mediterranean.

nean below, and the green of pines and parks above.

Architecturally, the city is European with a strong Mediterranean flavor. The famous Casbah, an interesting Arab quarter in the heart of the city, contains most of what remains of the Turkish city of the 16th to 18th centuries, but falls short of the romantic image created by the movies. More characteristic of modern Algiers are the many apartment buildings and grand villas with their views of the city and the sea. Among the multitude of mosques are a few dating from the 17th century, and others that once were constructed as churches by the French. Traffic, especially during morning, midday, and evening rush hours, is very heavy and often frustrating.

The Mediterranean climate reminds Americans of southern California. Compared to Washington, DC, the summer (May to October) is longer and more moderate, except when the hot *sirocco* (desert wind) blows in from the Sahara. Heat and humidity can combine to make a summer day uncomfortable, but there are many more days of excellent weather. Throughout this warm season, the sandy beaches and the waters of the Mediterranean provide relief and recreation. The cooler heights of the nearby mountains at Chrea and Tala Guilef are also pleasant at this time. Despite its warm summers, Algiers has what is often described as a "cold climate with a hot sun." Winter temperatures rarely fall below freezing. Cool to cold weather generally begins in November and lasts into April, but the "rainy season" lasts about five months.

Fewer than 500 Americans reside throughout Algeria, and are principally employed in the hydrocarbon sector, working in central and southern Algeria.

Food

Staples can be purchased locally, but prices are higher than in the U.S. Frequent shortages occur and the quality is often inferior to American varieties. Fresh fruit and vege-

tables of good quality are plentiful in season. Markets carry beef, chicken, lamb, fish and shrimp, but all are expensive. Eggs are always available, but butter is occasionally hard to find. Pork products are not available.

Clothing

Apparel for all seasons is required in Algeria—from bathing suits to warm coats. Rainwear and umbrellas are advisable for all members of the family. A Washington, D.C. wardrobe is suitable for an extended stay. Although winters are not as cold in Algiers, strong winds and less effective heating/insulation in buildings can make the climate seem quite uncomfortable.

Some clothing suitable to Western tastes is available, but is much more expensive than in the U.S. Shoes are not usually of good quality, nor do they conform to American preference.

Because dry cleaning is unpredictable in quality and availability, men find that wash-and-wear clothes of medium weight are useful for office wear, with some lightweight suits for really hot days. Winter clothes can be worn from November to April, and an additional sweater or vest is welcome in winter. A topcoat is sometimes useful.

Women dress for professional or office jobs as they would in Washington, DC; others tend to dress informally, wearing skirts and sweaters in winter and cotton dresses in summer. Conservative dress minimizes embarrassment; shorts should not be worn in public. Street-length dinner and cocktail dresses are appropriate in the evening although, occasionally, a long dress is needed for a formal event. Shawls and sweaters are advisable at night, even in summer.

Neither men or women should wear sports clothes that reveal shoulders, arms, or legs, especially when touring religious sites.

Children have the same clothing needs in Algiers as they would in

Washington, DC. Good quality clothing for children is not always available.

Supplies and Services

Services available in Algiers, but not up to U.S. standards, include tailoring; dressmaking; shoe repair; and radio, TV, and other electrical appliance repair. Dry cleaning is fair. Barber and beauty service is available, but many women prefer to have haircuts, permanents, etc., done on trips abroad.

Items difficult to locate in Algiers include linens, plastic ware, shower curtains, coat hangers, Scotch tape, adhesive tape, glue, paper napkins, toys, books, records, and special occasion gifts and cards. Few toiletries are available locally.

Religious Activities

The predominant religion in Algeria is Islam, but other faiths are respected. In Algiers, there are several Catholic churches that offer masses in French and Italian, and sometimes in English. English-speaking priests will hear confessions for Americans. One Jewish synagogue continues to hold services. The British Protestant Church is nondenominational and has services each Friday, plus Sunday school for children. In Oran, places of worship include one Protestant and two Catholic churches, both with French-language rituals. A weekly, informal, nondenominational service is conducted in various private homes.

Domestic Help

Competent and adequately trained domestic help is difficult to find, but it is possible to employ people for cleaning, laundering, shopping, and child care. Part-time gardeners are available. A good cook is rare, and wages quite high. Social-security payments are required, but the rate varies depending on the work schedule. Algerian law requires all household staff to have 1.5 paid vacation days each month, plus a free day each week. Employers usually recognize Islamic holidays with a cash gift. Many expatriates have hired foreign household help, from such



Aerial view of Algiers, Algeria

© Francoise de Mulder/Corbis. Reproduced by permission.

countries as the Philippines, to work in their homes

Education

The American School of Algiers, the only English-language school, offers coeducational instruction from pre-kindergarten through grade nine. It is located in El Biar, one mile from downtown Algiers. In 1991, the staff included an American principal, 14 full-time and three part-time teachers, a secretary, and classroom aides. Classes are held from September to June. The standard U.S. curriculum is followed and adapted to accommodate children of many countries, with emphasis on local educational opportunities such as field trips and excursions. Science, music, art, and physical education are also offered. Extracurricular activities include computers, yearbook, school newspaper, and a literary magazine. The school's library has 8,000 volumes and a variety of multimedia materials. The three-

acre campus consists of eight buildings with 14 classrooms, a science lab, computer lab, and two playing fields. French is taught in grades four through eight. The school has a capacity for 215 students. Many nationalities are represented among the student body. Students are required to speak and understand English well enough to follow courses. Parents of children with special needs should contact the school directly before moving to Algiers; the address is: 5 Chemin Cheikh Bechir Brahimi, El Biar, Algiers, Algeria.

An English-language secondary school is not available, but there is a French *lycée*, equivalent to U.S. high school. American students are admitted if space is available and if the student has adequate French-language ability. The French system is also available below the *lycée* level. In addition, German, Japa-

nese, Egyptian, and Italian schools are in operation in Algiers.

Some parents have found local private nursery schools satisfactory for pre-kindergarten children. One English-language play school is available for children three to five years old. The French kindergarten will accept children at age four.

Most families send children of high school age to international schools abroad.

Recreation

The Algerian national passion is soccer; it is played in the streets, in stadiums, and in schoolyards. Algerian women rarely attend sports events and European women never go unescorted; even with an escort, they usually feel conspicuous.

Tennis is one of the most popular sports in Algiers, and can be played year round. Golf also is available at

an 18-hole golf course, Route de Chéraga, on the heights of Algiers. Algiers' outdoor swimming and water sports season is from May through September. Several public beaches are a 30 to 60 minute drive, although those closest to Algiers are very crowded on weekends and may be polluted. Better beaches are located an hour from Algiers. Because no facilities are available, beach umbrellas, mats, barbecue grills, and ice chests are a must. Unescorted women should not visit beaches.

Algiers Bay and nearby coastal waters provide possibilities for boating, wind surfing, and spearfishing. Caution and experience are necessary on the water, as currents and winds can be treacherous.

Several riding clubs in the vicinity of Algiers offer adequate facilities (including jumps) at reasonable rates. In winter, limited skiing on difficult slopes is available in the Algerian mountains.

Wild boar and waterfowl hunting is difficult, but possible. A government hunting license is required. The importation of firearms is restricted to sporting weapons, and special permission must be obtained beforehand. Hunting can be organized through ONAT, the national tourist agency, which provides, as part of its hunting service, facilities for acquiring authorization to carry arms. These tours are extremely expensive.

Algeria offers many opportunities for pleasant day, weekend, and longer outings to points of scenic beauty and historic interest. However, because roads can be rough and acceptable tourist facilities (including restrooms) are rarely available, every trip can be an adventure.

In and around Algiers itself, one finds the Casbah, museums, the Forest of Bainem (a good hiking and picnicking area), the beautiful flowers and greenery of the Jardin d'Essai, and many beaches.

Easily arranged one-day trips include: the mountain resort of Chrea; Tizi-Ouzou, "capital of the Kabyle"; and the ancient Roman seaport of Cherchell (Caesarea). The extensive Roman ruins of Tipasa, about 50 miles from Algiers, overlook the azure waters of the Mediterranean, forming a scene of unmatched beauty.

Farther away, for weekend trips, are Annaba (the ancient Hippo Regius); Bou Saada, gateway to the Sahara; and many beach and mountain resorts east and west of the capital. The government travel organization has established an extensive network of lodgings and spas at regional capitals, mineral springs, skiing sites, and other appropriate points. Modestly appointed, and usually with restaurants, they vary in quality from barely acceptable to good. The staffs occasionally speak English. Some adequate private hotels and inns also can be found. Because reservations are often difficult to confirm, and accommodations may not be properly cleaned, lighted, or heated, many travelers provide their own camping equipment and sleeping bags. Water can be a problem, and it is always advisable to take along enough for drinking and washing. Finally, because acceptable restaurants may not exist en route, most people carry food for breakfasts and lunches.

On a long weekend driving tour, the visitor can see such attractions as Timgad—possibly the most extensive Roman ruins anywhere, and certainly unmatched outside Pompeii; El-Oued, an oasis town of considerable charm; Oran and Western Algeria, a region very different from the Algerois; Hass R'mel and Hassi Messaoud, hydrocarbon production centers; and Tunis, Tunisia, or Fez, Morocco.

The actual Sahara is a longer trip, but well worth it. For travel in the Hoggar-Tassili and Saharan areas, one can fly to Tamanrasset or Djinet and hire a Land Rover or join a tour there. The trip is long—it is about as far from Algiers to Taman-

rasset as from Algiers to Edinburgh, Scotland.

Entertainment

Movies, some in French, most in Arabic, are the principal commercial entertainment in Algiers. Cinemas are crowded and rarely attended by women. Live theater has a limited season, with emphasis on Arabic productions.

Algiers has a number of museums devoted to art, history, and anthropology. A major amusement park complex and a zoo in the suburb of Ben Aknoun offer entertainment opportunities.

Algiers has many restaurants which serve French and/or Algerian dishes, and a few serving Chinese/Vietnamese food. Some restaurants feature folkloric entertainment. However, because most restaurants (even the smaller ones) are state-owned, quality and availability of food and service at even the best can vary dramatically. That, combined with endemic parking problems, makes dining out in Algiers something of an adventure.

For those interested in photography, Algiers' unusual architecture and magnificent views offer many subjects for pictures. Photographic supplies should be brought from home as local supplies are limited and expensive. Discretion must be used in photographing individuals and mosques; military and strategic installations should never be photographed.

A good shortwave radio, phonograph, or cassette player are desirable. Records and music cassettes can be purchased locally, but prices are very high.

Algiers has no American-sponsored fraternal organizations, and most mixing of the American official and private communities is through entertaining in the home. An informal English-speaking women's coffee group meets each month in a member's home.



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Typical street in an Algerian city in the Sahara

Social activities for American children consist of privately sponsored gatherings, such as birthday parties for young children, camping trips, and beach parties. The American School and the British Church arrange a number of activities, including occasional weekend trips.

Algeria's political and cultural orientation limits opportunities for meeting host-country nationals, although relationships are possible; it is generally easier to become acquainted with nationals of other countries.

The French, Italian, and German Cultural Centers have film showings, exhibits, concerts, and language classes for those interested.

Oran

Oran, Algeria's second largest city and most modern port, is the economic and cultural capital of a

region rich in history and natural beauty. Situated on a high plateau that overlooks the Mediterranean, it is flanked on the west by the Djebel Murdjadjo which rises 1,500 feet; on the crest of this mountain are an historic fort, an abandoned cathedral, and the hermitage-like home of the *marabout* (dervish) Sidi Abdelkader El Djilali. Another picturesque site is Lion Mountain which stretches east, 10 miles along the coast. Situated between the Mediterranean coast and miles of vineyards, it is impressive in its graceful plunge to the sea.

Archaeological remains show that Oran has been inhabited since pre-historic times. The first known residents of the area were Berber herdsmen and the Berber culture dominated despite successive visits by the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, and the Germanic Vandals. In the Middle Ages the Berber kingdom of Tahert, near the mod-

ern-day city of Tiaret, made the area well-known for scholars and commerce.

Berber dynasties like the Almoravids fought off the encroaching Arabs for almost three centuries, but slowly the Arab culture took hold and gave the region its present Arab-Berber mix. Europeans reappeared in the region when, in the 16th century, the Spanish occupied the city-state of Oran and neighboring Mers El Kebir. The Ottoman Turks drove out the Spanish from most of their Algerian enclaves, but the Spaniards clung to Oran for 300 years and built forts that still dominate the port and the town.

After the French invasion of Algiers in 1830, the Oran region was a center of resistance to French rule. Emir Abdel Kader waged a 15-year struggle against the French before being defeated and deported.

French and Spanish settlers arrived and Oran, surrounded by fertile countryside, became the main port for the Algerian wine industry.

Oran was occupied briefly by the U.S. Army during World War II as Algeria was used as a staging area for the invasion of Sicily. During the late 1950s, Oran was the scene of civil strife between French underground terrorists and Algerian nationalists. The violence prompted the mass exodus of the French. The city's fortunes declined for a time, but began to revive some years after Algerian independence was gained in 1962. The hydrocarbon and construction industries have breathed new life into the region's economy. In the Arzew Industrial Zone, built along a bay 25 miles east of Oran, two immense natural gas liquefaction plants are among the most important petrochemical installations in Algeria. Their enormous gas flares dominate the landscape and, on a clear night, are visible all the way to Oran.

South of Oran lies a region of rich agricultural land planted in vineyards, wheat fields, olive trees, and orange groves. Farther south are rugged mountains with wheat and olives, a high plateau of grazing land, and rocky wastelands extending more than 100 miles from the coast.

The industrial part of Oran, in the outlying south-southeastern districts, contains hundreds of small food-processing and diversified manufacturing plants and a small iron and steel mill. Principal exports are wine, cereals, vegetables, and fruits.

Oran is an international port that is connected by rail to Algiers, Béchar, and Morocco. Oran-Es Senia International Airport is located approximately six miles (ten kilometers) from the city.

Oran's Mediterranean climate and physical beauty are striking and resembles parts of California and northern Florida. Winters bring rainy winds and cool weather, with

daytime temperatures in the 50s. Summer lasts from May to October, with fine, sunny weather and a constant breeze off the sea. This is the time to enjoy the beaches.

Close to one million people live in urban Oran, including an English-speaking community concentrated around Arzew. The French community in Oran numbers several thousand and includes teachers and technical assistance personnel. The city is mostly Muslim, and nearly all of the French-built churches have been converted into mosques. The culture is a distinct mix of Arabic and Western. There are mosques in every neighborhood and the five-times daily prayer call rises from minarets all over the city. In the streets, veiled women walk alongside those dressed in the latest fashions from France. Although Algeria has many women doctors, lawyers, and other professionals, segregation of the sexes remains the custom. Women rarely go out alone and are seldom seen in the city's cafes.

Consulates in Oran, other than that of the U.S., represent France, Spain, Italy, and Morocco.

Education

Education at public schools in Oran is conducted in Arabic and French. The Lycée Pasteur, operated by the French Government, offers kindergarten through high school for dependents of French functionaries and other non-Algerian students. All instruction is in French, and the curriculum is more rigorous than that of the typical American high school.

French- or classical Arabic-language instruction from private tutors is available. Group classes in either language or in computer basics are sponsored by the French Cultural Center. The Catholic church offers lessons in modern, standard Arabic.

Instruction in the arts is offered by the Oran Municipal Conservatory, which conducts classes in a variety of musical instruments, harmony,

dance, and dramatic arts. Courses in tennis, judo, skin diving, and karate may be arranged at clubs.

Recreation and Entertainment

In Oran, soccer is the most popular spectator sport, and weekly matches are held in the city's stadium. Women rarely attend. The Oran area has fine beaches and windsurfing is growing in popularity. The American community has a full program of recreational sports, including softball and a tennis club. Several aerobic exercise groups have formed. Other activities in and around the city include excellent saltwater fishing, sailing, and scuba diving, although it is difficult to charter a boat. Wild boar and small game hunting is also available.

Within the district are many points of scenic interest, beach resorts, towns, and wooded mountainsides. Although not so rich in Roman ruins as the eastern and central parts of the country, opportunities do exist for archaeological and historical study. Principal historic sites in Oran include the 16th century Santa Cruz Fortress and the Mosque of the Pasha of Sidi El Houari dates from the 18th century.

Algeria is a beautiful country with a surprising variety of environments. Deep forests of cork and pine, mountains, windy steppes, and desert sands are all only a few hours drive from Oran. Opportunities for hiking and picnicking are excellent.

Organized tours outside of Oran are available. The Moroccan border, with good sight-seeing and shopping opportunities, is only two hours away by car. The Spanish enclave of Melilla, with its fascinating history and well-stocked duty-free shops, is less than a six-hour drive away. Ferries go regularly from Oran to Marseille and to Alicante.

Entertainment opportunities in Oran are not particularly good. A number of movie theaters show films in French and Arabic. Occasional French-language or Arabic

plays are performed in the Opéra Municipal (Municipal Opera House), and concerts by visiting artists are presented at the Oran Municipal Conservatory about twice a year.

The French Cultural Center sponsors a busy program of films, lectures, and concerts. It also maintains a library and a "filmtheque."

Oran is a quiet, easy-going provincial city. Patience and initiative reap ample rewards. The American community in Oran is extremely small. However, expatriates and their families often join in sports, barbecues, films, and other social activities with the American community in Arzew. Most Algerian social life revolves around the family and most Algerians do not entertain. However, younger Algerians are often attracted to American films or music, or seek opportunities to practice their English.

Annaba

Annaba, a Mediterranean port in northeastern Algeria, was called Bône until the country achieved its independence from France. In the early centuries A.D., under the Romans, it had been known as the port city of Hippo Regius. Later it became the see of St. Augustine, and a center of Christianity. Augustine, recognized as the founder of Christian theology, was born in the year 354 at Tagaste, about 40 miles south of Hippo, and served the district as bishop. He died in 430, during the time that the Vandals were besieging Hippo.

Annaba was founded by the Carthaginians, and once was a residence of ancient Numidian kings. After its many centuries of Roman and Vandal occupation, it came under Arab rule in the seventh century, and was held during the Middle Ages by Algerines, Italians, and Spaniards. In the 17th and 18th centuries, it was a center for European trade. The French captured Annaba in 1832.

Now a modern city of close to one million people, Annaba is surrounded by wheat farms, forests, and mines. It is a main trading and fishing port and Algeria's chief exporter of iron ore and phosphates. Annaba is connected by railway and roads to Algiers and other major cities in northeastern Algeria. The city is known for its chemical plants, iron and steel factories, automobile and railroad workshops, and fertilizer plant.

There are few English-speaking people in the area, but some Europeans and Americans with a knowledge of French visit or conduct business here.

Constantine

Constantine (Qacentina), the ancient city of Cirta, lies on rocky heights above a river valley in the northeastern part of Algeria. Its port is Skikda, which was known as Philippeville under the French. Constantine has a population of roughly one million. Suburbs have developed to the southwest and east of the city.

In the second century B.C., Constantine (then Cirta) was the capital and commercial center of Numidia. After being destroyed by wars, it was rebuilt in the year 311 by the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, and he gave it his name. The city was a provincial capital under the Turks in the 16th century, and was taken by French forces in 1837. It was occupied in 1942 during World War II by U.S. troops.

Constantine rests on a rocky, diamond-shaped plateau and, since Roman times, has been entirely surrounded by a wall. The city is a study in contrasts. The Rue Didouche Moutad divides the city into two parts. Western sections of the city, with its wide squares and straight streets, exhibits a strong French influence. The Souk el-Ghezal mosque, which was converted into the Notre-Dame des Sept-Douleurs Cathedral by the French, and the Casbah are major attractions. Eastern and southeastern

areas of Constantine, however, exhibits strong examples of Islamic architecture such as the Salah Bey and Sîdî Lakhdar mosques. Many skilled trades are represented in the eastern sector and entire streets are devoted to one craft. Throughout the city, there are ruins of Roman fortifications and many medieval walls and gates.

The city has several public institutions. These include the municipal library, the museum of Cirta, and the University of Constantine, which was founded in 1969. Also Constantine-Ain-el Bey International Airport is located roughly six miles (ten kilometers) outside of Constantine.

OTHER CITIES

BATNA is a city in northeastern Algeria. Originally established as a French military outpost in 1844, Batna is currently a trading center for forest and agricultural products. Roman ruins at Tazault-Lambese (Lambessa) seven miles (11 kilometers) to the southeast and Timgrad (Thamugadi) 17 miles (27 kilometers) to the east-southeast attract many tourists. Batna has an estimated population of 185,000.

BÉCHAR, formerly known as Colomb-Béchar, was just a village before coal was found here in 1907. It thrived on the activity of the coal mines until petroleum production seized the market. Located in the northwestern region of Algeria roughly 36 miles (58 kilometers) south of the Moroccan border, Béchar has an estimated population of 107,000. The city is noted for its leatherwork and jewelry. Dates, vegetables, figs, cereals, and almonds are produced near Béchar. Bituminous coal reserves in the region are not exploited to their greatest potential because of high transportation costs. The city was once the site of a French Foreign Legion post.

Before 1962, **BEJAIA** was named Bougie. Since the discovery of oil in

Algeria, this Arab city has been a major port for oil and trade. Situated in the northeastern part of Algeria, 115 miles east of Algiers, the city is divided into a coastal, industrial section and a residential section 500 feet higher. Bejaia is a busy market town and exports iron ore, phosphates, olive oil, wine, and cork. The population is estimated over 125,000.

With January temperatures averaging 52°F, **BISKRA** is a common vacation spot in winter. Located in northeastern Algeria on the northern edge of the Sahara Desert, Biskra has a population of about 130,000. The area surrounding Biskra is very arid and most of the population live in oases. Dates, figs, pomegranates, and apricots are grown near Biskra. Biskra's major exports are dates and olives.

After devastating earthquakes in 1825 and 1867, **BLIDA**, which lies in northern Algeria, 25 miles southwest of the capital, was rebuilt into a commercially active center. This city is known for its beautiful orange groves and rose gardens that cover miles of landscape. Several light manufacturing industries are located in areas surrounding Blida. Crops grown near Blida include barley, citrus fruits, wheat, tobacco, olives, and vegetables. In 2000, Blida's population was estimated at 165,000.

DJELFA is located in north-central Algeria. The town, founded in 1852 as a French military post, is a meeting place for the Ouled Naïl. The Ouled Naïl are a semi-nomadic people who live in black-and-red striped tents and claim they are direct descendants of the Prophet Mohammed. The area surrounding Djelfa is notable for its abundance of Neolithic rock carvings dating from 7,000 to 5,000 B.C. Djelfa is primarily a trading center for goats, sheep, and other livestock. The population of Djelfa is over 85,000.

The oasis town of **I-N-SALAH** is situated in central Algeria and has a population of roughly over 21,000. Visited primarily by the nomadic

Tuareg people, I-n-Salah is a transportation center for the export of dates. At one time, I-n-Salah was located on the ancient trans-Saharan caravan routes and served as a major trade link between north and central Africa. The town's importance has declined considerably due to the exodus of workers to developing gas fields 60 miles (110 kilometers) southwest of I-n-Salah and prohibitive transportation costs. I-n-Salah is composed of four walled villages or *ksars*. The *ksars* are surrounded by fruit and vegetable gardens and palm groves. Also, they are irrigated by artesian wells and surrounded by hedges that protect against the Saharan desert's corrosive sand.

MÉDÉA, located in north-central Algeria, is roughly 56 miles (90 kilometers) south of Algiers. The present-day city is situated on the site of an ancient Roman military post and has a history dating back to the 10th century. The town is French in character, with a rectangular city plan, red tile-roofed buildings, and beautiful public gardens. The hills surrounding Médéa are covered with vineyards, orchards, and farms that yield abundant grain. Médéa's chief products are wines, irrigation equipment, and various handicrafts. The city has an estimated population of over 85,000.

OUARGLA, situated in east-central Algeria, was originally settled by the Berbers and Black Africans. The town is walled with six gates and dominated by a large mosque. Irrigated date palm groves and vegetable gardens surround the town. Ouargla is a trading center, especially for woolen carpets, basketry, and livestock. Oil and natural gas wells to the southwest and east-southeast of town have increased Ouargla's population and local economy. The town is also home to the Saharan museum.

The town of **SAÏDA** was established as a French military outpost and once housed a regiment of the French Foreign Legion. Situated in northwestern Algeria, Saïda is noted for its fine leatherwork and

mineral waters, which are bottled and sold throughout Algeria. Areas to the north of Saïda are fertile and supply abundant crops of grapes, olives, and wheat. Saïda is also a trading center for sheep and wool.

An ancient northeastern city dating back to the first century, **SÉTIF** is now a local medium for trade and communications. It is known for carpets and flour. Sétif, laid out in a grid pattern of wide streets, is one of Algeria's highest places at an altitude of 36,000 feet. The University of Sétif was founded in 1978. Remains of an ancient Byzantine fortress are located north of the city. In 1959, a Roman cemetery was found near the center of town. Located in a cereal-growing area, it is one of the most populated cities in Algeria, with a resident count estimated over 185,000.

Although it was completely surrounded by a wall until the 1930s, **SIDI-BEL-ABBES** now has a modern look with wide boulevards and squares. South of Oran, in the northwestern region of the country, this commercially vibrant city's infrastructure is comprised of factories, highways, and railroads. Industry includes a farm-machine manufacturing complex. The surrounding area, once swampy, now produces barley, wheat, and grapes. Once France's Foreign Legion headquarters, Sidi-Bel-Abbes is now a trade center with an estimated population over 150,000.

SKIKDA, situated on the Mediterranean Sea, 40 miles northeast of Constantine, is rich in history, with its Roman background still evident in a cemetery and the largest Roman theater in Algeria. A local museum houses many Roman artifacts. Skikda is an industrial city of roughly 129,000, whose major exports are fish, olive oil, and fruits. A natural-gas pipeline from Hassi R'Mel to Skikda became operational in 1970, leading to the development of petrochemical industries and oil refineries. Skikda also exports large quantities of marble, iron, lead, and iron ore. Many city residents of Italian and Portuguese origin left the

city after Algerian independence in 1962. Today, the population is predominantly Muslim. Before Algeria's independence, this French city was known as Philippeville.

TAMANRASSET, also called Tamenghest (after 1981) and located in extreme southern Algeria, was originally established as a military outpost to guard the trans-Saharan trade routes. Surrounded by the barren Sahara Desert, some of the world's highest known temperatures have been recorded here. Tamanrasset is located at an oasis where, despite the difficult climate, citrus fruits, apricots, dates, almonds, cereals, corn, and figs are grown. The Tuareg people are the town's main inhabitants. Their red houses and the area's magnificent, rugged scenery make Tamanrasset a popular tourist attraction during the cooler months. Visitors are also drawn to the Museum of the Hoggar, which offers many exhibits depicting Tuareg life and culture. The town has an estimated population of 38,000.

Throughout history, the northern town of **TIARET** has been occupied at various times by the Berbers, Arabs, Turks, and French. Today, Tiaret is an agricultural center specializing in cereal production and livestock raising. The town is also noted for its purebred Arabian horses.

TINDOUF is situated in extreme western Algeria. The town has a large population of Regeibat nomads and, due to its location near the borders of Mauritania, Morocco, and Western Sahara, is of strategic importance. Rich deposits of iron ore are at Gara Djebilet 93 miles (150 kilometers) to the southeast.

TLEMCEN, close to Morocco in the northwestern part of Algeria, is rich in tradition and history. Its famous mosque of Sidi Bou Medine dates back to the 14th century. The city is sharply divided between the Hadars (the middle class descended from the Moors), the Koulouglis (descendants of Turks and Arab women), and the traditional Jewish commu-

nity. Each group lives within its own sector of town. Tlemcen's winding, narrow, arched streets are crowded with shops, cafes, and mosques. The city has a pleasant climate. It is located sufficiently inland to avoid the stifling humidity of the Mediterranean coast, but is near enough to cool sea breezes in the summer. Known for its crafts, Tlemcen produces handmade leather goods, copperware, silk tapestries, and carpets. The town supports a bustling trade in agricultural products. It is also known for furniture and food processing. The railroad connects Tlemcen to other cities, including Beni-Saf.

TOUGGOURT, located in northeastern Algeria, is an oasis town where cereals, date palms, and vegetables are grown. Inhabited by the Rouarha, a people of Berber origin, and Jewish converts to Islam (Medjaia), Touggourt is a typical Saharan town of dried mud or claystone buildings and winding streets. Located at the junction of ancient trans-Saharan caravan routes, Touggourt is a trading center for livestock, woven cloth, and carpets. The estimated population is over 75,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Algeria, the second largest Arab/African country, after the Sudan, is almost one-third the size of the continental United States. With an area of 918,497 square miles, Algeria is more than three times the size of Texas.

Its geography is a contrast between the mountainous, fertile terrain of the north and the great expanse of arid desert in the south. Nearly 90 percent of the population lives on the productive coastal strip. The major cities of Algiers, Oran, and Annaba are located in this area, within a quadrilateral that extends

about 50 miles inland from the coast, and stretches some 950 miles from Morocco on the west to Tunisia on the east.

South of this coastal plain rise the beautifully rugged hills and mountains of the Kabylie and the Aurès. Behind the mountains lies the high plateau, a semi-arid rangeland. Beyond that, some 200 miles inland, is the vast Sahara Desert, which comprises 90 percent of the country.

The climate varies. Coastal areas, including Algiers, have a pleasant, mild climate which becomes hot in summer, and chilly and rainy for several months in winter. Alistair Horne, in *Savage War of Peace*, describes it thus: "The summer in Algiers is long and torrid, and by the end of it, the Europeans tend to feel like fruits that have ripened too long in the sun. . . . Through much of the year—winters that sparkle and springs that warm—the climate, like the architecture, is that of the northern Mediterranean."

Inland mountain regions between the coast and the desert have cooler weather, with temperatures below freezing for long periods in winter. Spring and fall in the Tell (that part of northern Algeria that receives an average annual rainfall of 16 inches or more and is, therefore, usable for agriculture), are mild and enjoyable. The Tell and the Sahara both have climatic extremes, although in different ways. The Tell is very cold in winter and very hot in summer. The Sahara's extremes are between daytime (warm in winter, intensely hot in late spring, summer, and early fall) and nighttime (extremely cold year round).

Population

Algeria's population, a mixture of Arab, Berber, Turkish, and West African (in the Sahara) in origin, numbers nearly 31.8 million and is 99% Moslem. The principal languages are French and Arabic, although several Berber dialects are spoken and remain the mother tongue in many rural areas. A strong program of Arabization is

underway; French is still widely used for official purposes, although this is expected to cease soon. Few people speak English.

Algeria has one of the world's highest population growth rates (2.3% in 2000). At least 70% of the population is under age 30. The traditional Moslem male-dominated culture is very much in evidence. Although women are participating more in Algerian society, the pace of change is slow. Many Algerian women still wear the traditional veil and "haik" a white wrap-around silk or nylon cover robe. Others, however, wear jeans and Western clothes, particularly in cities. After dark, women are rarely seen in public places. Relationships between Americans and Algerians proceed more formally and slowly than those to which Americans are accustomed due to the restraints placed upon women and the reserve in most Algerians' attitudes toward strangers.

Public Institutions

The Algerian Parliament is made up of a directly elected lower house, the National Popular Assembly, and an indirectly (and partially appointed) upper house. The government's executive departments are headed by ministers.

After gaining independence in 1961, Algeria had a single-party state dominated by the country's army and supported by the bureaucracy and the National Liberation Front (FLN). The FLN's rule ended in 1988 following wide-spread rioting. Under the 1989 Constitution, there was to be a transition to a pluralist republic with a strong president. The democratization process was suspended in 1992 when the Army forced the President to resign, canceled the second round of parliamentary elections which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win, and installed a ruling five-man High State Committee, which banned the FIS and jailed more of its leaders. The cancellation of the elections in 1992 escalated fighting between the security forces and

armed Islamist groups seeking to overthrow the government and impose an Islamic state.

President Liamine Zeroual, a former general, was elected in November 1995 to a 5-year term. Zeroual had previously served as president of a transition government established by the Army in 1994. The President controls defense and foreign policy, appoints and dismisses the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers, and may dissolve the legislature. The presidential election was competitive. Three opposition candidates had some access to state-controlled television and radio and also received heavy coverage in the independent press. Zeroual received 61% of the votes according to government figures; losing candidates claimed that there were instances of fraud, but did not contest the Zeroual's victory. In June 1997 Algeria held the first legislative elections since January 1992.

In May 1996 the President began reviewing with legal opposition parties a memorandum containing his ideas on how to develop a political system. These included amending the Constitution to define acceptable political practices and to establish a second parliamentary chamber (a senate). The President also insisted the electoral and political party laws be changed. In September, several important opposition political parties joined with the President to sign a national charter encompassing these ideas. In November the government obtained approval of proposed changes to the Constitution, including provision of a second parliamentary chamber and greater presidential authority, in a flawed popular referendum.

The government's security apparatus is composed of the Army, Air Force, Navy, the national gendarmerie, the national police, communal guards (a local police), and local self-defense forces. All of these elements are involved in counter-insurgency and counterterrorism operations. The security forces were

responsible for numerous serious human rights abuses.

The economy is slowly developing from a centrally planned system to a more market-oriented system, in the wake of stabilization policies and structural reforms undertaken in 1994 and 1995. The pace of structural reform slowed in 1996.

Noncompetitive and unprofitable state enterprises constituted the bulk of the industrial sector. The state-owned petroleum sector's output represented about a quarter of national income and about 95% of export earnings in 1996. Algeria is a middle-income country whose annual per capita income is about \$1,700. Unemployment continued to rise in 1996, hitting young people especially hard. About 70% of persons under the age of 30 could not find adequate employment. Some made a living from petty smuggling or street peddling.

Although the government's human rights performance improved somewhat, there were continued serious human rights abuses. The security forces carried out extrajudicial killings, were responsible for numerous cases of disappearance, routinely tortured or otherwise abused detainees, and arbitrarily arrested and held incommunicado many of those suspected of involvement with armed Islamist groups. Poor prison conditions, lengthy trial delays, illegal searches, and infringement on citizens' privacy rights also remained problems. The government heavily censored news about security incidents and the armed groups. The government also continued to restrict freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and movement. The Family Code limited women's civil rights, while domestic violence against women remained a serious problem.

Armed groups and terrorists also committed numerous serious abuses, killing thousands of civilians. Armed Islamists have conducted a widespread insurgency since elections were canceled in January 1992. Although some areas

of the country saw less conflict in 1996 than heretofore, acts of terrorism were still numerous. Islamist groups targeted government officials and families of security service members. They also assassinated political and religious figures, businessmen, teachers, journalists, state enterprise workers, farmers, and children. Armed Islamists targeted women especially; there were repeated instances of kidnaping and rape. Bombs left in cars, cafes, and markets killed and maimed people indiscriminately. By the end of 1996, most commonly accepted casualty estimates were that 60,000 people had been killed during five years of turmoil.

Since diplomatic relations were restored in 1974, Algerian-U.S. relations have gradually improved. This is due to Algeria's role in the Iran hostage crisis in 1981 and to increased commercial ties. Algerian-French relations have gone through periodic ups and downs. Ties with France cover an extremely broad spectrum. France is Algeria's leading exporter. Approximately 800,000 Algerians live and work in France. About 50 countries maintain resident diplomatic missions in Algiers.

Political Environment

After the cancellation of parliamentary elections in January 1992, which the Islamist opposition party, the Islamic Salvation Front (in French, FIS) was poised to win, a building confrontation between the military-backed government and Islamist armed groups quickly expanded. The armed groups' operations included attacks on the security services, and they also targeted schools, public buildings, security service members, and a variety of noncombatants, including journalists, intellectuals, government officials, women, and even children. Unofficial estimates of the dead range from 30,000 - 60,000 during nearly five years of fighting. In addition, over 120 foreigners have been murdered since December

1993. The Armed Islamic Group, thought responsible for those murders, also threatened foreigners and Algerians working in the hydrocarbons sector specifically. Although many Algerians perceive the violence is receding somewhat, fighting and terrorist incidents erupt regularly; no prompt military solution to the conflict seems possible.

The flag of Algeria consists of two equal vertical bands of green (hoist side) and white with a red five-pointed star within a red crescent; the crescent, star, and the color green are traditional symbols of Islam.

Arts, Science, Education

Before independence, a predominantly foreign scientific and artistic community thrived in Algeria. It was well-supported by the French Government and was intended mainly for the European community. From this community developed the University of Algiers, two libraries (each with more than a half-million books), important research in solar energy and anthropology, and a small but highly regarded group of writers and painters—Nobel Prize winner Albert Camus among them.

Since the revolution, Algerians have maintained many of these French foundations and traditions. At the same time, they are developing institutions and customs more typical of their own character and needs.

Although it is small, the Algerian artistic community is active and well-supported by the government and news media. Several painters have achieved local and international reputations and often present exhibitions of their works.

The country has a long tradition of handicrafts, especially in rural areas. Although modernization is eradicating many of these, among the crafts found here are hand-woven textiles, including flat-weave

rugs and strips of tenting; traditional garments; pottery; basketry; coppercraft; brasswork; and leatherwork. The most notable is the Kabylie style of engraved silver jewelry decorated with coral and enamel inlays. Also notable are the intricate and colorful tiles which have for centuries decorated the courtyards and doorways of Algeria.

Expenditure on education has grown steadily since independence. Emphasis is now being placed on secondary and higher education. The University of Algiers (founded in 1909), its affiliated institutes, and other regional universities provide a varied program of instruction that stresses development-related subjects. Many technical colleges also are in operation as well.

In the mid-1990s, less than half of Algeria's population was literate.

Commerce and Industry

Despite Algeria's ongoing security difficulties, the Algerian economy is steadily growing. The engines of this growth are the hydrocarbons and agriculture sectors. Other sectors of the economy, especially industry, are suffering. The government, in conjunction with programs backed by the IMF and World Bank, is working to develop the economy from one centrally planned to one which is market oriented. In addition, the government is seeking to modernize Algeria's financial markets by working to establish secondary credit markets and attract private investment into commercial banking. These financial reforms should help spur investment, which so far has been minimal outside the food processing sector. Sustained economic growth in northern Algeria will likely await a resolution of Algeria's political turmoil, which so far has scared off many investors.

Algeria, whose territory is one-third the size of the U.S., has devoted significant resources to expanding and modernizing the transport and telecommunications sectors since the

1970s. Today, Algeria has a relatively well-developed infrastructure as a result. Unfortunately, armed groups fighting the government have often targeted the power and telecommunications networks as well as rail and road transport lines.

The Chambre de Commerce d'Alger is located at 6, boulevard Anatole France, Algiers; the other Chambers of Commerce are in Oran, at 8, boulevard de la Soumman; and in Constantine, at Palais Consulaire, rue Seguy-Villevalaix.

Transportation

Regional

Frequent flights link Algiers' main airport, Dar-el-Béïda, to all major European cities. Flights are available to Paris, a two hour trip. Flying time to Marseille is one hour; Madrid, two hours; London, three hours; and Palma de Mallorca, a lovely vacation spot in the Balears province of Spain, 45 minutes. Air service is available to Tunis and Casablanca. Tickets are expensive. During summer months, flights are heavily booked and obtaining reservations can be complicated. Ticket restrictions complicate arrangements for connecting flights.

Travel facilities in the Oran area are much the same, with daily heavily booked flights to Algiers, Marseille, and Paris.

Domestic commercial air service is provided by the national airline, Air Algérie, and serves all major interior and coastal cities. Because a policy of decentralization has increased emphasis on the development of interior cities, service to the Sahara is frequent. Fares are reasonable; but unannounced schedule changes also are frequent. Decentralization has created extreme crowding, and travelers often face a lengthy wait at airports for subsequent flights.

Algeria has international air facilities at Constantine, Annaba, and Tlemcen as well as at Algiers and Oran. Many other airports, smaller

in size, and a number of airstrips are in operation throughout the country.

Shipping from Algiers is primarily cargo, but some passenger ships call at the port. A ferry service runs daily between Algiers and Marseille; twice weekly between Oran and Spanish ports.

Local

Algeria has a good network of roads which are kept passable; but local travel can be an adventure. Although most Algerian drivers are extremely courteous, defensive driving is a must; the highway fatality rate is very high. "Fender-benders" are almost unavoidable, even for especially cautious drivers. Extremely heavy traffic should be expected in the cities, and particularly on weekend outings. It is not uncommon for a 30-mile beach trip to take six hours.

Algeria has over 3,000 miles (4,700 kilometers) of railway that connect all the major cities and towns in Algeria. However, trains are often overcrowded, unclean, and frequently late.

Public bus service in Algiers is not generally used by Americans because of overcrowding and erratic schedules. Intercity bus service is more dependable; most official Americans do not use the service, however, because of the crowding and unacceptable bus stations. The national tourist agency, offers bus tours to oases and other points of interest.

Taxis are very difficult to find except at the airport and major hotels. Drivers do not cruise, but wait at widely scattered stands throughout the city. Little service is available after hours and holidays. Taxis are metered and fares are not exceptionally high. Surcharges are often collected after dark. A tip of 10 percent is customary.

Automobiles

A private car is a necessity in Algiers. Walking in Algiers is very difficult because of the narrow, hilly,

winding streets, which often do not have sidewalks. These same streets make driving conditions difficult at best—worse during rush hours. Parking can be time consuming and frustrating. A small car is most practical for city driving, although cars should have sufficient space to make long trips comfortable. To see the many sights scattered in diverse areas of Algeria requires extensive travel. Reliable repair and maintenance facilities for American cars are not widespread, but there are adequate facilities for small foreign cars such as Renault, Volkswagen, Peugeot, or Fiat. Japanese-made vehicles are seen with increasing frequency. Cars with left-hand drive are standard, but right-hand drive vehicles are not prohibited. Algerian safety laws require yellow headlights and the use of seat belts outside the city limits. Additional seat belts may be needed to secure a child's car seat. Emission control devices on U.S. models should be removed and cars adapted to receive local gasoline.

Third-party liability insurance is mandatory and must be purchased from Caisse Algérienne d'Assurance et de Réassurance (CAAR), a national company. It is relatively expensive. Insurance in Algeria is valid only within the borders of Algeria. When outside the country, coverage applicable to the visited countries must be purchased at the border.

Members of the official communities representing other countries do not need Algerian drivers' licenses if they hold valid permits issued elsewhere.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local and international telephone service is generally adequate, but it is sometimes difficult to get calls through to the U.S. Although international calls are expensive (about \$1.65 per minute to the U.S.), direct dialing is available to most countries, including the U.S.

Mail

International airmail from the U.S. takes 712 days. Surface letters take a month. Parcel post service is irregular because the U.S. does not have a parcel agreement with Algeria. Once a parcel is received, lengthy customs delays may be experienced.

Radio and TV

Medium-wave and long-wave radios can receive French language programs from RadioTelevisionAlgerienne, Radio Diffusion Francaise, Europe No. 1, Monte Carlo, the Voice of America (evenings only), the BBC, and Moroccan-based Medi 1.

Reception of foreign shortwave broadcasts varies with the season, but BBC can be received clearly, as can Armed Forces Radio and Television Service broadcasts. Algerian television broadcasts between 7 a.m. and 1 a.m. daily. Many movies and the late-night newscasts are in French. Arabic programming (sometimes dubbed American films) is the general rule. Algerian television uses the PAL system, so U.S. receivers will not work in Algeria.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Three Arabic dailies are available in Algeria, and seven daily papers are published in French.

Few foreign publications are available locally. Magazines are usually subscribed to by individuals as they cannot be found in local newsstands.

Health and Medicine**Medical Facilities**

Algiers and the other major cities have several large nationalized hospitals and clinics. These facilities, however, are considered to be below U.S. standards. For the most part, noncritical obstetrical, surgical, and emergency patients are sent to London (medevac point) or the U.S. (in the case of official Americans, to the nearest U.S. military facility). In critical emergencies, an Algerian

military hospital will care for patients through special arrangement.

No American doctors currently practice in the country, but some foreign-trained local physicians and specialists are available. A number of these maintain private practices.

Community Health

Public sanitation standards are lower here than in Western Europe or the U.S., although (in Algiers) garbage is collected almost daily. Feral cats and various vermin abound. While sewage systems are adequate during the dry season, they often overflow during and after rains, and sometimes there are almost daily water interruptions.

High year-round humidity makes this area inadvisable for persons with serious respiratory ailments and sinus trouble. Children seem particularly susceptible to colds and respiratory infections.

Preventive Measures

Rabies is endemic in Algeria. The three-inoculation anti-rabies series should be considered before entering the country.

Mosquitoes are a definite nuisance in the residential areas of Algiers, and are found in some areas year round. In certain parts of the country, malaria is prevalent. Therefore, malaria prophylaxis should be taken.

During periods of drought, water supply from the city is sporadic, oftentimes no more than once every three days.

All water used for drinking and ice cubes should be boiled. Bottled water is generally available. Typhoid and gamma globulin immunizations are recommended. Local milk should be boiled before consumption. Doctors recommend "long conservation" milk (boiled under pressure) for infants and small children; it can be kept unopened without refrigeration for a reasonably lengthy period. Both

evaporated and powdered milk are usually available.

Fresh fruits and vegetables should be washed and soaked in a disinfectant, and rinsed in boiled water.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS**Passage, Customs and Duties**

No American passenger ships serve the Mediterranean. The best air connections for Algiers are from Paris, with direct flights available daily. It is also possible to fly from Madrid, Zurich, Rome, Frankfurt, or London. Daily flights go from Paris to Oran, and four to five flights a day are scheduled between Oran and Algiers.

Passports and visas are required for U.S. citizens traveling to Algeria. For more information concerning entry requirements, travelers may contact the Embassy of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria at 2137 Wyoming Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 265-2800 or go to <http://www.algeria-us.org/> on the Internet.

Smallpox vaccinations are required. Yellow fever and/or cholera vaccination certificates are required for travelers arriving from infected areas. Inoculations which should be kept current include the complete polio series, diphtheria and tetanus, typhoid, cholera, and gamma globulin.

Americans living in or visiting Algeria are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Algeria and obtain updated information on travel and security within Algeria. The U.S. Embassy is located at 4 Chemin Cheikh Bachir El-Ibrahimi, B.P. 549 (Alger-gare) 16000, in the capital city of Algiers. The telephone number is [213] (21) 691-425/255/186. The fax number for the U.S. Embassy is [213] (21) 69-39-79. The U.S. Embassy workweek is Sunday

through Thursday. The former U.S. Consulate in Oran is closed.

Pets

There are no restrictions on importing or exporting pets. Rabies, however, is common in Algeria. Pets must have certificates of inoculation and good health, and proof that rabies vaccination has been given within the last three months. Many hotels in Algeria will not accept pets, especially the SONATOUR (or national) hotels. Some will accept small pets more readily. None have kennels.

Firearms and Ammunition

The importation of firearms and ammunition is discouraged; handguns are strictly prohibited by Algerian law.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The Algerian unit of currency is the *dinar* (DA). It is divided into hundredths which, in popular usage, are called *francs*. Algerian currency notes may not be exported or imported.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

Officially a Muslim Arab country, Algeria still follows the Gregorian calendar for most purposes, and Friday is the day of rest.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Jan. | New Year's Day |
| Mar. 8. | Women's Day |
| May 1. | Labor Day |
| June 19 | Revolution Recovery Day |
| July 5. | Independence Day |
| Nov. 1. | Revolution Day |
| | Id al-Adha* |
| | Hijra New Year* |
| | Ashura* |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | *variable |

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Alf, Andrew Heggton. *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Algeria*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, 1972.

Algeria. Les Guides Bleus: Hachett, Paris, 1974.

Algeria. Nagel: Geneva, 1971.

Area Handbook for Algeria. Foreign Area Studies, American University. U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, 1979.

Horne, Alistair. *Savage War of Peace*. MacMillan Ltd: Great Britain, 1977. Viking Press: New York, 1978. Penguin Books, Ltd.: United Kingdom and New York, 1979. (This book is the best introduction.)

Humbaraci, Arslan. *Algeria: A Revolution That Failed*. Pall Mall Press, Ltd: London, 1966.

Kraft, Joseph. *Struggle for Algeria*. Doubleday: New York, 1961.

M'rabet, Fadila. *Las Femme Algerienne*. Maspero, 1964.

Ouandt, William. *Revolution & Political Leadership. Algeria 1954-1968*, M.I.T. Press: Cambridge, MA, 1969.

ANGOLA

People's Republic of Angola

Major Cities:

Luanda, Huambo, Lobito, Benguela

Other Cities:

Cabinda, Namibe

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2001 for Angola. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The name "Angola" comes from the Mbundu word for "king"- *ngola*. Few African countries have seen their natural and human potential as underutilized and thoroughly ravaged by violence as Angola.

In precolonial southern Africa, the area was home to some of the continent's richest kingdoms, which welcomed European merchants and missionaries in the 15th century, only to be corrupted and ultimately destroyed by the transatlantic slave trade in the 16th century. The abolition of the trade—a politically and economically destabilizing event—was followed by the repressive taxation and forced labor regimes of Portuguese colonialism. Although much

of the rest of the continent underwent rapid decolonization in the 1960s, the armed struggle for independence in Angola took nearly 15 years and perpetuated internal divisions that turned into a decades-long, ongoing civil war.

Small groups of hunter-gatherers were the first to inhabit the region of present-day Angola, but late in the first millennium Bantu-speaking people migrated to the area from the north. They brought with them iron-smelting skills, agricultural practices, and cattle, all of which they used to establish some of the largest and most centralized kingdoms in Central Africa. In the mid-13th or 14th century, Congo kings organized agricultural settlements surrounding the mouth of the Congo River into provinces, collected taxes, and established an official currency of shells.

Portuguese explorer Diogo Cão sailed into the mouth of the Congo River in 1482. The Portuguese initially maintained peaceful relations with the Congo, trading goods in exchange for slaves. But the slave-traders became more intrusive and violent. When they began to meet resistance, the Portuguese monarchy sent troops to Angola.

Slavery existed in some form in most of Angola's kingdoms. It is

estimated that between the late 16th century and 1836, when Portugal officially abolished slave trafficking, 4 million people from the region were captured for the slave trade. Slave trading agents, or *pombeiros*—some Portuguese, most African, or Afro Portuguese (*metiços*)—bought slaves from local chiefs in exchange for cloth, guns, and other European goods.

Throughout the 19th century and until the military campaigns ended in 1930, many sectors of Angolan society resisted domination by the Portuguese monarchy. Kings, especially the well educated leaders of the Congo, invoked historical treaties to resist Portuguese dictates.

The country has been engulfed in war and civil strife since its independence from Portugal in 1975. A peace accord, signed in 1994, brought a temporary halt to the civil war, but war erupted again in 1998.

However, despite these grave difficulties, Angola is not without its share of intrigues. Numerous beautiful beaches surrounding Luanda—such as the *Palmeirinhas*, *Ilha*, and *Ramiro*—are popular places for water sports enthusiasts. Three museums include a Museum of Anthropology, with an excellent collection of African arts, and several

discos and clubs are dotted throughout the city. Angolans are also known for their hospitality; it is not uncommon for visitors to be invited into their homes for a traditional meal.

MAJOR CITIES

Luanda

Luanda, Angola's capital and largest city, lies less than 9 degrees south of the equator. It was established in 1576, and by 1627, the city had become the headquarters for the Portuguese colonial administration and the main outlet for slave traffic to Brazil. Luanda experienced a dramatic population increase after 1940 as thousands of Portuguese immigrants and rural Angolans flocked to the city. This population explosion ceased shortly after Angola's independence from Portugal in 1975, when Portuguese nationals returned en masse to Portugal. By 1976, Luanda's large white population had dwindled from 150,000 to 30,000. The city's population increased again during the Angolan civil war as an influx of Cuban soldiers and civilians settled in Luanda. Luanda has an estimated population of 3 million.

Today, Luanda is a city of contrasts. The lower part of the city serves as Luanda's commercial and industrial center. Skyscrapers and wide avenues give the city a modern appearance. However, vast poverty-ridden shanty-towns are prevalent in other parts of the city. These neighborhoods are filled with sun-dried, mud brick shacks known as "musseques."

Luanda is the site of the University of Luanda, the seat of the Roman Catholic archdiocese, and the location of 4 de Fevereiro, Angola's international airport. Luanda is a busy international port. Coffee, cotton, iron, salt, and diamonds are chief exports. Products are also transported by rail link to Malanje, a city located 200 miles east of Luanda.

Utilities

Running water is available throughout much of the city, though outages do occur. Electricity is 220 volts, 50-cycle electrical power. Power outlets are the standard European two round prong. Persons planning to bring sensitive electronic equipment should also bring a voltage regulator, UPS, and/or surge protector, as voltage may fluctuate as much as 10%. It is also advisable to bring only battery-operated clocks.

Food

Most basic items (dairy products, eggs, butter, bread, sugar, flour, beans, rice, fresh and frozen meats, and limited amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables) can be purchased locally in open-air markets and supermarkets (Jumbo, Afri-Belg, and Intermarket) or in hard currency stores (ES-KO and Cantina Palanca Items in the hard-currency stores are expensive compared to Washington, D.C. prices, but not prohibitive.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are grown locally or imported from South Africa with a moderate amount of variety (tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, onions, lettuce, apples, oranges, mangos, papayas, bananas, etc.). Items purchased in the open-air markets are sold "as is." Care must be taken with these items, especially in the proper cleaning of all fresh produce. Fresh local fish is also abundant and reasonable. Alcoholic beverages are also found in a wide variety, such as wines from South Africa and Europe, beers from Angola, South Africa, Namibia, and hard liquors. Food stuffs, including perishables, can also be ordered on a bimonthly basis from South Africa. Due to the cost of air shipment, prices are high.

Clothing

Locally available clothing is unacceptable by American standards. Size, selection, and availability are extremely limited. It is advisable to bring all clothing items and shoes with you. There are no local taboos regarding clothing, and the majority of people in Luanda dress in the

"Western" style. As Luanda has a tropical climate, any type of washable cotton/linen tropical wear would be well suited for day and nighttime use. Replenishment of clothing items is done most often by catalog purchase through the pouch system. Clothes can also be bought in South Africa at reasonable prices and are of good quality.

Luanda's year-round climate is generally sunny, hot, and humid. Washable 100% cotton clothing is recommended, as dry cleaning facilities are unreliable. Comfortable, durable walking shoes are also recommended. Life, in general, and social functions, in particular, tend to be casual in the expatriate community. Angolans, on the other hand, always dress well for functions.

Supplies and Services

Luanda has one drycleaner shop that is considered adequate, plus a few well regarded, reasonably priced barbershops and beauty salons. There are auto repair shops in town that have received mixed reviews and are not inexpensive.

Domestic Help

Domestic help is readily available at reasonable rates, usually payable in U.S. dollars. However, those employed who have not worked before for Americans may need training, and most speak only Portuguese. Currently, there is no requirement for pension, social security, or retirement payments for domestic help. All household help should have a medical exam and routine security background check prior to beginning work.

Religious Activities

There are missionaries of all faiths living in Angola. Although their principal role is humanitarian assistance, many do hold religious services for their individual faiths. There is a large number of Catholic, Baptist, and Methodist churches in Luanda. The Catholic church has a resident cardinal, and the Methodist church has a resident bishop. Church facilities are simple; most



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View of Luanda, Angola

services are conducted in Portuguese, and attendance by Angolans is normally high. An English non-denominational church group meets every Sunday morning and is open to everyone.

Education

The International School of Luanda (LIS) instructs in English as a first language and has a preschool and kindergarten, as well as grades 1-8. It is a member of the Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA) and is listed in the worldwide International Education Handbook. The school is working in conjunction with the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) and their Primary Years Program and is also seeking US. accreditation. There are also French and Portuguese schools in Luanda.

Sports

The national sports of Angola are soccer and basketball. Local games are held regularly. Angola also

sponsors tennis, European handball, basketball, and field hockey teams. Dance, aerobics, karate, and "capoeira" lessons are available, located at several different fitness gyms and at reasonable prices. Runners can participate in the Hash House Harriers, a weekly "Fun Run" sponsored by the British Embassy, and more informal events.

The city has a tennis club; court rental is \$10 per hour for nonmembers. Bring shoes, rackets, and balls sufficient to last a tour. Reasonably priced tennis lessons are available through private arrangement.

Entertainment

Entertainment in Luanda is limited. Alliance Française and the Portuguese Cultural Center will have special cultural programs to which all are invited. There is a small theater with local groups performing. Most people dine out for entertainment. Nightclubs, jazz clubs, and many relatively good res-

taurants serve Angolan, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Cuban cuisine. Restaurants in Angola are expensive by U. S. standards.

Special Information

The security situation in Luanda requires caution. Civil war, banditry and landmines make travel throughout Angola unsafe. Street crime, sometimes violent, is common in Luanda and in other urban centers. Police, who often carry automatic weapons, patrol city streets. They are unpredictable, and their authority should not be challenged. Travel in many parts of Luanda is relatively safe by day, but doors must be locked, windows rolled up, and packages stored out of sight. Police checkpoints contribute to unsafe travel on roads leading out of the city. Visitors are strongly advised to avoid unnecessary travel after dark. All visitors are required at the earliest opportu-

nity to contact the U.S. Embassy security officer for a briefing.

Huambo

Located in west-central Angola, Huambo (formerly Nova Lisboa) was founded in 1912 and quickly became a major transportation center. The city is built on Angola's main railway, the Benguela Railway. The railway, which extends from Lobito on Angola's Atlantic coast to Zaire, was used extensively to transport coffee, wheat, and corn grown near Huambo. As a result of this activity, Huambo became a very prosperous city. Huambo's fortunes plummeted during the civil war when the Benguela Railway was severely damaged. The city itself has suffered severe damage. Most of Huambo's residents fled and the city was looted. Huambo faces hardship and years of rebuilding. The city's estimated population in 2000 was 400,000.

Lobito

Lobito is Angola's third largest city and was founded in 1843. The completion of the Benguela Railway served as a stimulus for Lobito's growth into a major city. Lobito is Angola's largest and busiest port. Because of its extensive rail links with Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and South Africa, Lobito was once a leading transport center for Southern Africa's mineral wealth. However, damage to the Benguela Railway has severely disrupted Lobito's trade with other African countries. Several industries are located in the city, among them food processing, shipbuilding, and metalworking. The French built a new textile complex at Lobito in 1979 and a second textile mill is planned for the future. Grains, fruits, sisal, coconuts, and peanuts are grown near the city. Plans to rehabilitate Lobito and the surrounding area were in progress in mid-1991. Lobito's population is roughly 75,000.

Benguela

The city of Benguela is an historic trading, fishing, and administrative center. Benguela was founded in 1617 by Portuguese traders seeking to open new ports and trade markets in Angola. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Benguela served as a major transport point for Portugal's lucrative slave trade. The city currently serves as a trading center for the coffee, corn, tobacco, sugarcane, and sisal grown near Benguela. Industry in the city consists of fish processing, sugar milling, and soap manufacturing. Manganese deposits have been discovered south of the city, but were not developed extensively because of Angola's civil war. Benguela has an estimated population of over 50,000.

OTHER CITIES

The port city of **CABINDA**, situated in the Angolan enclave of Cabinda, was once a transportation point for West African slaves. Today, Cabinda province contains rich crude oil deposits and the city is a major port of Angolan oil exports. Timber, cocoa, coffee, phosphates, and potassium are also transported through Cabinda. Manganese and gold deposits have been discovered near the city, but have not been fully exploited. Cabinda has been able to escape damage during the civil war because it is geographically separated from Angola. Cabinda's status as a free port has made it attractive to foreign businesses and investors.

Cabinda is a small city located 200 miles east of Luanda. It developed in the mid-19th century as an important open-air market. Today, the city is the center of an important cotton- and coffee-growing area. The prosperity of the town was hampered by the exodus of skilled Portuguese workers following Angola's independence. In addition, the city was partially destroyed during the civil war. Malanje is linked by rail

and road with Luanda. Several interesting attractions are located near the city. These attractions include the Luando Game Reserve, Milando Animal Reserve, and the 350-ft. high Duque de Breganca Falls. The city's population is estimated at 31,600.

The port of **NAMIBE** (formerly Moçamedes) was founded by Brazilians in the mid-19th century. Namibe is a city of small houses and administrative buildings crowded together along a low inland cliff with commercial buildings nestled along the Atlantic coast. The city was solely dependent on fishing until the discovery of iron ore near Namibe. A lucrative iron ore mine was opened at Cassinga, but operations were disrupted during the civil war. Fishing remains an important activity for Namibe's residents. Namibe has an estimated population of 77,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Angola is located on the western coast of central/southern Africa. It is bordered by Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) on the north and northeast, Zambia on the east, Namibia on the south and by the Atlantic Ocean on the west. Its coastline extends from the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda (north of the mouth of the Zaire River) to the northern border of Namibia, a distance of nearly 1,000 miles. Angola comprises a total area of approximately 481,354 square miles, larger than Texas and California combined.

The Atlantic coast of Angola is narrow and flat. Most of the country is comprised of a vast plateau elevated 3,000 to 7,000 feet above sea level. Northern and western portions of Angola have mountains, thick vegetation and fertile soil. The majority of Angolans live in the north and

west. Many of the country's rivers originate in central Angola. However, only the Cuanza River is navigable. The eastern half of Angola consists of relatively flat, open plateau and sandy soil. Angola's southern areas are dominated by the Namib Desert. Population in southern and eastern regions is very sparse. The Cabinda province is covered by tropical rain forest.

Angola has a tropical climate. The hot season runs from January to April, with high temperatures and high humidity. There are light rains in November and December with rains falling in March & April.

Population

With only about 12 million people, Angola is lightly populated. As a result for three decades of conflict, an estimated 80% of the population is now concentrated in 20% of the national territory closest to the coast, and nearly 30% of the total population now resides in the capital, Luanda. The rest of the population is spread over the central highlands.

Angolans are mostly of Bantu ethnic heritage. About 75% of Angola's people are members of Angola's four largest ethnic groups. The Ovimbundu, normally resident in the central highlands and southeastern parts of Angola, are the largest group, comprising about 37% of the population. The Ovimbundu were traditionally farmers and traders.

The Kimbundu, approximately 25% of Angola's population, live in and around Luanda and to the east. Prolonged contact with Portuguese colonial rulers has given the Kimbundu the highest proportion of Angolans assimilated into European culture.

The Bakongo, usually concentrated in the northwest, and areas adjacent to the Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Cabinda Province, constitute 13% of the population. The Bakongo at one time formed a loose federation known as

the Kingdom of the Kongo with whom the Europeans made initial contact in the 15th century when the Portuguese first landed at the mouth of the Congo River.

The Lunda and Chokwe occupy the northeastern sector of Angola, with branches also in Democratic Republic of Congo, and make up 10% of the population. These two ethnic groups once comprised a great kingdom in the Angolan interior and were barely touched by Portuguese influence.

Other relatively minor ethnic groups include the Nganguela in the southeast and the Ovambo and Herero in the southwest (about 7%). The Ovambo and Herero are migratory cattle herders, who maintain close ties to kinsmen in Namibia, and regularly migrate across the Angolan-Namibian border. The rest of the population is made up of mulatto or mestizo (mixed European and African, 2%), Europeans (1%), and others (5%).

Before the 1975 civil war, approximately 750,000 non-Africans, primarily Portuguese citizens, lived in Angola. About 500,000 fled to Portugal because of the war. Today, about 40,000 Portuguese live in Angola, constituting the largest foreign population. The mulatto/mestizo are influential politically and economically beyond their numbers.

The diverse ethnic backgrounds of the population suggest the wide range of languages spoken. No one African language is widely used beyond its ethnic area. Portuguese is Angola's official language and is used by the government, in schools, and by people throughout the country.

The last official Angolan census was taken in 1970. Since then, because the war has made accurate demography impossible, population figures have only been given as estimates. The Angolan Government estimated the 1988 population at almost 9.5 million. Today's best estimate is about 12 million inhabit-

ants, with about 3 million of those residing in Luanda.

History

Modern-day Angola was first discovered in 1483 by the Portuguese explorer Diego Cao. Although the Portuguese government sent a small group of settlers to Angola in 1491, the establishment of large permanent settlements was not their primary objective. Rather, Angola was to serve as an ample source of slave labor for Portugal's profitable coffee plantations in Brazil. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Portuguese had established a lucrative slave trade in Angola. It is estimated that nearly three million Angolans were eventually sent to South America as slaves. More Portuguese flocked to Angola as the slave trade grew. In 1575, the Portuguese established their first permanent settlement at Luanda.

Angola's lucrative slave trade quickly captured the attention of Portugal's colonial rivals. In 1641, the Dutch invaded and occupied Luanda. For seven years, Portugal's Angolan slave trade was controlled by the Dutch. The Portuguese eventually wrested control of Angola from the Dutch in 1648.

Angola's boundaries were formally established by the Berlin West Africa Congress in 1884-1885 in which France, Germany and Portugal won international recognition of the borders of their African colonies. During the early 20th century, Angola was wracked by a series of tribal uprisings against Portuguese rule. All of these uprisings were ruthlessly crushed. By 1922, the Portuguese government claimed that all resistance against colonial rule in Angola had been silenced.

The years following World War II brought an influx of new Portuguese settlers. Beginning in 1950, the Portuguese government initiated a campaign to entice new settlers to Angola with a promise of free farmland. The plan was highly successful. By the end of 1950, there were

80,000 Portuguese living in Angola, compared with fewer than 10,000 in 1900. The Portuguese promises of free land created a series of hardships for native Angolans, however. Most of the free farmland was confiscated from traditional African farming areas. Many African farmers, displaced from their land, were forced to take menial jobs in Angola or work outside the country. The Portuguese settlement practices, coupled with harsh repression of dissent, led to deep bitterness and discontent among the Angolan people. The seeds of violent revolution had been sown.

In 1961, Angola was shaken by two separate uprisings. The first revolt was conducted by a political group known as the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Shortly thereafter, the FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola) launched their own military campaign. Initially, both uprisings made impressive gains against Portuguese troops. However, the Portuguese eventually gained the upper hand and crushed the revolts. Members of the MPLA and FNLA were forced to flee to remote parts of the country. In 1966, after a series of disagreements, several members of the FNLA left the party and formed the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). UNITA began its own revolt against the Portuguese in late 1966. It was quickly defeated. Eventually, tribal rivalries, personality conflicts and ideological differences erupted between members of the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA. Relations between the three groups became so hostile at one point that they began murdering and imprisoning each others officials. Although the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA were equally committed to driving the Portuguese from Angolan soil, the bitter rivalries and hostilities between them and within their own parties severely hampered these efforts.

In 1974, the Portuguese government at home was overthrown. Weary of Portugal's prolonged involvement in Angola, the new gov-

ernment decided to grant independence. Representatives of the Portuguese government and the three opposition parties met in January 1975 to plan an orderly transition from colonial rule. At this meeting, the MPLA, UNITA and FNLA agreed to form a transitional government and to hold free elections. All Portuguese troops were to be removed from Angola. Complete independence was scheduled for 1975. Unfortunately, Angola's journey to independence would be marred by warfare and hardship.

Within a matter of months, the shaky coalition government collapsed. By mid-1975, the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA were engaged in open civil warfare.

On November 11, 1975, Portugal declared Angola independent. Because Luanda was in MPLA hands at the time of independence, the Portuguese handed control of the government to the MPLA.

Although the MPLA controlled Angola, they were faced with a host of internal and external problems. Years of civil warfare had decimated Angola's economy. Many Portuguese settlers fled the country after 1975, taking with them the expertise needed to rebuild the economy. Although substantially weakened, UNITA and the FNLA still posed a major threat to the MPLA. Foreign powers, such as South Africa, wanted to destroy the MPLA. Finally, the MPLA suffered from dissent within its own ranks.

In 1991, the MPLA and UNITA signed a formal peace agreement, effectively ending 16 years of civil war. However, the peace lasted only until October 1992, when the civil war resumed. The Lusaka Protocol of 1994, supported by armed UN peacekeepers, promised peace by guaranteeing UNITA a voice in the government. In spite of recurrent episodes of violence, some 100,000 troops had been demobilized by 1996.

Public Institutions

Angola changed from a one-party Marxist/Leninist system ruled by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) to a multiparty democracy following the September 1992 elections. Since then, political power is increasingly concentrated in the Presidency. The political power of the MPLA Central Committee Political Bureau has diminished. Currently, the MPLA and eight other political parties are represented in the National Assembly, including the largest opposition party, UNITA, made up of former fighters who have abandoned the armed struggle.

In late 1999, a major Government offensive succeeded in destroying Jonas Savimbi's conventional military capacity and driving him to guerrilla tactics. Currently, the Government controls 90%-95% of the national territory, and a similar share of the population, with Savimbi's forces reduced to scattered, but sometimes effective, raids against civilian as often as military targets. As the UNITA military threat abated, the Government has slowly allowed for greater public dissent, a freer press, considerable leverage for opposition parties, and a proposal to hold national elections in 2002. Some of this public debate has increased and strengthened civil society, in the process helping to make the country a more dynamic and interesting place to work in international affairs.

The executive branch of the government is composed of the Chief of State, President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, Prime Minister (a position which, since the early 1999 government reorganization, is also held by the President), and the Council of Ministers.

The Constitution establishes the broad outlines of the government structure and delineates the rights and duties of citizens. The legal system is based on the Portuguese civil and customary law system. It was recently modified to accommodate a multi-party political system and

increased use of free-market concepts and is again under revision in the National Assembly. The legal voting age for Angolans is 18.

Military and civilian courts exist, but the judicial system is precarious. There have been reports of prolonged detention without trial, unfair trials, and arbitrary executions.

The country is divided into 18 provinces, each with its own provincial government, but the governors are appointed by and under direct authority of the central government.

Angola has been ravaged by warfare since initiation of the struggle for independence from the Portuguese in 1961. An estimated 450,000 people have been killed; 100,000 maimed; and 3.7 million people were orphaned or forced from their homes since the wars began. The war has severely damaged the country's social institutions and infrastructure. The millions of dislocated people, orphaned children, and the lack of communications and transport between cities and the interior have all taken their toll. Daily conditions within the country, and in the capital city, Luanda, are difficult for most Angolans. Hospitals are without medicines or basic equipment; schools are without books; and public servants often lack the basic supplies for their day-to-day work.

An ally of the Socialist Block during the Cold War, Angola has increasingly drawn closer to Western nations, including the U.S. Angola's vast petroleum resources and its role as a regional power give it high importance.

The flag of Angola consists of two equal horizontal bands of red (top) and black with a centered yellow emblem consisting of a five-pointed star within half a cogwheel crossed by a machete

Arts, Science, Education

The arts and crafts market may not be as prolific in Angola as in some African countries, but there are beautiful artifacts. There is a trade in antique masks and fabrics. Ivory engraving is said to be the most intricate and detailed work found in Angola. Some craftsmen in Luanda market in woodcarvings for the expatriate community, and there are a few good painters as well, painting from traditional landscape and portrait to abstract art.

Angola is predominantly Roman Catholic (60%). Protestants (15%) and various indigenous beliefs that may also be nominally Christian (25%) fill out the pattern of religious affiliation. Catholic churches are found in most towns, and their religious workers have played an important role in keeping education and food distribution programs going in the war-torn country.

The Portuguese brought the Catholic religion with them, and toward the end of the 19th century Protestant missionaries arrived from the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. Catholic and Protestant missionaries have played a significant role in Angola education. At the time of independence the leaders of Angola's three major liberation movements had been educated a Protestant missions. Literacy, less than 10% at independence, has increased, despite the onset of the civil war, and is estimated at 45% of the total population. Currently, only 40% of Angolan children attend school for the first three grades, after which attendance declines severely. Also, the quality of education is poor, and most of the children of parents with money are sent overseas to Portugal or other countries.

Commerce and Industry

The continuing civil war has devastated Angola's postindependence economy and has created wide-ranging humanitarian and social

problems and diverted resources that otherwise might have been used for the maintenance and improvement of infrastructure. The war has caused serious disruptions in the transportation of people and goods, and in agricultural production.

Angola is resources-rich, with abundant offshore oil reserves, high-quality diamond deposits, numerous other minerals, rich agricultural lands, and many rivers, which serve as a source of water and power supply. Prior to independence Angola was a net food exporter, and one of the largest coffee and cotton producer in the world. Other main crops included bananas, sugarcane, sisal, corn, manioc, tobacco, forest products, fish, and livestock. Now Angola buys almost all of its food, as well as most consumer products. Coca-Cola invested \$35 million in a bottling plant located 60 kilometers outside of Luanda. The plant opened in early 2000 and added a second production line in November 2000. Coca-Cola's investment is the largest single non-mineral investment in Angola's history.

The oil sector dominates the economy. Petroleum exports account for about 90% of total exports annually, and oil revenue makes up almost half of the country's Gross Domestic Product, which reached \$5.6 billion in 1999. This strong reliance on a single commodity makes Angola very vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices. Weak oil prices in 1998 and part of 1999, combined with increased arms purchases in response to an escalation of hostilities, led to a heavy external debt burden. Angola's external debt amounted to almost \$10 billion at the end of 1999, and \$4.4 billion of this amount was in arrears. Higher oil prices in late 1999 and 2000 and the intake of signing bonuses for new oil concessions helped to keep the debt from growing further.

Angola is the third largest trading partner of the U.S. in sub-Saharan Africa, mainly because of significant petroleum exports. Between 1997-99, Angolan crude oil accounted for

about 5% of U.S. total imports of crude. The U.S. imported \$2.4 billion of crude oil from Angola in 1999 and exported \$252 million of goods to Angola, primarily machinery and transport equipment, manufactured goods, and food products.

After 1975, Angola's Soviet-influenced economy was highly centralized and state-dominated. The Government has very slowly introduced reforms and liberalizations since the early 1990s. The government enacted its most significant reforms to date in 1999, when it unified official and parallel market exchange rates and liberalized interest rates. In April 2000, the Government reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund on a Staff-Monitored Program (a precursor to receiving loans from the IMF and other concessionary lenders). Progress on economic reforms, such as privatization and improved accountability and transparency, continues-but at a slow pace.

Transportation

Automobiles

A 2000 law requiring that all cars brought into the country be no more than 3 years of age has been informally relaxed for non-commercial users. The only safe means of traveling in the city is by automobile. As with all other types of infrastructure in Angola, roads have been poorly or infrequently maintained in the past 20 years. Potholes are typically deep and numerous. High-clearance, heavy duty suspension vehicles are recommended. Cars brought into Angola by nonresidents are considered in transit, and no taxes are levied. Only leaded fuel is available, and although the lines are long at peak hours, there is no widespread shortage of fuel. Fuel prices have risen considerably over the last year. Rental vehicles are available, but are very costly.

There are no vehicle inspections required for registration or licensing purposes. Vehicle traffic moves on the right as in the U.S. A valid

U.S. driver's license is needed to apply for an Angolan driver's license, but recently the Angolan Government has been slow in issuing licenses despite charging a fee. Local third party insurance is available and required by law. Full coverage purchased locally is expensive and not reliable when paying for damages. Vehicle owners may wish to obtain hard-currency insurance from outside Angola.

There are repair facilities in the city for GM, Dodge, Jeep, Ford, Toyota, and Nissan vehicles. However, it is helpful to bring basic items such as air and oil filters, fan belts, spark plugs, etc., with you. A heavy-duty battery is required, and air conditioning is a must year round. The poor road conditions also cause suspension systems and tires to wear rapidly. Any vehicle shipped to Angola should have heavy-duty suspension, radial tires, and undercoating. Carburetors should be adjusted to low-octane leaded gas and catalytic converters removed, since locally available gasoline is of poor quality. Because of the extremely high rate of pilferage from the Luanda port, do not ship car radios, stereos, or other removable items with the vehicle. Shipping time for vehicles averages about 4 months with some time in port. It will take about a month to receive plates before the vehicle can be driven.

Local

Local public transportation is limited and deemed unsafe. The public buses and collective taxis (minibuses or "candongueiros") are not safe; no individual taxi service exists. Reliable railroad transportation is not available. Roads to the interior are not deemed safe for general travel. The best method of reaching other areas is by air. Air transport to major interior cities is available on the Angolan national airline TAAG; however, security conditions and equipment problems regularly interrupt service.

Regional

The following airlines provide service to/from Europe on a weekly or

more frequent basis: Sabena (Belgium), Air France, TAP (Portugal), and TAAG (Angola). Air Namibia, Air Zimbabwe, Air Ethiopia, Air Gabon, and South African Airlines offer regional service.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Angola's telephone system is poor. Local and international telephone connections can be difficult to make and can be extremely frustrating and expensive. Luanda's cellular telephone system is estimated to be 400% oversubscribed, and connections, particularly during business hours, are difficult to make. The telephone system is slowly being changed to digital but problems are still rampant.

Radio and TV

Luanda's local radio stations broadcast on AM, FM, and SW Programs concentrate on popular music and local news, with programs from 6 am until midnight daily. Shortwave broadcasts from Europe, North America, and Africa are the best source for international news and can be received without much difficulty.

Angolan television (TPA) transmits daily in color, with programming consisting of news, sports, cartoons, soap operas, cultural programs, and movies from the U.S., Europe, and Brazil. International programs are usually telecast in original languages with Portuguese subtitles. A multi-system 120/220v television, video, or stereo system is required; local television transmissions are in PAL-1.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Almost all publications in Angola are in Portuguese; a few French books are also available. The main local newspaper, the state-run *Journal de Angola*, is published daily. Several independent newspapers (also in Portuguese) are published weekly or biweekly. English-language publications are difficult to obtain in Angola. It is advisable to

receive magazines, newspapers, and books by pouch mail or subscribe to an internet service.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

The government-run hospitals are substandard by Western criteria and lack such basics as medicines, supplies, or trained staff, and are often without water, electricity, and sanitary facilities. There is one dental office.

Community Health

Because of the poor living and health conditions within the capital city's neighborhoods, disease, illness, and malnutrition are commonplace among the majority of Luanda's population. Warm weather and standing water from rains create a rampant breeding area for mosquitoes, and malaria is a common and dangerous threat to the population throughout Angola. Dust is also a continuous problem, and many people suffer from allergies and sinus trouble.

Recently a beautification project called Urbana 2000 was begun to try to beautify and clean up the city's image. Though Luanda's garbage collection system operates regularly, garbage and trash still ends up in the streets. Air pollution from dust, automobile exhaust, and burning garbage is heavy. City water is badly contaminated by raw sewage, human waste, and other toxic substances. Because of the poor living conditions, the average life expectancy for local citizens is only 45 years.

Preventive Measures

Luanda is afflicted with virtually every disease known to mankind. There are incidents of the following illnesses: hepatitis types A, B, C, measles, typhoid fever, polio, leprosy, amoebic infestations (whipworm, roundworm, amebiasis, and giardia lamblia), cholera, yellow fever; filaria, tetanus, meningitis, trypanosomiasis, rabies, tuberculo-

sis, syphilis, and varieties of AIDS. HIV and hepatitis contaminate the local blood supply. HIV/AIDS precautions are strongly recommended. Malaria is a serious continuing health risk because of the warm climate and a lack of community programs to combat it. Luanda is normally dry and dusty for 9 months of the year; as a result, some individuals are troubled with sinus, allergy, and respiratory problems.

It is recommended that vaccinations, including yellow fever, typhoid, rabies; hepatitis A, B, C, and meningitis, be updated prior to coming.

Antimalarial precautions are a must, with Mefloquine Doxycycline being the prophylaxis of choice. It is recommended that malaria prophylaxis begin a week prior to arrival.

Drinking local tap water is very hazardous. Care must be taken when dining out, as food poisoning is common, although not necessarily in restaurants frequented by expatriates. All locally grown produce should be soaked in iodine or bleach solution before consuming, and care should be taken with the purchase and cooking of local meats and fish.

In sum, Angola, and Luanda in particular, is a place for the relatively healthy who are free of any major or continuing health problems.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

A passport and visa, which must be obtained in advance, and an International Certificate of Vaccination, are required. Persons arriving without visas are subject to possible arrest and/or deportation. Travelers whose international immunization cards do not show inoculations against yellow fever and cholera may be subject to involuntary vaccinations and/or heavy fines. Visitors remaining in Angola beyond their

authorized visa duration are subject to fines and possible arrest. Current information on entry requirements may be obtained from the Embassy of Angola at 1615 M Street, N.W., Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20036, tel. (202) 785-1156, fax (202) 785-1258.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register with and obtain updated information on travel and security from the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Luanda located at the Casa Inglesa Complex, Rua Major Kanhangula No. 132/135, tel. 244-2-396-727; fax 244-2-390-515. The Embassy is located on Rua Houari Boumediene in the Miramar area of Luanda, P.O. Box 6468, tel. 244-2-447-028/(445-481)/(446-224); (24-hour duty officer tel. 244-9-501-343); fax 244-2-446-924. The Consulate may be contacted by e-mail at amembassyluanda@netangola.com.

Pets

Quarantine is not required for pets brought to Angola. Dogs and cats must have rabies shots within 6 months, but not less than 30 days prior to arrival. Heartworm medication is also advised. Limited pet food is available locally, and what is available is very expensive. The mange parasite is prevalent in Angola; infection may occur if a pet comes in contact with infected animals. There are several private practice veterinarians in Luanda. No kennel facilities are available.

Firearms and Ammunition

The Government of Angola prohibits the importation of any type of personal firearms or ammunition.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

Angola's currency is the kwanza. The exchange rate is market-determined. U.S. paper currency (no coins) is widely accepted in Angola. Angolan kwanzas are not convertible outside of Angola. U.S. dollars can be converted to local currency at exchange houses authorized by the Angolan government. Rapid fluctuations in the value of the Angolan Kwanza and shortages of U.S. dol-

lars are widespread. Currency conversions on the parallel market are illegal, and participants are subject to arrest. In general, only the newer series 100 (US) dollar bills are accepted due to widespread counterfeiting of the older style.

Banking practices are unreliable. It is advisable to use your stateside bank, with direct deposit for all payroll or voucher transactions. Traveler checks are not generally accepted outside the Mission. Credit cards are accepted at major hotels and by a few businesses that cater to the expatriate communities. Otherwise, credit cards are not accepted.

Angola uses the metric system of weights and measures.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Feb. 4 | Commencement of the Armed Struggle |
| Feb/Mar. | Carnival* |
| Mar. 8 | Women's Day |
| Mar. 27 | Victory Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Apr. 14 | Youth Day |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| June 1 | Children's Day |
| Aug. 1 | Armed Forces Day |
| Sept. 17. | Heroes' Day |
| Nov. 2 | Remembrance Day |
| Nov. 11 | Independence Day |
| Dec. 1 | Pioneer's Day |
| Dec. 10 | Worker's Party Foundation Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas |
| Dec. 25 | Family Day |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Web Sites

Angolan Embassy in Washington, D.C. <http://209.183.193.172>

Angola's Official Web Site <http://www.angola.org>

Angola Business and Economics <http://www.angola.org/business>
Angola Press

<http://www.angolapress-angop.ao>
UNITA's Homepage <http://www.kwacha.org>

Radio Ecclksia-Catholic Emissary in Angola

<http://ecclesia.snet.co.ao> Lusofone Web Site-gossip (chat room), information, and other links. <http://www.portugalnet.pt>

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Marcum, John. *The Angolan Revolution*.

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Minter, William. *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique*. 1994. Okuma, Thomas. *Angola in Ferment*. 1974.

Sean Sheehan, *Angola: Cultures of the World*. 18 Marshall Cavendish Corporation. 1999.

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- Spikes, Daniel. *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*.
- Tvedten, Inge, et al. *Angola: Struggle for Peace and Reconstruction* (Nations of the Modern World. Africa). 1997.
- Van der Winden, Bob, ed. *A Family of the Musseque*. Oxford, England: World View Publishing, 1996.
- Warner, Rachel. *Refugees*. Hove, England: Wayland Ltd., 1996.
- Watson, James. *No Surrender: A Story of Angola*. London: Lions Tracks, 1992.
- Wilson, T. Ernest. *Angola Beloved*. 1998.
- Wright, George. *The Destruction of a Nation: United States Policy Toward Angola Since 1945*. 1997.

BENIN

The Republic of Benin

Major Cities:

Cotonou, Porto Novo

Other Cities:

Abomey, Ouidah, Parakou

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated February 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of **BENIN**, one of the smallest and most densely populated nations in Africa, was once a colonial possession of France. It later functioned as an autonomous member of the French Community for 22 years before achieving independence in 1960. Benin was known as Dahomey until 1975 when, with the espousal of a socialist orientation, its name was changed to the People's Republic of Benin. In 1990 a national conference repudiated Marxism in favor of multiparty democracy and adopted the country's present name. The word "Benin" is derived from the name of an African kingdom that had flourished near the Gulf of Guinea in the seventeenth century.

When Benin's official capital, Porto Novo, was founded as a trading post by Portuguese explorers in the 17th century, the country was actually an agglomeration of small principalities, most of them tributary to the Kingdom of Abomey, which had dominated the Yorubas and other coastal tribes. The king of Porto Novo requested protection from France, with whom there was a commercial treaty; with the help of the French military, all of what is now Benin was organized as a protectorate in 1894. It was administered through Paris under territorial governors and governors general until it achieved its status as an autonomous state.

MAJOR CITIES

Cotonou

Cotonou is, by virtue of its economic predominance, the administrative capital and major city of Benin. It is where most ministries, all diplomatic missions, and the president's residence are located. Situated on the Gulf of Guinea, it was founded in 1851 as a French trading post, and now has an estimated population of 750,000.

Cotonou's port is the transit point for many goods destined for Niger and Nigeria. The World Bank is financing an extension of the port which, upon completion, will give it a freight-handling capacity of more than a million tons of cargo annually.

Cotonou is a sprawling town with tree-lined streets. Architecture varies according to the locale, from concrete bungalows to old French colonial buildings, to Beninese thatched-roof dwellings. The sandy streets, dusty yards, and rundown buildings give parts of the town a shabby look, although there have been recent efforts to clean up these areas. A paved boulevard parallels the ocean front, and the beach extends east and west to Nigeria and Ghana. North of Cotonou, a lagoon extends eastward to Porto Novo, and is connected by a navigable waterway with Lagos, Nigeria. Cotonou is a growing city. Although the commercial center is small, residential areas are large. Most expatriates reside in neighborhoods of European-style dwellings. Cotonou is separated from its eastern residential quarter, Akpakpa, by a lagoon linking Lake Nokoue with the Atlantic. A new bridge, financed by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), connects the city's two sections.

Schools for Foreigners

The Nigerian Community School, which opened in 1982, offers English-language instruction from the nursery level through sixth grade.

The curriculum follows the British system. The school year extends from October 1 to June 30, and is divided into four semesters. Nigerian and Beninese holidays are observed.

Another school in the city, *École Montaigne*, offers a French curriculum; all classes are conducted in that language. Under the auspices of the French Embassy, *École Montaigne* is one of nine members of the federation of French schools south of the Sahara. It is accredited by the French National Ministry of Education. The school offers three levels of nursery school and kindergarten through high school. The school year is divided into trimesters running from the end of September through June. French and local holidays are observed.

The Brilliant Stars International School was established in 1986 as a private, nondenominational school and offers an American curriculum. It offers pre-K through grade 6. The school is not accredited at this time. Classes are taught in English, and French is taught at all levels.

Cotonou has no facilities for English-speaking students with learning disabilities or other handicaps.

Recreation

The entire coast of Benin is a long, sandy beach. It is ideal for horseback riding, but walking alone is not recommended. The treacherous undertow and strong currents make swimming and surfing dangerous. However, a few miles east of the city is one of West Africa's best beaches, *La Crique*, where swimming is safe.

Four hotel swimming pools in Cotonou are open to the public (admission charged), and there are tennis courts at the Sheraton Hotel, the

French Yacht Club, and the Benin Club.

Benin has no golf courses. The closest are in Lagos, Nigeria, a two-and-a-half-hour drive, or in Lomé, Togo, two hours away. Benin's favorite spectator sport is soccer, and matches are frequently played at the two stadiums in Cotonou. Basketball also is played.

Many weekend excursions can be made from Cotonou. The most popular is to Lomé, a two-hour drive to the west. Shopping and fine restaurants are popular attractions. To the east is Lagos, a large, bustling city. It has bookstores with extensive English-language selections, an interesting museum of Yoruba and other tribal art, and a busy social life within the large diplomatic and expatriate communities. Other points in Nigeria within weekend reach of Cotonou are Ibadan, Nigeria's most populous city, and Ife, which has a museum displaying many excellent 15th- and 16th-century bronze and terra cotta busts and effigies.

Abomey and Ouidah, north and west of Cotonou, respectively, are interesting towns for day trips.

For the activity of African marketplaces, a rotating schedule of large markets is available in Cotonou, Porto Novo, and Adjara, just north of Porto Novo. An adventuresome trader can buy *gri-gri* charms, colorful enamelware from China, and interesting fabrics.

Travel to northern Benin offers self-help projects, where a visitor is welcomed into a village and enjoys a greeting by the entire community.

There is an excellent hotel in Natitingou, the center of the Ditamari culture. Farther north, the region is rich in wild game and the scenic beauty of mountains and waterfalls.

Entertainment

Cotonou has five cinemas, one of which is a modern, air-conditioned theater. All offer current Western films; soundtracks are in French.

Visiting foreign artists also occasionally perform in the city.

Saturday night is disco night in Cotonou, with entertainment establishments open until 2 or 3 a.m. Nightclubs are crowded and lively with African and European music and atmosphere. Some Cotonou residents go to either Lagos or Lomé for weekend social life.

Despite the small size of the city's American community, there are many opportunities for social contacts. The several diplomatic missions resident in the city include the French, Egyptian, Ghanaian, German, Chinese, Nigerian, Nigerien, North Korean, Russian, Zairian, Cuban, Libyan, Bulgarian, Chadian, and Algerian embassies. Several other Western and Eastern countries have honorary consuls or trade representatives in Cotonou. A large United Nations staff and many French Canadians also are in residence. Among American expatriates, small informal get-togethers are popular. Also, volleyball games draw people from the international community. Acquaintances are easily made and informal get-togethers are frequent.

Contacts with the Beninese are possible and encouraged. The population is friendly and receptive. Many Beninese are educated, but most do not speak English. French is necessary for maintaining social relationships with them.

Porto Novo

Porto Novo is the official capital of Benin. Situated on a lagoon in the southeast part of the country, it is a commercial center and rail terminus from the interior. Historians believe that it was founded in the 16th century as the seat of a native kingdom, but it was named by the Portuguese who built a post there and settled the city as a center for slave trade.

Porto Novo passed to the French late in the 19th century under the protest of the King of Abomey, who attacked the town in 1891 with an

army which included 2,000 female warriors. He was defeated by the French, and the town was incorporated into the colony of Dahomey, becoming its capital in 1900. Dahomey was consolidated into French West Africa in 1895.

The city is the administrative capital of the Beninese Government. Porto Novo is connected by road and rail to Cotonou and by road to Lagos, Nigeria. The city has been bypassed for commercial and industrial development since the building of a railway to the interior and the improvement of deep water harbor facilities in Cotonou. There are several African artisans and guilds in Porto Novo.

French is spoken throughout the city, and the visitor needs a good working knowledge of that language to conduct business or to find their way through the shops or places of interest. There is a small museum here, tracing the history of the kings of Porto Novo, as well as a fine collection of masks and statues.

The population of Porto Novo in 2000 was approximately 194,000.

OTHER CITIES

ABOMEY, about two hours west by road from Cotonou, was the capital of the Dahomean Empire until the late 19th century. The Royal Palace, the tombs of the kings, and a historical museum are maintained in Abomey. Many artifacts from the royal period are on display in the palace. Weavers are at work in the palace courtyard, and their products, as well as carvings and bronzes, are on sale. Abomey was once a slave-trading center. The city is located in an area where palm nuts and peanuts are grown. Abomey has a population of approximately 80,000.

OUIDAH, 20 miles west of Cotonou, was the main port of the Kingdom of Abomey in the 18th and 19th centuries. Ouidah also became an important trading center for several

European nations. Remnants of Portuguese, French, Dutch, Danish, and British trading posts can be found here. Ouidah offers a Portuguese castle and a temple displaying sacred pythons. Coffee and coconuts are grown in the area. Ouidah is known for its orange and citron trees. Ouidah's population is estimated at 60,000.

Located in the center of the country, **PARAKOU** is 200 miles north of Porto Novo. The estimated population is over 65,000. It is the link that extends the transport route of the Niger River; railways pass northward from Cotonou to the Gulf of Guinea to Parakou, then goods are finally received in Niger.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Benin, a narrow, north-south strip of land in West Africa, is bounded by Nigeria on the east, Togo on the west, Niger on the north, and Burkina Faso on the northwest. Its total area of 43,484 square miles (112,622 square kilometers) extends inland from the Gulf of Guinea to the Niger River.

The country has two rainy and two dry seasons. Annual rainfall in the coastal area averages 14 inches (36 centimeters), not particularly high for this part of West Africa. The principal rainy season is from April to late July, with a shorter, less intense, rainy period from late September to November. The main dry season is from December to April, with a short, cooler dry season from late July to early September.

Temperatures and humidity are high along the tropical coast. In Cotonou, the average maximum temperature is 89°F (31°C), and the minimum is 75°F (24°C). Variations in temperature increase when moving north through a savanna and plateau toward the Sahel.

Population

Benin has an estimated population of 6.5 million people. Two-thirds of the population live in the south. The population is young, with over half being under twenty years old. Several tribal groups include the Yoruba in the southeast, Fon (south central), Mina (southwest), Bariba (northeast), Dendi (north central), and Somba (northwest). French is the official language, but is spoken more in urban areas than in rural sections. Fon and Yoruba languages are common vernaculars in the south, with at least six major tribal languages spoken in the north.

The Fon and Yoruba of the south are more Westernized than the northern peoples. During the colonial period, their opportunities were expanded by their prominence in the administration of French West Africa.

Government

After achieving independence in 1960, Benin (then Dahomey) passed through a succession of governments which ended in 1972 with a military takeover. Marxism-Leninism was declared the official ideology in 1974, and a single political party, which came to dominate all aspects of Beninese public life, was established. Major businesses, including banks, were nationalized. East bloc countries became the focus of Benin's foreign policy.

The collapse of all state-owned banks and an increasing economic crisis led to the convening of a national conference in 1990. That conference repudiated Marxism and paved the way for a new constitution creating a multi-party democracy. In 1991 Benin became the first African country to replace a military leader through the power of the ballot box. Benin's president is elected by popular vote for a five-year term, and there is a directly elected National Assembly.

The country is divided into six provinces which are subdivided into 86 districts and 510 communes. Local



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Market street scene in Benin

administration is assigned to elected provincial district, town, and village councils.

The flag of Benin consists of two equal horizontal bands of yellow (top) and red with a vertical green band on the hoist side.

Arts, Science, Education

The museums in Porto Novo, Abomey, and Ouidah offer a view of Beninese culture and history. Porto Novo's small museum displays artifacts and brief historical summaries of the kings of Porto Novo, as well as the best collection of masks and statues to be found in the area. At Abomey, the capital of the former Dahomean Kingdom, it is possible to explore the restored royal palace grounds. Within them is a courtyard where artisans weave or forge and sell their crafts. In Ouidah, a

museum has been established in a former Portuguese fort. Exhibits focus on the slave trade and Benin's links with Brazil and the Caribbean.

Contemporary artists specialize in stylized bronze figurines and appliqué wall hangings. They are relatively inexpensive, and of good quality. African art objects are sold at several more Office National du Tourisme et Hôtellerie (ONATHO) shops in Cotonou.

The French Cultural Center in Cotonou offers French-language instruction and nightly movies, also in French. The American Cultural Center has a small library with books in both English and French. The National University of Benin, a 20-minute drive north of Cotonou, has not yet developed an artistic or cultural focus.

The literacy rate in Benin is extremely low at 37.5 percent.

Commerce and Industry

Benin's economy is based on agriculture and transit trade. Products include cotton, sugar, peanuts, palm oil, and cashews for export. Various tubers and corn are grown for local subsistence. A modest fishing fleet provides fish and shrimp for export to Europe. Major commercial activities, formerly government-owned, are being privatized. The former state-run brewery was acquired by a French brewer, and petroleum distribution will soon be privatized as well. Smaller businesses are privately owned by Beninese citizens, but some firms, primarily French and Lebanese, are foreign-owned. The private commercial and agricultural sectors remain the principal contributors to growth. Benin began

producing a modest quantity of oil in 1982, and exploration and exploitation are continuing.

Chambre de Commerce, d'Agriculture et d'Industrie de la République Populaire du Bénin (CCIB) is located at avenue Général de Gaulle, B.P. 31, Cotonou.

Transportation

A railroad line connects Cotonou with Parakou, a large city in the north. Bush taxis ply the roads throughout the country, but most Americans living here drive their own vehicles when traveling in the countryside.

Domestic air service between Cotonou, Parakou, Natitingou, Kandi, and Abomey is provided by the government airline.

Roads between Cotonou, Lagos (Nigeria), and Lomé (Togo) are good. Many roads in Benin are in poor condition and, in the north, are often impassable during the rainy season. Travel via Togo is preferable, as the major north-south road is paved and in good repair. The main streets of Cotonou are paved, but side streets are deeply potholed or sandy. Surface repair is sporadic. Cotonou has no public transportation system, and therefore, most Beninese rely on private cars, taxis, mopeds, and motorbikes.

American cars are not recommended here. Spare parts and repair services for most French automobiles are available. Both Honda and Toyota have dealerships in Cotonou, although models may differ from U.S. models. The color black is reserved for Benin Government vehicles only.

Communications

Telephone service interruptions are frequent during the rainy seasons, when water often seeps into underground lines and switching equipment. Service to other francophone West African countries is good; additional international links, if

calls can be routed through Paris, also are good. Telephone service to Nigeria and Ghana is rare. Telephone service from Cotonou to the U.S. is good, but expensive. Cotonou is six hours ahead of eastern standard time. The local telegraph and telex service is adequate. Telex facilities in Cotonou are available at post offices and good hotels.

International mail service is unpredictable. Official Americans stationed in Cotonou are authorized to use the twice-weekly air pouches, through which first-class mail arrives within three to five days. Letters, magazines, newspapers, and packages are sent via the surface-to-air pouch; transit time is approximately one week.

Benin's Office de Radiodiffusion et du Télévision du Bénin broadcasts radio programs in French, English, and 8 local languages.

Benin has one TV station that is owned by the national government. Broadcasting daily, it offers a wide variety of programming, some locally produced and some originating in France.

Shortwave reception in Cotonou is good, and foreigners can rely on Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and other foreign transmissions.

International editions of European and American newspapers and magazines are available, although expensive. *La Nation*, formerly *Ehuzu*, is a government daily published in Cotonou; other government publications include *Bénin-Magazine*, a monthly publication dealing with cultural, social, and economic affairs; and a government weekly, *Bénin-Press Information*. Other publications include the Catholic newsletter, *La Croix du Bénin*. A privately owned bimonthly, *La Gazette du Golfe* began publication in 1988. While many new publications were launched in 1990 following the end of government censorship, several have since disappeared due to financial difficulties.

Health

English-speaking doctors are hard to find. Emergency care for serious injuries or illness is available from various French and Beninese specialists working in private clinics or at the government hospital in Cotonou. Local facilities are suitable for emergency treatment, but are not recommended for inpatient care. Medical information can be obtained from the U.S. Embassy's health unit or the Peace Corps office.

Emergency dental care is also available in Cotonou, but more competent dentists practice in Lomé, Togo; Lagos, Nigeria; and Accra, Ghana. Any routine dental care should be done before coming to Cotonou.

Local patent medicines are usually of French manufacture and are in limited quantity. Medical supplies are variable; even the most basic products, such as rubbing alcohol, are expensive and of uncertain age.

Precautionary measures and common sense are sufficient for maintaining good health in Benin. One of the greatest health hazards in Cotonou is contaminated water. Although most houses in the more modern residential quarters have septic tanks, many neighborhoods have no sanitation facilities at all. Cotonou has a running water system, which occasionally goes dry, but the water is not safe for Westerners to drink without boiling and filtering. Most cooks are trained in water sterilization and filtration techniques; periodic reminders help to insure their continued compliance. Locally purchased fresh vegetables and fruits should be soaked in a solution of potassium permanganate or chlorine, and rinsed in boiled, filtered water. Thoroughly cook all locally purchased meats.

Precaution against sun exposure is advised, since Cotonou is at latitude 6°N of the equator. Because of the high temperatures and humidity, extra precautions are required during outdoor exercise in order to avoid sunstroke or heat exhaustion.

Some people tire easily and need more rest at night. High humidity and the *harmattan*, a dust-laden wind which blows in November, December, and January, can exacerbate respiratory problems and cause irritations and infections, such as conjunctivitis.

Ants, cockroaches, and termites are the most prevalent household pests, but they can be controlled by regular use of insecticides, a clean house, and a tidy garden. Keeping the lush, tropical foliage cut back usually prevents rodent problems. Snakes, including some poisonous varieties (green mambas and black cobras) occasionally are found in residential areas, but they are not a significant hazard. Some rabies cases have occurred, making it advisable to avoid stray animals.

Visitors arriving in Benin should have valid vaccinations for cholera, typhoid, polio, smallpox, and yellow fever. The U.S. Department of State also recommends gamma globulin injections, as hepatitis is a significant health hazard. Since malaria is endemic, suppressants should be started two weeks before arrival and continued for at least six weeks after departure.

Clothing and Services

Benin's hot, humid climate requires lightweight, washable clothing, and summer footwear. However, shorts are not generally worn on the streets. Local shops carry a limited selection of European ready-made clothes, but sizes vary and prices are high. Dress and suit material can be purchased, and local tailors and dressmakers can produce certain styles with some success. Many expatriates order clothing through mail-order catalogs.

Office wear is casual for men. Sport shirts or short-sleeved dress shirts are suitable for most evening gatherings, although suit and tie, or safari suits, are worn at formal functions.

For evening social occasions, many Western women find the African *booboo* both attractive and comfortable. Cotton dresses, or skirts and blouses, are suitable for the office. Simply styled, washable dresses are comfortable for wear around town.

Children's clothing is expensive in Cotonou. Blue jeans, T-shirts, tennis shoes, and sandals are acceptable for everyday wear. The local school for English-speaking children does not require uniforms; dress tends to correspond to American trends.

Most household products are available, although prices are much higher than in the U.S. Toiletries, cosmetics, suntan lotions, medicines, cleaning supplies, and household gadgets are almost all imported from France.

Pineapples, oranges, bananas, tangerines, lemons, limes, papaya, grapefruit, tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, lettuce, radishes, green peppers, squash, leeks, parsnips, onions, eggplant, string beans, and carrots are available year round at seasonally variable prices. Mangoes, guavas, melons, and avocados are plentiful and inexpensive in season. Celery and cauliflower are expensive. All locally grown vegetables must be treated before eating.

Local meats, beef, veal, lamb, and pork, of varying quality, can be purchased at the market or butcher shops. Good-quality chicken, duck, and rabbit are available.

Cotonou stores carry imported canned goods, sterilized milk (safe for drinking), butter, cheese, cereals, and baby foods, and often stock imported fruits and vegetables such as Valencia oranges, pears, apples, artichokes, lettuce, and celery. Imported high-quality meat can also be bought, but prices are high. Good French-style bakeries sell fresh bread, pastries, and ice cream.

Basic repairs can be done on French automobiles, but work involving

electrical systems, wheel balancing, and alignment is not always predictable. Spare parts for French cars are also available. American parts are unavailable, making it necessary to keep a supply of filters, belts, points, sparkplugs, condensers, bulbs, and other common replacement items. Initial vehicle inspection requires yellow headlights (sealed yellow lamps or yellow plastic covers).

Small appliance and radio repair is available, but quality is poor and prices vary.

Domestic Help

Most expatriates engage at least one domestic—either cook, cook/domestic, nanny, or gardener. Cooks, who are especially valuable for bargaining in the markets, generally specialize in French cuisine; they can, however, learn to prepare whatever meals the employer prefers.

Cleanliness, especially in the kitchen, must be maintained with strict supervision. A part-time gardener is useful, as tropical flora requires constant care.

Domestic staffs do not live in. The average monthly salary of a domestic employee is based on work category and experience. The annual cost of employing a domestic is raised somewhat by mandatory payment of social security contributions and fringe benefits. Most employers provide white uniforms for those who serve at the table.

An English translation of the local labor code is available from the U.S. Embassy in Cotonou.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1 New Year's Day
 Mar/Apr. Easter*
 Mar/Apr. Easter Monday*
 May 1 Labor Day
 May/June Ascension Day*

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| May/June | Pentecost* |
| May/June | Whitmonday* |
| Aug. 1 | Independence Day |
| Aug. 15 | Assumption Day |
| Oct. 26 | Armed Forces Day |
| Nov. 1 | All Saints' Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| | Id al-Adah* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |

*Variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

International air service to Benin is via Abidjan, Paris, and Brussels. UTA, Air Afrique, Sabena, Nigerian Airlines, Ghana Airways, Aeroflot, Air Burkina, Air Zaire, and Air Ivoire serve Cotonou. Most flights arrive at Cotonou-Cadjehoun International Airport, which is approximately 3 miles (5 kilometers) from Cotonou. Air connections to Europe also can be made through Lomé and Lagos.

A passport and visa are required. Travelers should obtain the latest information from the Embassy of the Republic of Benin, 2737 Cathedral Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 232-6656. Overseas, inquiries should be made at the nearest Beninese Embassy or Consulate. Travelers who intend to visit Nigeria should obtain Nigerian visas prior to arriving in Benin as the Nigerian Embassy in Cotonou may decline to consider applications for visas by U.S. citizens not resident in Benin.

As of 1994, dogs and cats entering the country must have a record of rabies vaccination and a veterinary health certificate issued no more than 10 days before arrival.

As of 1994, only the following non-automatic firearms and ammunition may be taken to Benin: rifle or shotgun, one per adult family member, plus 1,000 rounds of ammunition. Further information on export regulations are available at the Office of Export Control, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC.

Travelers in possession of prescription drugs should carry proof of their prescriptions, such as labeled containers. Police have been known to arrest foreigners carrying unlabeled pills. For a complete list of prohibited items, contact the nearest Benin Embassy or Consulate.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Benin are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Cotonou at Rue Caporal Anani Bernard. Updated information on travel and security in Benin may be obtained from the U.S. Embassy. The Embassy's mailing address is B.P. 2012, Cotonou, Benin. The telephone numbers are (229) 30-06-50, 30-05-13, and 30-17-92. The fax numbers are (229) 30-14-39 and 30-19-74.

Cotonou has several Catholic churches, including a cathedral in the heart of the city. There are also Assembly of God, Baptist, and Methodist churches, and mosques. Services are either in French or Fon. American missionaries are present in Benin; several monasteries are worth visiting.

The time in Benin is Greenwich Mean Time plus one.

The official unit of currency is the CFA (Communaute Financière Africaine) *franc*. Supported by the French *franc*, it is also legal tender in several other West African countries.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Allen, Chris and Michael Radu. *Benin & the Congo*. Marxist Regimes Series. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989.

Allen, Chris. *Benin, Congo, and Burkina Faso: Politics, Economics and Society*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988.

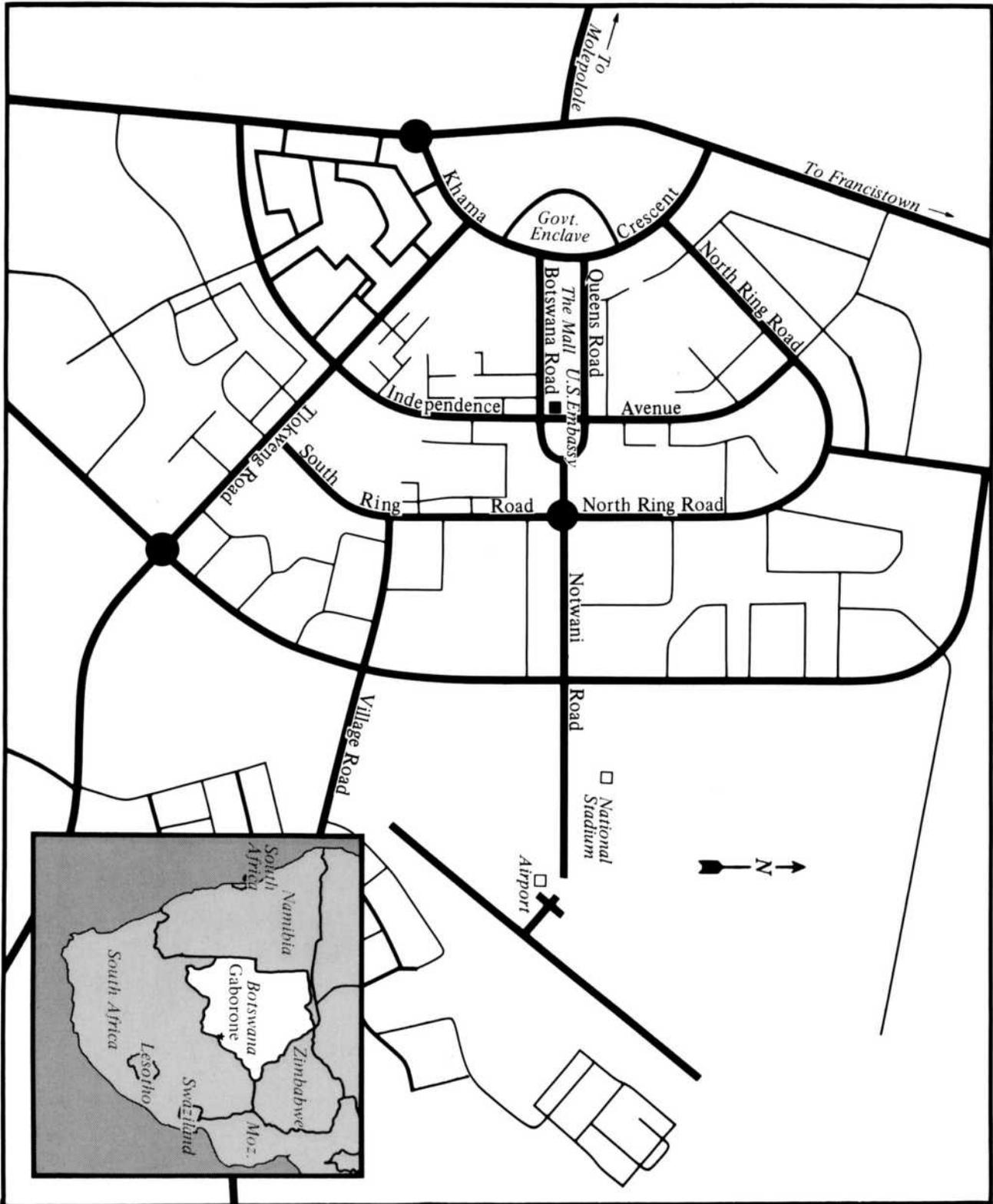
Benin. Let's Visit Places & Peoples of the World Series. New York: Chelsea House, 1989.

Decalo, Samuel. *Historical Dictionary of Benin*. 2nd ed. African Historical Dictionaries Series, no. 7. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987.

Igue, O. John. *Benin Etat-Entrepot*. Paris: Karthala, 1992.

Pilya, Jean. *Histoire de Mon Pays. La République du Benin*. CNPMS, 1992.

Polyani, Karl and Abraham Rotsfein. *Dahomey & the Slave Trade*. New York: AMS Press, 1988.



Gaborone, Botswana

BOTSWANA

Republic of Botswana

Major Cities:

Gaborone, Selebi-Phikwe

Other Cities:

Francistown, Kanye, Lobatse, Mahalapye, Serowe

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated April 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Botswana, which has been independent for more than two decades, is a nonracial, multi-party democracy which serves as a model of harmonious social development in a turbulent region. For most of its years as a republic, it has enjoyed excellent relations with fellow black African nations and with many other countries across the political spectrum. Botswana hosted the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in August 1990. The conference noted that a future democratic South Africa was expected to join the organization and to enhance regional efforts at arresting economic decline.

Tucked into the center of the south African plateau, Botswana was, from 1886 until 1966, the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland. The country was first inhabited by nomadic Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert, and later by Bantus. In the north are the ecologically unique Okavango Delta and the world-famous Chobe Game Reserve.

MAJOR CITIES

Gaborone

Gaborone is a rapidly expanding city of 182,000, located in southeastern Botswana, 12 miles from the South African border and on the main rail line from Mafeking to Bulawayo. A new city built since independence, Gaborone was selected as the site for the new capital of Botswana in 1962. One key factor influencing the choice was a suitable dam site on the nearby Notwane River, which offered a potential water supply capable of supporting a city. The administrative headquarters of the then Bechuanaland protectorate was outside the country at Mafeking, South Africa. The first government buildings and houses were ready for occupation in February 1965, and the shift from Mafeking was com-

pleted by 1969. The city is named after a 19th century Batlokwa chief from a nearby village, Gaborone-a-Matlapeng.

Gaborone has expanded under the guidance of an existing town plan between two already established areas—the railroad station and Gaborone village. The city is built out from a central pedestrian mall which features shops, a cinema, and the older President Hotel. A newer, larger shopping area is located in Broadhurst, with smaller shopping centers scattered around the residential areas. A modern cinema is located in the village.

Food

Shopping can be time consuming in Gaborone. Local supermarkets carry a wide variety of foods. Unfortunately, they will frequently run out of the most popular items until they receive the next shipment from South Africa. Shoppers find they must visit two or three shops if their list is at all extensive. In addition, beer, wine and liquor are only sold in "bottle stores."

Botswana beef is lean, tender and quite inexpensive compared to the U.S. Pork and lamb are usually available. Chicken is expensive by U.S. standards, as is turkey. Ham slices, lunch meats and sausages are all found locally. Supermarkets



Jason Laure. Reproduced by permission.

Crafts for sale in Gaborone, Botswana

sell a variety of frozen, packaged fish.

Dairy products are also widely available, though milk spoils quickly. Long life milk is a solution. With a certain amount of tenacious searching, you can find cream, mozzarella, yogurt, foreign cheeses, even fresh Parmesan cheese.

Basically, anything that is widely available in the U.S. is available in Gaborone—fresh and frozen vegetables, baby food, spices, prepared foods, fruit juice, instant cake and bread mixes, even taco sauce. Any imported food item is considerably more expensive than in the U.S., but a South African equivalent may be just as good at half the price.

Clothing

Bring clothes for all the four seasons. September and October weather is warm and pleasant, so

“Spring-like” lightweight attire will suffice. But Gaborone summers are extremely hot (November–February), so bring a plentiful supply of light, cotton shirts and skirts/trousers, shorts, sundresses, etc. Expatriates dress casually when going out shopping or doing errands and both men and women can wear shorts publicly. Gaborone’s winter should not be underestimated. Houses are not insulated, do not have central heat, and let a lot of air leak in through doors and windows. Temperatures can drop to freezing at night. Bring moderately-heavy, washable clothing such as sweaters, shawls, lined raincoats, and light parkas. Heavy overcoats are not necessary. Children will need heavy, washable trousers and woolen sweaters for outdoor play during winter.

There is clothing available in Gaborone, but styles are different from

what most Americans prefer, and variety is still limited.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: Pharmacies and supermarkets stock a good variety of shampoos, soaps and toiletries, though rarely American brand names. Cosmetics are also widely available, though quite expensive. Prescription and non-prescription medicines may be obtained from local pharmacies, non-prescription at a higher price than in the U.S., but prescription generally cheaper. Tobacco products are widely available and cheaper than in the U.S. Basic sewing notions and a fair selection of cotton and synthetic fabrics are available.

You can find almost anything in Botswana—CD players, televisions, microwaves, tennis rackets, golf clubs, toys—but prices are double, sometimes triple American prices.

Expensive and exclusive household items like bone china and crystal are sometimes difficult to find. Bring supplies of decorative paper napkins, birthday cards, and wrapping paper as the selection is not as wide as the U.S.

It should be noted that whatever is not available in Botswana is generally available in South Africa's major cities. Items made in South Africa are of variable quality and are frequently less expensive than American products. Imported products are often double or triple U.S. prices.

Basic Services: Dressmakers and tailors are available, though not any cheaper than in the U.S. Simple shoe repairs and leather work can be done. Dry-cleaning is available, reasonable and quite safe. Several good hairdressing salons are spread around the city which serve both men and women. Haircuts cost less than \$15.

Adequacy and availability of radio and appliance repair varies from fair to poor. Do not bring 60 Hz or U.S. standard appliances expecting to have them converted. Household repair services (plumbing, electrical, plastering) are acceptable. Hardware stores have a good assortment of home repair items and power tools for the do-it-yourselfer.

The quality of auto repair varies. Wheel balancing and alignment and computer diagnostics are available. Skilled mechanics are rare, and although tools and parts may be available, workmanship is often poor, and expensive. Common consumable spares, such as plugs, belts, tires, and filters are readily available for Japanese and European cars, and even most American cars. Counterfeit parts from Taiwan are the norm.

Religious Activities

Gaborone's churches are filled Sunday mornings as worshipers attend Sunday school and religious services. A great number of Christian denominations are represented, including Anglican, Catholic, Meth-

odist, Mennonite, Quaker, African Methodist, Lutheran, Assemblies of God, Seventh-day Adventist, Baptist, and others. The small Jewish and Mormon communities are not active. The Moslem communities are very active.

Congregations are made up of both Batswana and expatriates. Services are available in both English and Setswana. The interdenominational Trinity Church offers services in English on Sunday evenings led by ministers from various churches.

Education

Dependent Education: All schools in Botswana begin the school year in late January and end in early December. Thirty-day breaks occur in April/May and August/September and a 6-week break from early December to mid-January. Schools require uniforms which may be purchased locally.

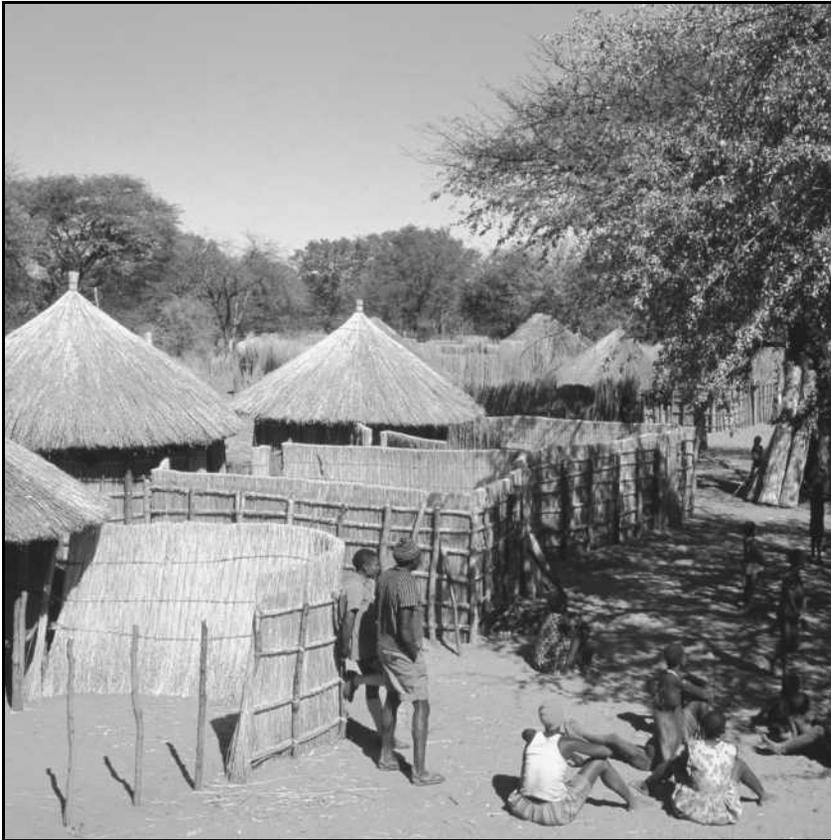
The school day begins at 7:30 am for primary schools and ends at 12:30 or 1 pm. Secondary school students attend classes from 7:10 am or 7:15 am until 12:30 or 1 pm, depending on the individual schools. On certain days at Westwood International School, classes are extended until 3 pm for secondary students. Extracurricular programs draw students for supervised activity in the afternoons. Swimming pools offer recreation and swimming lessons. Children also have their pick of soccer, softball, cricket, choir and glee club, working on the school yearbook, arts and crafts, or tennis. Students may also participate in gymnastics, cooking classes, stamp club, marimba club or chess club. Since public transportation is not available, parents deliver and pick up their children if they live beyond walking distance from school. Carpooling is common. Few students ride their bicycles due to the high incidence of traffic accidents.

Gaborone has four private English primary schools; these schools are Broadhurst Primary School, Thornhill Primary School, Northside Primary School, and Westwood International School. Schools are

designed to accommodate expatriate students and approximately 1/3 of the students are Batswana. There is currently no waiting list for the English language primary schools in Gaborone. Primary school consists of classes ranging from Kindergarten (called Reception) through Grade 7 (called Standard 7). Children are accepted from ages 5 to 12 in primary schools. Broadhurst, Thornhill, and Northside Primary schools operate under the Botswana teaching curriculum, modified to meet the needs of the school's international enrollments. The Botswana system is closely modeled on the British system. The fourth school, Westwood International, was founded by the British and American Embassies and has a curriculum designed to meet the needs of children transferring to or from the U.S., British, or other international school system. Teaching staffs are recruited from Britain, the U.S., and southern African nations.

Gaborone has three secondary schools. The Gaborone Secondary School, a local government operated co-educational school with a student body composed of approximately 10 percent expatriates and the rest Batswana. This school follows the Botswana curriculum designed to prepare students to take the Junior Certificate examination at the equivalent of the American ninth (9th) grade level. About one-third of the students then are allowed to study for a Cambridge O-Level examination which follows 2 more years of study. According to the headmaster, an American student would need at least two years at the school in order to take the J.C. examination.

Maru-a-Pula Secondary School, a private co-educational boarding and day-school, has approximately 550 students coming from nearly 20 countries (the majority are Batswana). The teaching staff is varied and in recent years has included several Americans. Maru-a-Pula offers educational programs from grades 8 to 13 (known as Form 1 to Form 6). The school basically fol-



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View of a village in Botswana

lows a British curriculum. Course work concentrates on preparation for O-Level examinations followed 2 years later by A-levels. It is a heavily exam-oriented curriculum. Students study a blend of subjects including English language and literature, French, history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and art. The O-level examination is administered in November at the end of the fourth term (grade 11). A number of students have been admitted to U.S. universities after completing O-levels and producing satisfactory SAT scores.

Maru-a-Pula also offers a 2-year program beyond O-levels, leading to the A-level examination. Here, the student studies the equivalent of a 12th and 13th year, concentrating on 3 subjects from among advanced mathematics, English, history, biology, chemistry, or physics. The A-level examination is given in June and sent to the U.K. for grading, with results available in August. A

number of American universities give students advanced placement on the basis of their performance at A-Level. Educational Test Service exams such as the PSAT and SAT may be taken in Southern Africa, but you should come with full particulars about which exam you need.

Although a fairly active sports and recreational program meets in the afternoon for students at Maru-a-Pula, no inter-school athletic competition of the type accustomed to in the U.S. is offered. An active tennis program, however, utilizes the school's two hard courts. Other extracurricular activities are limited and students are normally asked to choose one, rather than being allowed to participate in several.

American students who have attended Maru-a-Pula over the years have had mixed results. Highly motivated students have

done well; less talented or less enthusiastic students have not. Maru-a-Pula has a policy of discouraging the admission of academically gifted or handicapped children. No facilities are available for gifted and talented or remedial study. Admission to Form 1 (grade 8) in Maru-a-Pula is decided by an Admissions Committee on the basis of an Entrance Exam which includes a personal interview. All those who have applied by May of the year preceding their proposed entry to the school are tested. Maru-a-Pula has no tied places and admission to Form 1 is based solely on merit. Admission to other years prior to O-level is made by selection from the waiting list of applicants as and when vacancies arise. Entry to A-level is decided on the applicant's performance at O-level or in other exams of a comparable standard.

Some older American children attend Westwood International School. Founded by the American Embassy, the British High Commission, and several local business firms, the school opened in May 1988. Westwood is a combined primary and at present junior secondary school. A private co-educational English medium school, it is located in the south-western part of the city. Its modern campus includes 27 air-conditioned classrooms, a school resource center that houses the library and a computer center, a sports field and swimming pool, and a creative and performing arts hall. Westwood provides an international standard of education. School programs focus on preparing the children to re-enter their home country school systems or a third educational system in another part of the world. Westwood currently has over 500 pupils from ages 5 to 15 in an instructional offering that includes: one year of pre-school (Reception) six years of primary education (Standard 1 through 6), and recently established 3 year Junior Secondary Programs (Years 7, 8 & 9). In January 1996, a study group/pilot group was established as a year-10 program. The core subjects of the curriculum of the Junior Sec-

ondary Program include math, English, social studies, biology, general science, information technology, French/Setswana, art, music, physical education, agriculture, drama, and the pursuit of the Westwood Award. The Junior Secondary Program culminates with the preparation of the National Junior Certificate Examination (Year 9).

During the 1995 year, the school council undertook to continue the development of the secondary program by extending it upward through a senior secondary program and finish it with a pre-University program. The program for the preparation for the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) will be introduced at the completion of the junior Certificate Year (after Year 9). (The IGCSE is an internationally valid examination administered by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate). The international Baccalaureate (I.B.) program will follow the IGCSE years: a full 2-year program of preparation of the University (years 12 and 13) will be offered starting January 1999. The headmaster plans on having the first graduating class with the I.B. in the Year 2000. The International Baccalaureate is acclaimed worldwide as one of the best preparations available for university and is accepted by most universities in the world.

Several private Pre-Schools, including one Montessori, provide half-day care for ages 2 1/2 (or potty trained) and up. The curriculum focuses on play rather than academics. These facilities are acceptable but not quite up to U.S. standards.

The cultural environment in Gaborone for teenagers is extremely limited. With virtually no part-time work opportunities, many find they have a lot of free time. Avid readers, self-starters who take an interest in Botswana and the Setswana language, or enthusiastic tennis players or golfers intent on developing their game can be happy. But some American youth find life here dull.

Movies and private parties on weekends are popular.

Special Education Opportunities

The University of Botswana is a degree-granting university offering a variety of courses in the arts and sciences. A limited number of foreign nationals are accepted for coursework. With sufficient advance notice, it is possible that some arrangement can be worked out with the university. Syllabi of individual courses should be checked with the U.S. institution where credits would be transferred prior to enrolling in a specific course. Many U.S. institutions, however, do accept work completed at the University of Botswana every year.

Two other local institutions also offer training. The Institute of Development Management (IDM) offers courses in accounting and finance, communications, development management, educational administration, electronic data processing, health services management, retail management, marketing, and public administration. The Botswana Institute of Administration and Commerce (BIAC) offers courses in Accounting and Business Studies, Public Administration and Management Studies, Computer Studies, Language and Communication Skills, and Secretarial Studies, all at both the Certificate and Diploma levels. The Institute also runs seminars and workshops on request covering the above-mentioned subjects. Most students at the Institute come from the Botswana Civil Service. There are a limited number of spaces available for expatriates.

There are several good private business schools in Gaborone which can arrange specially designed courses tailored to one's individual needs. The Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry, and Manpower (Boccim) and the Association of Training and Development Officers (ATDO) are good sources of

information on local training and business schools.

Sports

Gaborone is a good place for outdoor sports. The sunny weather allows tennis enthusiasts to get plenty of practice at the American court, or the Notwane or Gaborone Club courts. Clubs are easy to join and fees are reasonable (under \$100/yr.). The Notwane club is better organized and has social evenings, ladies evenings and junior times. The Gaborone Club is a tennis, rugby, bowls and swim club, so offers more variety and greater breadth of contacts.

An excellent 18 hole golf course with grass fairways and greens is centrally located, five minutes from virtually every residence in town. Club fees include an initiation fee (approximately \$400) and then yearly dues (approximately \$250). The club charges the same fees whether for Botswana resident or diplomat. The golf club membership is active and well-organized and has competitions for both men and women once a week.

Squash is another popular game in Gaborone. There is a squash club next to the Notwane Tennis Club. The Grand Palm Hotel and Gaborone Sun both have tennis and squash courts, which members of their recreation associations can use. Club membership also offers use of the weight room, sauna and pool at the hotels. There is also a fitness center in a local mall, which many prefer to join as it offers regular exercise classes as well as a large variety of equipment.

A small yacht club is located at the Gaborone Dam, where sailing and windsurfing are available. Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is a problem on the other side of the reservoir, but yacht club members uphold it is safe to swim on their side. Horseback riding is available just outside of town and riding instruction can be arranged. For those who prefer spectator sports, soccer games are

held regularly at the National Stadium and on other fields.

The Kalahari Hash House Harriers meet every week and serious marathoners can compete in a full season of events, including an international 72 km ultra-marathon. Two triathlons are held each year.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Hunters, photographers and fishing enthusiasts will enjoy Botswana's rich game and wildlife areas. Over 15 percent of the country is dedicated to national park areas, including immense expanses of wildlife sanctuaries, such as Chobe National Park, Moremi Game Reserve, Kalahari Gemsbok National Park, and the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. To the northwest, the huge Okavango Delta region receives its annual inflow of water from the Angolan Highlands. Thousands of square miles are the home of waterfowl, exotic varieties of bird life, antelope, lion, elephant, and other wild animals, and the fighting tiger fish, a sportsman's dream. Light aircraft are available to take travelers into this wilderness area, though charters are expensive and so are the camps set up in the bush to accommodate those on safari. There are cheaper ways to do this, though not as luxurious. The hardy and adventurous drive to Maun on the paved roads and hire a local company to drive them into the Delta (sand roads). Done this way, and using one's own camping equipment, seeing the Delta is not quite so prohibitively expensive. Another Game Reserve, Kutse, in the Kalahari about a four hour drive from Gaborone (half on sand roads) is a fascinating experience for those who don't mind fairly primitive camping. You may camp next to the wardens' houses and use their water and toilets, or camp inside the park in glorious isolation. Prospective campers should outfit themselves before leaving the U.S. with sturdy (animal-proof) tents and equipment of good quality. Local and South Afri-

can camping equipment is very expensive. Four wheel drives are a must inside and en route to Botswana Game Parks.

Entertainment

Gaborone has three movie theaters, which run the range from fairly recent quality films to Kung-fu. Video outlets provide an overnight checkout service. These videos cannot be played on VHS sets, so you will need either a multi-system or a local PAL-1 VCR. Active bridge clubs meet regularly. An enthusiastic musical society presents occasional concerts and sponsors intermediate level chamber music get-togethers. A thriving amateur theater group puts on about four productions a year. The Botswana Society and The Kalahari Conservation Society present lectures, slide presentations, and/or exhibits on a regular basis, at Gaborone's surprisingly good National Museum. A bird club and photographic society are also very active.

The Maitisong Center, opened in 1987 (on the campus of Maru-a-Pula Secondary School) has become the center for cultural activities in Gaborone. They bring in performers from the Southern African region, and occasionally from other areas.

Gaborone supports Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, German, and Italian restaurants and several steak houses.

The Gaborone Sun and Grand Palm offer professional entertainment occasionally—comedy shows, dancing, and floor-shows. The Sun also has a casino and the Grand Palm is currently building a casino, due to open mid-1996. Other venues occasionally sponsor sessions with well-known foreign singers or performers. Johannesburg attracts some of the best names in the business.

Much of the entertainment in Gaborone consists of informal outdoor braais (barbecues) in people's homes. Daytime patio entertaining is possible year round; however, during the winter months (July,

August) it may be too cool to sit outside in the evenings.

Social Activities

Among Americans: There is quite a large American population in Gaborone. The American Women's International Association (AWIA) holds regular meetings and activities. About half its members are American. The other nationalities taking part in its activities give it an international flavor.

International Contacts:

Botswana, relations between black and white are not characterized by the tension found in some other countries in southern Africa. People mix freely and easily. Botswana appreciate the contributions being made to the country's development by the international donor community and work side-by-side with expatriates harmoniously and effectively. As English is one of the two official languages, there is no language problem. Fluency in English is generally dependent upon education levels and frequency of opportunity to use the language. The farther one travels from the cities, the less English is spoken.

Several thousand additional expatriates from the U.K., South Africa, Zimbabwe and the Scandinavian countries live and work in Botswana. Some have chosen to become citizens. A number of Americans, many of them ex-Peace Corps volunteers, have chosen to remain in Botswana working in one capacity or another.

Selebi-Phikwe

Selebi-Phikwe is located in the central eastern area of Botswana. About 250 miles northeast of Gaborone, it is connected by asphalt road and a freight carrying branch railway line to the main Gaborone-Francistown road and railway line 35 miles to the west. Selebi-Phikwe has an airport but there are no scheduled flights.

The region is part of a vast semiarid plateau with a mean elevation of 3,000 feet above sea level. The terrain is essentially flat with scattered small, rocky hills. The vegetation is characteristic of the savanna, with thick brush and hardy trees prevalent.

Selebi-Phikwe, the third largest town in Botswana, has grown since 1967 from an agricultural village to a community of nearly 50,000 people with the development of a larger copper-nickel mining operation (BCL). The expatriate population numbers about 200. The town is laid out around a central park and shopping area, near a modern hotel. A second hotel is located near the edge of town.

Selebi-Phikwe's commercial and shopping center, the mall, provides a variety of shops and services including the post office, two banks, two pharmacies, several hardware, appliance, book, clothing, supermarkets and several shops offering meat and groceries. Surrounding the center are the residential areas. On the outskirts of the town are the mines, the smelter plant, the electrical generating plant, water purifying plant and industrial site.

Located approximately 26 kilometers west of Selebi-Phikwe is a short wave transmitter site and one and one half kilometers farther west is a medium wave transmitter site operated by the USIA's "VOA," Botswana Relay Station. The short wave site has four 100 kilowatt short wave transmitters for long distance broadcasting. The medium wave site has one 500 kilowatt transmitter that broadcasts VOA English programs to listeners in Southern Africa. The international mailing address is Private Bag 38, Selebi-Phikwe; telephone 810-932.

Education

Selebi-Phikwe has nine government primary schools, three private English medium primary schools, four junior secondary schools and one senior secondary school. The

English-medium Morula Primary School accepts children ages 5 to 12 or 13 years. Three school terms are held yearly and tuition is 1,590 pula per term plus levy fees of about 1,000 pula for first entry in school. Private secondary schools are not available in Selebi-Phikwe.

Health

The town has two hospitals, a government hospital with 70 beds and four clinics, and a 25 bed private hospital. The latter is operated by the BCL Mining Company. There are several private medical practitioners and a dentist available two days of the week in Selebi-Phikwe. Health conditions in Selebi-Phikwe are generally favorable. The town maintains adequate sanitation procedures and safe tap water. However, because of occasional dust conditions and smoke emissions from the smelter operation, persons with severe respiratory problems may experience difficulty.

Recreation

Recreational facilities include an 18-hole golf course and two sports and social clubs, which provide facilities for tennis, squash, swimming, field sports, amateur theater, and other activities. A local television association relays South African TV programs to the local community.

OTHER CITIES

FRANCISTOWN, with a population of almost 66,000, is located northeast of the capital near Zimbabwe. It is the second largest city in the country; flights connect it with South Africa and Zambia. Francistown was the site of the first mine discovery in southern Africa in the 1880s. Reminders of its past are still present in mine dumps, pit heads, and old shafts. Today, it is an administrative and commercial center and the site of the Dumela industrial complex.

Located in southern Botswana 50 miles west of the capital, **KANYE** is

the traditional homeland of the Bangwaketse people. A mission hospital, schools, banks, and an airfield can be found in the city. The population is approximately 26,000.

As Botswana's meat industry center, **LOBATSE** exports livestock and livestock products to nearby countries. It is located about 45 miles southwest of Gaborone. In fact, the city once was considered for capital status. The town has a tannery, canning factory, and a soap factory. Lobatse is also the seat of the High Court of Botswana and the headquarters of the Department of Geological Survey. The population is estimated to be over 26,000.

MAHALAPYE is situated on a plateau, which makes it ideal for farming. The city is 93 miles northeast of Gaborone. The economy is based on cattle raising and the farming of sorghum, corn, and beans. Its industries include textiles and tool manufacturing. A National Library branch, health center and a meteorological station are found in Mahalapye. The population is roughly 104,000.

Home of the Bamangwato tribe, **SEROWE** is a traditional city composed of clusters of round, traditional African homes surrounded by extensive compounds and gardens. Located in the central district, this city is 150 miles north of the capital. It has an airfield and a major hospital. The population is roughly 95,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Botswana occupies the center of the southern African plateau and has an elevation of approximately 3,300 feet. The country is flat, with frequent outcroppings of rocky hills (koppies) in the east. The 224,710 square miles encompass three broad

ecological areas: the Northwest, dominated by the Okavango Delta; the East, where most of the population lives, characterized by generally arable land and communications links with neighboring countries; and the Central-to-Southwestern belt, dominated by the grass and thorn bush of the Kalahari Desert.

About the size of Texas, Botswana is a landlocked country bounded by the Republic of South Africa on the south and east, Zimbabwe on the northeast, Zambia (at a point where the Chobe and Zambezi Rivers meet) to the north, and Namibia on the north and west.

The eastern and northern parts of the country receive around 21 inches of rain yearly, but in western areas, rainfall can be as little as 10 inches. The rainfall pattern is erratic; some areas may receive sufficient rains, while others receive none. A succession of dry years produces drought conditions and inflicts misery on the dispersed rural population. November to March is the rainy season.

Temperatures during the hottest month, January, average 91°F (33°C), and 62°F (22°C) during the coldest month, June. During the summer, temperatures may climb into the 100°F levels with slight cooling at night. During winter, temperatures may fall to freezing level at night, but rise to comfortable 70°F levels at mid-day in the constantly sunny weather.

The air is dry virtually all year round (although humidity increases during the rainy season) and dust may prove an irritation to eyes and the upper respiratory tract for some. August is the month of dust storms.

Population

Botswana is the name of the country, the national home of the Tswana people. The names for its people are Motswana (singular) or

Batswana (plural). The language is Setswana.

Botswana's population is approximately 1.5 million, 46 percent of which lives in urban areas. At any given time perhaps 50,000 Batswana may be absent working in South Africa. Well over ten thousand expatriates reside in Botswana, many in Gaborone. South African and Indian citizens can be found in large numbers, often dominating certain businesses. Smaller numbers of expatriate British, Africans, Europeans, Canadians, South Asians and Americans are employed by the Botswana Government, international organizations, and private companies. Large numbers of Zimbabwean citizens, many of them in the country illegally, are employed as laborers and domestics.

Most Batswana speak Setswana and are members of eight closely related tribes. Unlike many African countries, tribalism is not a major factor. English and Setswana are the official languages. The literacy rate, approximately 69.8 percent, is high by African standards. More than half the population is at least nominally Christian. A variety of mainline denominations are represented, but many Batswana Christians are affiliated with independent churches.

Botswana's four major incorporated towns, all located along the eastern edge of the country, are Gaborone (182,000), Francistown (66,000), Selebi-Phikwe (50,000), and Lobatse (26,000). Additionally, several important "villages" have large populations, most notably Mochudi in Kgatleng District with approximately 60,000. Other towns with over 20,000 residents are Serowe in the Central District, Kanye in the Southern District, Molepolole in the Kwenange District, and Maun in the Ngamiland District.

Public Institutions

Botswana, the former Bechuanaland Protectorate, received its independence from Great Britain in 1966 and is a democratic, multi-party state. All national elections since the gaining of independence have been freely and fairly contested. The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has held a majority in the unicameral National Assembly since independence. There are 40 elected and 4 appointed seats in the National Assembly, although that number is updated with every census (ten years).

Executive power is vested in the President (chief of state and head of government), chosen in a national election for a term not to exceed 5 years. The President selects a Cabinet from among the Members of Parliament, consisting of the Vice President, who acts as government leader in the National Assembly, and an unspecified number of ministers. Voting for members of the National Assembly is based on universal adult suffrage (minimum age 21).

The Constitution also provides for a House of Chiefs that serves as a tribal-based advisory body to the government. Chiefs of the eight principal ethnic groups are ex-officio members of the House with additional members representing other smaller tribes. Since independence, the government has gradually moved toward transferring traditional powers of the chiefs to itself or to local elected bodies. For example, mineral rights in tribal lands are now vested in the national government, and the chiefs no longer control the schools.

Local government is carried out by nine district councils and five town councils. Executive authority is vested in the district commissioner appointed by the central government. The district commissioner is assisted by the members of the district/town councils and development committees, some of whom are appointed and some elected.

Botswana's constitution contains a code of fundamental human rights which is enforced by the courts. Judges, many of whom came from the British Commonwealth judiciary services, are appointed by the President and may be removed only for cause and after a hearing. Cases may be taken to the High Court and then to the court of Appeals if necessary. In a parallel, traditional system, chiefs and headmen preside over local courts constituted according to local customs and enforce traditional tribal laws.

The Botswana civil service, established on the British system, is headed by permanent secretaries of each of the ministries who, along with their civil servants, carry out the daily affairs of their respective ministries.

Arts, Science, and Education

Cultural activities in Gaborone can be limited. Only a handful of internationally recognized performers will visit the country in any given year. Local artistic performances can be rewarding, but the country and city's small population mean that the depth of the artistic community and the frequency of performances are limited.

The indigenous handicrafts industry is best known for its basketry, complemented by unique hide and skin products and an imported weaving tradition. Baskets are made primarily in the far northwest of the country but are available in abundance in Gaborone. The Herero design attractive dolls featuring their own unique, Victorian style of dress. The Basarwa (popularly known as the "Bushmen") produce ostrich eggshell necklaces, thumb pianos, hunting gear and other items.

Traditional culture is not strongly evident in Botswana's urban centers. Setswana, Herero, Basarwa and other tribal cultures can be experienced in rural areas. The cap-

ital does offer a museum/art gallery complex which features a good, permanent exhibit on Botswana's history, environment and culture. The National Art gallery occasionally sponsors art exhibits from Botswana and other countries.

The Botswana Society was formed in 1968 to study the cultural, historical, developmental and other aspects of Botswana. The Society sponsors lectures and readings and publishes *Botswana Notes and Records*, a scholarly journal on Botswana.

The University of Botswana, founded in 1972 as part of the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, but now a separate university, offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in a number of fields. The university library (with a reported 200,000 volumes) is available to the public along with the National Library (400,000 nationwide), the USIS library (5,000), and the National Archives (7,500).

Commerce and Industry

The economic foundations of modern Botswana were laid when diamonds were discovered and exploited in the 1970's. The largest component of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and government revenues comes from three mines—Jwaneng, Orapa, and Lethlekane. Diamond mining is carried out by the Debswana Corporation, a joint venture between the Government of Botswana and the DeBeers Corporation of South Africa. A U.S. firm, Lazare Kaplan, operates a diamond cutting and polishing facility in Molepolole.

In 2000, Botswana boasted an average per capita GDP of almost \$6600 per person. The country's balance of payments has been consistently positive year after year, with reported surpluses in the last 12 of 13 years. The minerals sector—largely diamonds but including copper, nickel, soda ash, and coal—

accounted for one-third of government revenues and generated approximately three-quarters of export earnings. Beef shipped to the European Union under the Lome Convention and assembled vehicles are the principal non-mineral exports.

Economic growth in Botswana was 6 percent in 2000. The rate is modest in comparison with the double-digit growth rates Botswana achieved in the 1980s.

The government of Botswana has sought to diversify its economy to lessen the dependence on minerals. Through the government's semi-autonomous investment arm, the Botswana Development Corporation (BDC), as well as through direct government investments, Botswana has sought to transform diamond wealth into economically productive, job-generating ventures. While the government continues to actively pursue this "social investment" role, it has also sought to privatize a number of profitable enterprises.

Botswana recognizes that the private sector must be the key to renewed, robust growth, and it has created one of the most attractive environments for investment in Africa. Bolstered by the country's substantial foreign currency reserves, the Pula is a markedly stable currency and is fully convertible. The country maintains the most liberal foreign exchange regulations in the region, and repatriation of profits for foreign direct investors is a routine process. The corporate and manufacturing tax rates, 25 and 15 percent respectively, are among the lowest in Africa.

Despite these efforts by government, Botswana continues to face structural economic challenges. Over half of the country's people—predominantly rural dwellers—are outside of the formal economy. Subsistence agriculture, particularly livestock, forms the basis of family income in the countryside, aug-

mented by government subsidies during and after periods of drought. Unemployment is estimated at 21 percent, and the population is increasing faster than the rate of job creation. Rural poverty remains a serious problem, while overall the country presents some of the worst figures for income disparity in the world.

Bearing in mind these challenges, however, Botswana's success remains striking. The country came to independence in 1966 as one of the poorest countries in the world. The government's immediate and consistent embrace of free enterprise, its prudent fiscal management, and, of course, diamonds, have led it to three decades of phenomenal development. Botswana's good road infrastructure, its modern, reliable (and expensive) telephone system, and dependable electricity supply have all been developed from scratch. An ambitious program of school and clinic building has successfully provided basic health care and education throughout the country.

Commercially, Botswana's membership in the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), made up of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland, has traditionally been the most significant barrier to American products. SACU has featured extremely high tariff barriers to agricultural and manufactured goods (well over 100 percent until recently on vehicles). Gradual reductions in those tariff rates, brought about in part by GATT Uruguay Round requirements, are making U.S. goods more competitive.

Statistics on foreign direct investment in Botswana are unavailable, but major U.S. investors include Owens Corning (Owens-Corning Pipe Botswana), H.J. Heinz (Kgala-gadi Soap Industries), Lazare Kaplan, Interkiln Corporation of Houston (Lobatse Clay Works), The St. Paul Companies of Minnesota (Botswana Insurance), and Fredkin

Adventures (Ker and Downey Botswana). There are various agents, direct distributors, affiliates and franchises representing U.S. goods and services in Botswana: distributors of Apple and Compaq computers and of Caterpillar and Euclid machinery; direct outlets of IBM and Xerox; accounting affiliates such as Coopers and Lybrand and Deloitte and Touche; and franchises such as Avis and Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Transportation

Local

Taxis, mostly mini-buses, are not plentiful but may be found in Gaborone and Francistown. Although not expensive, taxis accept passengers until they are completely full; so traveling from point to point can be an adventure. An intercity bus system links the major population centers, however, many Americans avoid them because of overcrowding and frequent mechanical breakdowns.

Regional

Air Botswana is the country's national airline and handling agent for ground traffic at the three main airports of Gaborone, Francistown, and Maun. From Gaborone an average of two flights depart daily for Johannesburg and three flights weekly for Harare, Zimbabwe. Regular connections are made with other regional population centers, as well as twice weekly direct flights to London (British Airways). Within Botswana, regular flights leave Gaborone for Francistown, Maun and Kasane. Several companies provide charter services into and out of Gaborone; the northern tourist areas can only be reached by charter aircraft, either from Gaborone or Maun.

The main rail line from Cape Town to Bulawayo runs through Botswana for about 400 miles, serving the main towns in the eastern part of the country. This line connects with Pretoria and Johannesburg in South Africa. Trains are

slow but comfortable, and rates are moderate compared to those in the U.S. In 1984, the last link in a paved highway connecting South Africa in the south with Zambia at the Kazangula Ferry crossing on the Chobe River in the north was completed. One can travel on paved roads west to Serowe in the central district, to Jwaneng from Lobatse in the south, and from Nata to Maun in the Okavango Delta.

Most find conventional two-wheel-drive cars more than adequate for use in Botswana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Extensive travel off the main north/south highway corridor requires a four-wheel-drive vehicle set up for long-range sand operations. Kalahari sand roads are such that heavy duty cooling systems, long-range fuel tanks, and off-road tires will all be stressed to the maximum. Four-wheel-drive vehicles can be rented locally, but they are extremely expensive.

The accident rate in Botswana is high and rising for several reasons:

- Rising incomes and the proliferation of low cost auto purchase schemes have created many first-time drivers who lack training and experience.
- Paved roads have 75 MPH speed limits, heavy traffic, and no shoulders. Most drivers exceed the speed limit on the open road.
- Cattle tend to wander onto the highways anywhere outside the towns, including the Gaborone airport road, especially at night in cool weather. Night driving out of town is extremely dangerous.
- Gravel, dirt, and sand roads have their own hazards that are not fully appreciated, even by drivers who drive them regularly. Head-on collisions and roll-overs are common on the outskirts of Gaborone and rural roads.

Communications

Telephone and Fax

Botswana joined International Direct Dial in 1987 and telephone service is considered quite good. The country code is 267. Rural areas are gradually being joined to the national system and calls to the U.S. can be made without difficulty. A call or fax to the U.S. costs approximately 6.70 pula (\$2.25) per minute.

Radio and TV

Radio Botswana broadcasts in FM, medium- and short-wave, in Setswana mostly, but also some English. The Voice of America operates a medium wave retransmitting facility in Selebi-Phikwe, 250 miles north of Gaborone. VOA programs are retransmitted between 6 and 7:30 am and after 7:30 pm. Reception is generally good in fair weather. Bring a good shortwave receiver to pick up VOA and BBC broadcasts. Radios and all electronic equipment are much more expensive locally than in the U.S.

There is no Government of Botswana television service. Signals from South Africa are retransmitted in UHF from a repeater station on top of Kgale Hill. GBC (Gaborone TV) began broadcasting in 1988, and offers a modest evening schedule of programs and news primarily in English.

All South African channels carry U.S. sitcoms, variety shows, and some other American programs as well as South African, British, Australian, and Canadian programs. Programming is in English, Afrikaans, Setswana, Xhosa and Zulu.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

A wide range of publications, mainly South African, but also U.K. and other European magazines, may be found in local bookshops. Popular American magazines available a week late include *Time* and *Newsweek*. Many beautiful but expensive "coffee table" books on Botswana and southern Africa are

available. The USIS library subscribes to 60 U.S. periodicals.

Besides the USIS library, a British Council library and a public library at the Town Hall are located in downtown Gaborone. Paperbacks may be purchased at bookstores or at the American Women's International Club thrift shop.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

The Gaborone Private Hospital offers consultant care for most specialty areas and those specialists who are not resident visit on a regular basis. The Private Hospital also has an emergency room which is open 24 hours a day. Medical Rescue International provides ambulance transfers (by land and air) by qualified paramedic staff.

Pharmacies (Drug Stores) are well supplied with prescription medicines; however, persons on long term medication may wish to bring their own products. A variety of over-the-counter medications are available, including some American brands and South African equivalents.

Community Health

Traveler's diarrhea is common and easily treated. Water purification in major towns is up to U.S. standards and water is considered safe to drink. Water is fluorinated in the larger towns only.

Bilharzia and tick bite are seasonal and prevail throughout the country. It is imperative not to swim in the rivers at all (there are plenty of pools around). The end of a long drought has brought the return of Tumbo fly (making it necessary to iron or machine dry all laundry) and malaria. Malaria is present north of Mahalapye and in the Limpopo valley all year round. It is of the chloroquine resistant strain, therefore mefloquine is the recommended drug of choice for prophylaxis.

Those who are unable to take mefloquine may take chloroquine and proguanil but see your doctor or nurse for up-to-date advice before travel.

Sleeping sickness carried by the tsetse fly can be a possible health hazard in the northern game parks. Wearing protective clothing at night can help you avoid these bites.

Allergies can be a problem as flowers and grasses are in bloom all year round. Upper respiratory infections and sore throats are caused by the dry dusty atmosphere during the dry season. Adequate humidifying of living areas of residences can reduce this problem considerably. Contact lens wearers can experience irritation in the dry season; it is therefore important for them to bring extra reading glasses with an up-to-date prescription.

AIDS remains a growing problem in the country. An aggressive educational program has been initiated by the Botswana Ministry of Health. Testing for HIV is done at all the hospitals and all blood donors are screened.

Preventive Measures

No vaccinations are required for Botswana; however travelers to other countries on the African Continent are advised to maintain up-to-date shots for yellow fever; typhoid; measles; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A (Havrix); hepatitis B (Engerix). All children should have their vaccination program kept up-to-date.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

Gaborone is most easily reached by air on one of the twice weekly British Airways flights out of London's Heathrow Airport. These routes avoid long layovers at Jan Smuts Airport in Johannesburg, but each

makes one stop en route. The alternative is a non-stop overnight flight from Europe to Johannesburg, and then on to Gaborone (an hour by air from Johannesburg). Multiple daily flights from Johannesburg to Gaborone via Air Botswana and Comm Air are available. Gaborone can also be reached via Air Zimbabwe from Harare three times weekly. There is also a code-shared flight from New York to Johannesburg on South African Airways.

A passport is required. U.S. citizens are permitted stays up to 90 days without a visa. For additional information on entry requirements, travelers may contact the Embassy of the Republic of Botswana, 1531 - 1533 New Hampshire Ave, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, telephone (202) 244-4990/1, fax (202) 244-4164 or the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Botswana to the United Nations, 103 E. 37th St., New York, NY, telephone (212) 889-2277, fax (212) 725-5061. There are also honorary consuls in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Houston. Overseas inquiries should be made to the nearest Botswanan Embassy or Consulate.

Americans living in or visiting Botswana are encouraged to register at the Consular section of the U.S. Embassy Botswana and obtain updated information on travel and security within Botswana. The U.S. Embassy is located in Gaborone on Embassy Drive, Government Enclave. The mailing address is P.O. Box 90, Gaborone, telephone (267) 353-982; fax (267) 356-947, and the after-hours emergency telephone (267) 357-111.

Pets

To enter Botswana, all pets and animals need a certificate issued by the Botswana Director of Veterinary Services. Shipment costs can be high as British Airways will not accept pets as baggage and applies a 200 percent surcharge on live animals carried as cargo.

In all cases, a valid rabies vaccination certificate and a certificate no older than 2 weeks from a veterinarian stating that the animal is in good health should also accompany the pet.

If the pet is to transit South Africa, a South African transit permit is required. If possible, the pet should transit directly without an overnight stop; no facilities for animals are provided at the Johannesburg airport.

Animal Travel Agency, a South African firm (PO Box 1478, Rivonia 2128, Transvaal, R.S.A.), can be retained to obtain necessary documents, meet, walk, water, and feed the animal at the airport, or keep it overnight and place it on the next plane.

Firearms and Ammunition

The Government of Botswana strictly controls the importation and local acquisition of firearms. Personally-owned handguns are prohibited by local law.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The local currency is called the Pula, which means rain. As of January 2001, the exchange rate was P5.5 to the U.S. Dollar. The rate of exchange fluctuates on the open market (the Pula is a hard currency), but has remained fairly stable over the last several years.

Barclays, Standard Chartered, First National (Barclays South Africa) and Stanbic (Standard South Africa) Banks offer modern and dependable banking facilities, including international transfers and travelers checks.

The standard official units of weight, length and capacity are kilogram, meter and liter, respectively.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Jan. 2 | Public Holiday |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Holy Saturday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| May/June | Ascension Day* |
| July (1st Mon). | Sir Seretse Khama Day* |
| July (3rd Mon & Tues) | President's Day* |
| Sept. 30 | Botswana Day |
| Oct. 1 | Public Holiday |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| Dec. 26 | Boxing Day |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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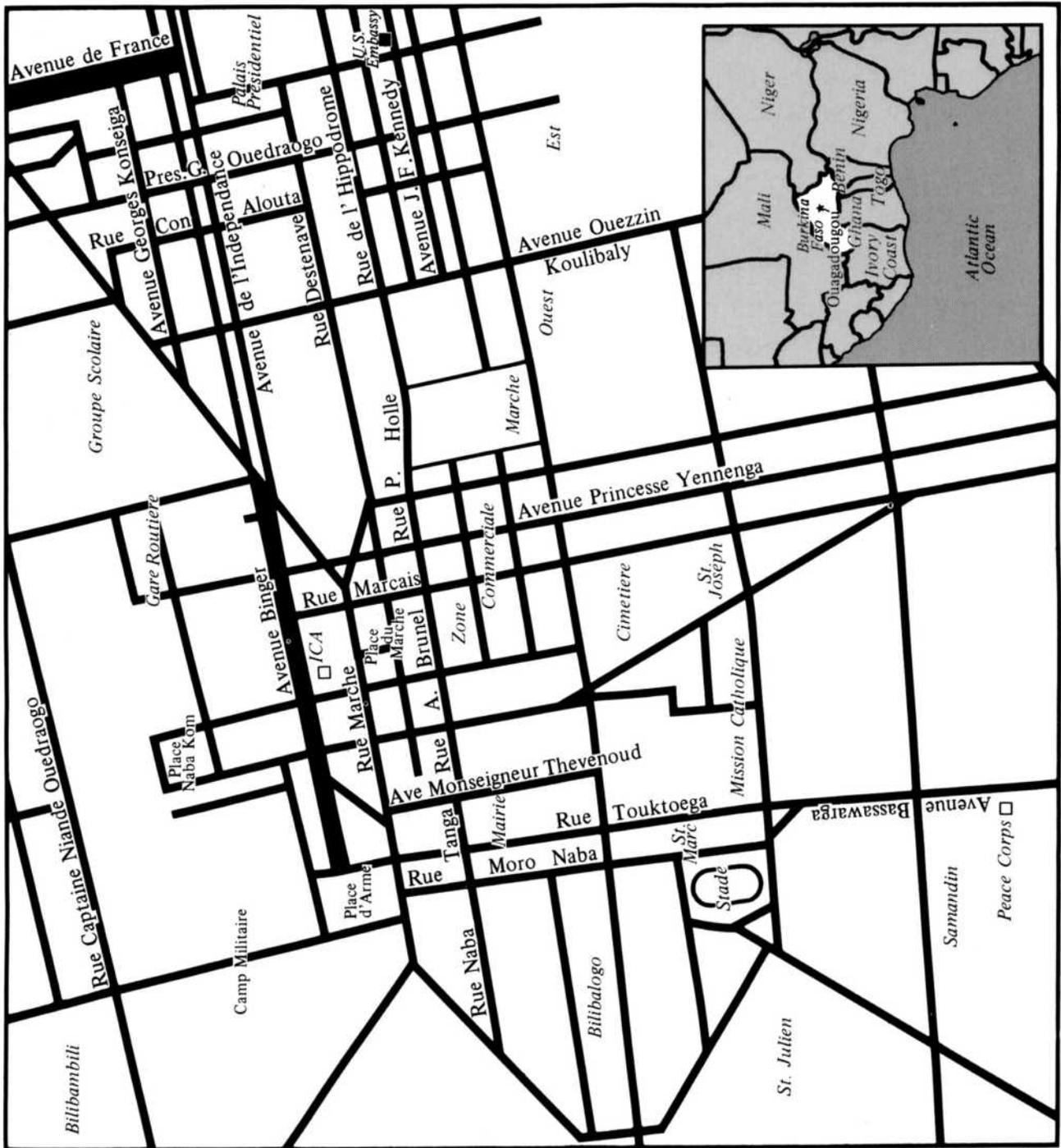
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Several National Geographic Specials have been produced on Botswana's unique wildlife and habitats. Strongly recommended are films by the Jouberts. In addition, specials have been produced on the Basarwa people of the Kalahari.



Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

BURKINA FASO

Major Cities:

Ouagadougou, Bobo-Dioulasso

Other Cities:

Koudougou, Ouahigouya

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated July 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The West African country of **BURKINA FASO**, formerly Upper Volta, gained its independence in 1960 after 64 years of French control. Marking the first anniversary of its third military coup in three years, it was officially renamed on August 4, 1984, as part of an effort to Africanize the country and sever its ties to the colonial past. The name Burkina Faso translates as "the country of upright men," in the language of the dominant Mossi tribe.

Burkina Faso, controlled by the French from 1896 to 1960, traces its history through a thousand years of domination by the Empire of the Mossi, powerful warriors who are

believed to have emigrated from East Africa in the 11th century. The Mossi still forcefully affect the political and economic life of the country.

MAJOR CITIES

Ouagadougou

Ouagadougou (pronounced Wah-gah-doo-goo), the capital city, is in central Burkina Faso, 500 miles north of the Ghanaian coastline. It has a long history as the center of the Mossi Empire, having been founded in the 11th century. The population numbers roughly one million, including 3,500 Europeans, mostly French. The city has tree-lined streets and much European and "African colonial" architecture. It is laid out compactly and simply.

The city has several modern public buildings sprinkled amid traditional residential neighborhoods. Ouagadougou is home to the country's national museum, a market, and a craft center. The city is connected by rail to the Atlantic port of Abidjan, capital of Cote d'Ivoire. This rail line provides landlocked Burkina Faso's primary link to the sea.

Several products are manufactured in Ouagadougou. These include textiles, soft drinks, matches, and footwear.

The national university of Burkina Faso, the University of Ouagadougou, is located here. It was formed from the Center for Higher Studies in 1974.

Education

Most American children in Burkina Faso attend the coeducational International School of Ouagadougou (ISO), which follows an American curriculum from the preschool (ages three and up) through the eighth grade. French-language classes are held daily, in addition to courses in biology, algebra, literature, art, environmental education, physical education, and computer instruction. Extracurricular activities are available in art, music, dance, sports, yearbook, computers, and drama. The school, which serves the needs of the American community and children of other diplomatic representatives from 15 nations, was founded in 1977. A new campus was completed in 1992.

Ouagadougou has three *lycées* (high schools) which are Burkinabe and follow a modification of the French system. Teachers are French and Burkinabe. No American children of



A village scene in Burkina Faso

David Johnson. Reproduced by permission.

high school age have attended in recent years.

École Saint-Exupéry, supervised by the French Embassy, now extends from kindergarten to *lycée* (high school). Classes consist of about 25 students. Entry is based on space available, with registration more limited in kindergarten and first grade. When applying for entry, students should bring samples of previous work in addition to report cards, especially in math, to indicate grade level.

Recreation

The most popular sports among Burkinabes are soccer, boxing, and bicycle racing. Soccer matches are held often at the stadium, and game announcements appear in the local newspaper.

Golf and tennis are popular with the American and European population, although facilities are limited. Some of the hotels have swimming pools, and these, along with privately-owned pools (e.g., the American Embassy Recreation Association), are the only safe places to swim. Visitors are warned not to wade or swim in ponds, rivers, or reservoirs.

Squash facilities are available at the International Squash Association of Ouagadougou. A yearly fee is

charged. Visitors and expatriates are advised to bring their own racquet and balls, because equipment is not available locally.

An 18-hole laterite (red clay) golf course is located eight miles from Ouagadougou. The greens are rolled sand, slightly oiled. A membership fee is charged. Membership is limited and a waiting period of up to one year is not unusual.

Club de l'Étrier, a riding club, charges a membership fee plus monthly dues. Stallions with tack can be rented. Also, horses can be boarded. Riders should bring their own hat, crop, and boots.

Ouagadougou's Aero Club is open to membership and, since English is the international flight language, applicants need not speak French to join. Flying lessons are available. Another flight club is active in Bobo-Dioulasso.

Hunting is permitted only in special non-prohibited areas and during certain seasons.

One of the most interesting places to visit in Burkina Faso is the game reserve at Arly which connects with the Pendjari Reserve in Benin. It may be reached by car or by air. On the thousands of acres at Arly/Pendjari, the visitor can see several types

of antelope, baboon, wild boar, water buffalo, and hippopotamus in two of the lakes. Wild boar, lion, elephant, and buffalo can be hunted at times in the non-prohibited areas.

Game reserves have two types of rooms available in the November-March season: regular air-conditioned rooms, or *campements*. *Campements* are hotels whose rooms are round, thatch-roofed huts with modern bathrooms and electricity. Reservations must be made in advance. Good food and cold drinks are served in the central dining room. *Campements* are linked with one another, and with Ouagadougou, by radio telephone. The reserve and hunting areas are 8–12 hours by car from the capital. Another important reserve, the "W" park, is in the area where the Niger, Benin, and Burkina Faso borders meet. A small park at Po, only a two-hour drive from Ouagadougou, is a convenient spot for an outing and for viewing elephants.

Americans and others enjoy an occasional weekend at Bobo-Dioulasso, the center for Burkina Faso's limited industry.

Banfora, a rich agricultural region, has interesting scenery, with two splendid waterfalls and fascinating native dancers. At Loropeni, between Banfora and Gaoua to the east, is an interesting ruin resembling a medieval city. The walls, about two stories high, are estimated to be several centuries old. The origin of the city and other lesser ruins nearby remains unknown.

The far north and east of the country are semi-desert areas. Places of interest include a weekly camel market in Markoye, the Dori Social Center, and the sand dunes and marshlands in the Oursi and Gorom-Gorom area. In the north, the nomadic and semi-nomadic Peuhl (Fulani), Bella, and Tuareg tribesmen wear attractive costumes and are of considerable ethnographic interest.

Other “bush trips” can be very interesting if the traveler knows someone at the other end (missionary, Peace Corps volunteer, or local) who can show him around the area.

Outside Burkina Faso, places such as Mopti, Timbuktu, and the Dogon cliff dwellings near Bandiagara in Mali make a fascinating trip. People normally drive to Bandiagara and Mopti, and then take the plane to Timbuktu. A boat travels between Mopti and Timbuktu in the December and January flood season on the Niger River, but it is usually booked well in advance. The coast offers more of a change. Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, is accessible by plane, train, or car. The shopping, good restaurants, and varied amusements of this prosperous, semi-French city are refreshing, but expensive.

The drive over paved roads to Lomé, Togo makes a pleasant trip. Lama Kara is a good place to stop overnight. The shopping, good restaurants, and nice hotels on the beach make Lomé a pleasant experience. Flights to Lomé are also available.

The climate changes little within the country or the surrounding areas, but there is a change of scenery. Traveling is usually done during the cool, dry season. Trips anywhere within the country are reasonable in cost, but those to the coast are more expensive.

Entertainment

An air-conditioned theater and two open-air cinemas show French films. Sometimes a recent film is shown.

The Franco-Burkinabe Cultural Center has an active program of films, amateur theater, musical events, and many other cultural activities. Children’s film and story telling sessions are sometimes featured. The American Cultural Center has a large library of videotapes ranging from serious political and economic discussions to music and cultural programs. It also has a large library, although many of the titles are in French. Sunday editions of the *New York Times* and

Washington Post and 25 American magazines are available.

Several restaurants offer a variety of cuisines including French, Continental, North African, and Franco-Italian. Prices in Ouagadougou are comparable to Washington, D.C. Bars and discotheques provide other sources of entertainment. There is usually no cover charge, but drink prices are expensive in the nicer discotheques. Another type of night life includes live bands playing local music.

Tribal and religious ceremonies, folk dancing, and other national cultural activities are held throughout the year. Activities vary from district to district. Some Moslem religious festivals are well worth attending, especially large ceremonies at the central square in Ouagadougou.

A permit is required to do any photography. Visitors will find willing subjects for photography among most men. However, many women will object to being photographed and will cover their faces and hide their children. Some Orthodox Moslems, especially from remote areas, do not wish to have their pictures taken. It is always wise and courteous to ask permission. Polaroid cameras are popular. Everyone appearing in a print will probably want a copy. Film is available locally but is expensive. Burkinabe law forbids the photographing of the airport, government buildings and installations, the water treatment plant, military installations, and military personnel. This law is enforced.

Bobo-Dioulasso

Bobo-Dioulasso is the country’s second largest city, and the center of Burkina Faso’s limited industry. A number of small factories produce cooking oils, soap, cigarettes, matches, bicycles, shoes, inner tubes, and plastic bags. The population is approximately 450,000.

The Medical Entomology Center and the Muraz Medical Center in

Bobo-Dioulasso conduct research on tropical diseases. One of the most important tropical disease centers in all of West Africa is also headquartered in the city—L’Organisation de Coordination and Coopération pour la Lutte Contre les Grandes Endémies (OCCGE), which was organized in 1968 by eight African states and France. France provides a large part of the budget.

Bobo-Dioulasso is an interesting city. It has a central market where many ivory, bronze, and iron handicrafts are available for sale, among them native masks and curios. Fruits and vegetables are also sold here. The colonial architecture and tree-lined streets are reminiscent of the days when Bobo-Dioulasso was the capital of Burkina Faso (then Upper Volta) and a French West Africa garrison town.

Bobo-Dioulasso is one of Burkina Faso’s main transportation centers. It is located on the central rail line between the capital of Cote d’Ivoire, Abidjan, and Ouagadougou. To the west of the city lies Borgo International Airport.

The city is a center for Islamic culture and worship. Also, it is the home of a major college, the West African Center for Economic and Social Studies, and the seat of several government research institutes.

A working knowledge of French is necessary to live and conduct business in this southwestern Burkinabe city. Currently, there are no educational facilities for English-speaking children.

OTHER CITIES

KOUDOUGOU, the third largest city in Burkina Faso with a population of over 100,000, is located approximately 55 miles west of Ouagadougou. In 1970, a textile plant, the first significant industrial facility in the country, began operation here. Using local supplies of cotton, the plant produces both yarn



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Market area in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso

and woven material. Finished products are sold only within the country. There is also some peanut and tobacco production in the area.

OUAHIGOUYA, the country's next largest city, with a population of over 40,000, is about 100 miles northwest of Ouagadougou. Ouahigouya was one of the kingdoms of the former Mossi empire. From here, the Mossi warriors of Yatenga defeated the Mandingo emperor's troops and sacked Timbuktu in 1333. A beautiful mosque at Ramatoulaye, near Ouahigouya, permits women to enter. Women should not, however, offer to shake hands here, as it is against religious custom.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Burkina Faso lies landlocked between the Sahara Desert and the Gulf of Guinea in the loop of the Niger River. It is bounded by Niger to the east; Mali to the north and west; and Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin to the south. It comprises 105,900 square miles (about the size of Colorado) on a

savanna plateau, 500 to 747 meters above sea level. Most of the country lies beyond the humid rain belt, or rain forest, which extends about 400 miles northward from the sea. The land to the south is green with forests and fruit trees. Desert-like sandy areas lie to the north.

The country's main rivers are unnavigable and flow south toward the Gulf of Guinea. Several small streams in the east drain into the Niger River; most contain water only part of the year. Low hills separate the Black, Red, and White Volta River Basin from the Niger River Basin.

The climate is tropical with distinct seasons—warm and dry from November to March, hot and dry from March to May, and warm and wet during the rainy season from June to October. During cool weather (December to February), daily maximum temperatures average about 85°F, with almost no humidity. Temperatures drop sharply after sundown to a pleasant 60°F. The extreme dry heat of March, April, and May is uncomfortable. Daytime temperatures can reach well over 100°F. Homes and offices are air-conditioned.

Harmattan conditions (hot, dust-laden winds during the dry

season) obscure visibility. Early summer rains break the extreme heat, but high winds bring dust clouds just before the rain. Annual rainfall is about 40 inches in the south; it is less than 10 inches in the extreme north and northeast, where a hot desert wind accentuates the aridity.

The number of mosquitoes, flies, and other insects varies with the season. Poisonous snakes exist, but are not often found in the city. Mildew is not a problem.

Natural hazards, such as earthquakes and floods, are no danger. Droughts cause great hardship in the northern part of the country among farmers and herdsman.

Population

Burkina Faso's population of approximately 11.9 million comprises 50 distinct tribal groups. The powerful Mossi, constituting about one half of the ethnic population, dominate political and economic life. They are descendants of warriors who founded a thousand-year-long empire in the area. The emperor of the Mossi still holds court in Ouagadougou. Other important tribes are the Gourounsi, the Bobos, the Lobi, the Senufo, the Mande, and the Peuhls. A few thousand Tuaregs inhabit the northern regions. Few Burkinabes are of non-African descent.

Most people live in southern and central Burkina Faso. Population density in the Mossi Plateau can exceed 125 persons per square mile. Overpopulation causes thousands of Burkinabes to migrate yearly to the Cote d'Ivoire for seasonal agricultural work and long-term employment.

French is the official government language and is taught in schools. However, each ethnic group has its own principal language and many Burkinabe often speak several dialects. People in the Ouagadougou market and in the countryside often speak only their tribal language, but Moré, the language of the Mossi,

has become a lingua franca for half of the country. Dioula (Bambara) dominates the western third.

Approximately 40 percent of the people are strongly attached to fetishism and animism. About 50 percent are converts to Islam and 10 percent are Christians—mostly Roman Catholics, with a small number of Protestants. Since many of the Burkinabe elite have been educated in Catholic schools, Catholicism has a significant influence in the country.

Most Burkinabes are too concerned with the struggle for existence to become involved in issues that do not involve them directly. Subsistence agriculture is the standard means of livelihood.

Traditional society in Burkina Faso is based on the extended family. The senior male, as family head, determines matters of descent and inheritance, controls the use of resources, and settles family disputes. Burkinabe women are considered inferior to men in many respects.

Only 10 percent of the population live in the modern environment of larger towns and cities. The new elite has adopted Western ways of living without abandoning its African heritage. Many of these were trained in the educational system established by the French, and follow cultural standards of both Africa and Europe, especially France.

Government

Burkina Faso was under French control from 1896 until December 1958, when it became an autonomous state of the French community. The country achieved full independence on August 5, 1960, loosening its French political and economic orbit, and elected Maurice Yaméogo its first president. However, it maintained close associations with the Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Benin, and Togo (other members of the "Council of the Entente"). The 1960 constitution provided for election by universal suffrage of a presi-

dent and a National Assembly for five-year terms.

Yaméogo was reelected in 1965, but was overthrown in a military coup in January of the following year.

In June 1970, Burkinabes ratified a new constitution establishing military-civilian rule for four years. A unicameral National Assembly was also elected, but was dissolved in 1974. After 1974, an appointed National Consultative Assembly was established to serve as Parliament. Free legislative elections were held in 1978. In November 1980, a bloodless *coup d'état* deposed the Third Republic, dissolved the National Assembly, and suspended the constitution. A government consisting of a mix of military officers and civilians was formed; that government was removed from power in another military coup in November 1982 by the People's Salvation Council (CSP). Still another coup, led by Capt. Thomas Sankara on August 4, 1982, replaced the CSP with the National Revolutionary Council (CNR).

On October 15, 1987, Sankara was killed in a coup attempt led by his second-in-command, Capt. Blaise Compaoré. Following the execution of several former government officials, Compaoré announced the formation of a new Popular Front (Front Populaire—FP) government. This government, created in March 1988, consists of a 288-member Coordinating Committee composed of national delegates, provincial coordinators, political and trade unionists, and a 25-member Executive Committee. All other political parties were banned. Compaoré was named Chief of State and Head of Government, a position he maintains to date.

In August 1990, the ban on political opposition parties was lifted. In 1991, a new constitution was drafted that called for a democratically elected president, who would appoint a prime minister answerable to a multi-party legislature. The president is elected by popular

vote for a seven-year term and may serve unlimited terms. The prime minister is appointed by the president with the consent of the legislature.

The legislative branch is bicameral. It consists of a National Assembly (111 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms); and the purely consultative Chamber of Representations (178 seats; members are appointed to serve three-year terms).

Administratively, the country is divided into 30 provinces, which are subdivided into departments, arrondissements, and villages. A new electoral code was approved by the National Assembly in January 1997, in which the number of administrative provinces was increased from 30 to 45, however, this change has not yet been confirmed by the US Board on Geographic Names.

Burkina Faso has received international censure for human rights abuses and military intervention in Liberia.

Burkina Faso is a member of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Common Organization of African and Malagasy States (OCAM), and various West African regional organizations, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic Community (CEAO).

The following nations have resident missions in Ouagadougou: Algeria, Germany, Egypt, France, the People's Republic of China, Ghana, Libya, The Netherlands, Nigeria, North Korea, the U.S., and the former U.S.S.R. Honorary consuls of Denmark, Belgium, Austria, Senegal, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom also have offices in the country. Canada and Switzerland have established offices in Burkina Faso to administer economic aid programs. Economic assistance is a prime consideration in the country's foreign relations.

The flag of Burkina Faso is composed of two equal horizontal bands of red (top) and green with a yellow five-pointed star in the center.

Arts, Science, Education

Burkinabe art is centered on music, dancing, wood and metal sculpture and weaving. The small National Museum in Ouagadougou displays indigenous artistic works and representative items from the daily life of the country's ethnic groups. Local artists exhibit Western-style painting, sculpture, and print-making. Carved wooden masks and figures are available for purchase by collectors, but antique pieces are rare and expensive.

The scientific world is small in Burkina Faso, but several specialized research centers exist. Several agricultural research and extension services are sponsored by the French Government, semiprivate organizations, and the Burkinabe Government. One of the most important tropical disease research centers in West Africa has its headquarters at Bobo-Dioulasso, the country's second largest city. It operates jointly with the Medical Entomology Center and the Muraz Medical Center to perform research on tropical diseases. France provides a large part of the annual budget, and the U.S. has provided a staff member. Several institutes in Ouagadougou carry on social science studies.

The University of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso's national university, evolved from the former Center for Higher Studies in April 1974. The university includes colleges of letters, law, science, economics, film, and engineering, and a technical training institute. A medical school has been constructed. The university has three- and five-year courses leading to the level of bachelor of arts degree. The student population is nearly all Burkinabe. A number of students also pursue university-level studies abroad.

Primary and secondary education is provided at government expense. However, it was estimated that only 22 percent of primary school-age children attended primary school. Moreover, secondary school enrollment was equivalent to only 6 percent of eligible children. Despite government support for education, Burkina Faso has one of the world's lowest literacy rates. As of 1995, literacy is 19.2 percent.

Commerce and Industry

Burkina Faso is predominantly agricultural. About 90 percent of its people make a living from subsistence farming and nomadic stock-raising. Primary food crops include sorghum, millet, rice, corn, yams, and beans. Cotton is the main cash crop, along with peanuts, sesame, and shea nuts (*karité*). There are plans to mechanize farming and open up new areas for development. Burkina Faso's agricultural growth is hampered by severe drought, poor soil conditions, and infrequent rainfall.

The government is placing great emphasis on the commercialization and development of the country's mineral resources. It opened the Poura gold mine, which is located 112 miles west of Ouagadougou, in 1985. Manganese deposits have been discovered at Tambao, along with reserves of limestone, lead, bauxite, phosphates, and nickel. A railway link from Ouagadougou to Tambao is under construction. However, progress has been slowed by a lack of funding.

Industry is vastly underdeveloped. Small factories are located primarily in Bobo-Dioulasso, Ouagadougou, Banfora, and Koudougou. Manufacturing is limited to flour milling, sugar refining, textile manufacturing, and the production of footwear, moped/bicycle assembly, soap, cigarettes, and beer.

Burkina Faso, with an estimated per capita GDP of \$1000 (as of 2000), is one of the poorest and least

industrialized nations of Africa. The country has been plagued by trade deficits. These deficits are balanced somewhat by borrowing, foreign aid, and money sent home by Burkinabe working in other countries. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) administers approximately 15 million annually in bilateral and regional assistance programs. Projects are ongoing in rural development, agricultural research, agricultural education, reforestation, health/nutrition planning, and population and family planning. USAID also sponsors a supplemental feeding program for schools, maternity centers, and food-for-work projects. The U.S. Embassy also supports small-scale development projects throughout the country.

Burkina Faso's primary export is cotton, followed by livestock, shea nuts, hides and skins, rubber products, and sesame seeds. Imports include vehicles, petroleum products, grain, dairy products, and machinery. The most important trading partners are France and Cote d'Ivoire.

The Chambre de Commerce, d'Industrie et d'Artisanat du Burkina is located in Ouagadougou, with a branch in Bobo-Dioulasso. The mailing address is B.P. 502, Ouagadougou.

Transportation

Burkina Faso has international airports at Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. The national airline, Air Burkina, serves Ouagadougou, Bobo-Dioulasso, and other major cities in the country. Air Burkina also offers flights to Niamey, Bamako, Lomé, Cotonou, and Abidjan. Ouagadougou's international airport is served by several weekly flights from Paris, Abidjan, Niamey, Bamako, Dakar, Algiers, Moscow, and Tripoli.

Trains operate twice daily between Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, and to Abidjan, 440 miles away on the coast, once a day. The 23-hour trip to Abidjan is an interesting one;

comfortable first-class, air-conditioned accommodations include sleeping compartments with sinks. Other compartments are fan-cooled, but hot and dusty. Americans usually take along a prepared snack, but a good-quality lunch and dinner are served on board.

Burkina Faso has city buses, but they are seldom used by Americans. Taxis in Ouagadougou are limited and often unavailable in residential areas. Although hailing a cab is difficult, cabs are usually available in the downtown area or at hotels. Fares are based on distance, with higher rates at night. Tipping is not customary.

Most roads throughout the country are unpaved, but are adequate during the dry season. The June-to-September rains make many roads impassable, and repairs often take several months. Paved roads are found in the main towns; from Ouagadougou to Bamako, Mali; from Ouagadougou to the Ghanaian border; and to Lomé, Togo.

Auto air-conditioning, in addition to its obvious benefits, also keeps out the red laterite dust during the dry season. Garages repair and service most air conditioners, including U.S. units. Every car should have an oil-bath air filter to prevent dust from damaging the engine.

Peugeot, Toyota, Renault, and Mazda are popular in Burkina Faso, and parts and service are readily available. Volkswagen, Nissan, and Honda are also found here, but Ouagadougou has no regular dealerships for these makes. Reliable repair service for Volkswagens is difficult to locate. Japanese motorcycles and motorbikes, used extensively in the cities, can be purchased locally.

It is advisable to have an international driver's license, as local licenses sometimes take many months to obtain. Third-party insurance is compulsory for all private vehicles.

Those planning camping and touring trips should equip a car with a heavy-duty radiator and shock absorbers. A supply of spare parts is advisable for American cars, as local garages do not stock them. Garages, which do good body work, can repair French-made cars with little trouble.

Communications

The local telephone dial system works well, but service is sometimes interrupted during the rainy season. Occasionally, long-distance calls are hard to place (and connections can be poor) within the country and to certain other African countries. Local telephone operator service is available 24 hours daily. Commercial telegraph service is expensive and inaccurate. Priority rate is double the cost. Telegrams in French are likely to be sent and received more accurately. International telex facilities are available at main hotels.

International airmail to and from the U.S. takes five to ten days for delivery.

Both Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso have AM and FM radio stations. Most broadcasts are in French; the rest are in various vernacular languages. Several hours of Western popular and semiclassical music are programmed each day. Shortwave broadcasts such as Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) can also be received.

Télévision Nationale du Burkina provides transmissions seven days a week to Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, Koudougou, and Ouahigouya, in French and African languages. French programs feature educational films, news, and movies. American sets are not compatible with the locally used French SECAM system, but can be used with transformers for American video and TV games.

Few English-language books, magazines, or newspapers are sold in

Ouagadougou. Several bookstores in the capital carry French paperbacks and airmail editions of *Paris Match*, *Jours de France*, and *Elle*.

Some expatriates have personal subscriptions to the international editions of *Time* and *Newsweek*. These publications usually arrive by air within 2–3 days of issue.

The U.S. Information Service (USIS) library has a limited selection of books in English, but few are best-sellers or mysteries. There is a larger stock of French books, which may be borrowed. The American Embassy Recreation Association has about 500 paperbacks contributed by personnel.

The only newspapers published in Burkina Faso are a government daily, *Sidwaya*; a government monthly, *Carrefour Africain*; a government daily news leaflet, *Bulletin Quotidien d'Information*; a government daily, *Dunia*; and a government weekly, *Journal Officiel du Burkina*. A new government daily, *Jamaa*, began publication in 1988. All of these publications are in French and depend on Agence France-Press for most of their international news.

Health

A 600-bed hospital in the capital is staffed by French and Burkinabe doctors, but it is rarely used by Americans. Most laboratory work is done at a local pharmacy or sent to the U.S. Americans needing special medical treatment or hospitalization are sent to France or Germany. A German dentist with a private practice does regular dental work in Ouagadougou.

Local pharmacies carry drugs and medicines, and a nurse or attending doctor can ensure that French prescriptions are suitable substitutes for American products. Prices are usually higher than in the U.S.

Temperature and humidity changes make colds, coughs, and sore throats a common, but not serious, problem. The hot, dust-laden wind

during the dry season aggravates asthma or sinus problems.

Mosquitoes carry malaria as well as numerous viral diseases and are a major health hazard. Under the rabies control program, the Burkinabe Government's veterinary services will inoculate dogs and cats for a nominal fee if the vaccine is provided. Dogs must be inoculated and tagged.

City water is filtered and chemically treated, but should be filtered and boiled for drinking and cooking. It is necessary to treat leafy vegetables with an antiseptic solution, and to cook all food thoroughly.

To prevent exposure to animal and waterborne diseases, all food, and particularly water, should be properly treated. A large supply of safe drinking water must be carried on trips. It is not safe to swim in lakes or streams, as water is a principal source of the parasites that carry dysentery, hepatitis, and bilharzia. Despite good intentions and precautions, dysentery may be contracted occasionally, but the necessary palliatives are available.

Rigid international controls and inoculations have reduced the danger of yellow fever, but inoculations are still required. These can be obtained more conveniently before traveling to Burkina Faso. Malaria, for the most part, is preventable by using approved suppressants. Suppressants should be started two weeks before arrival and continued eight weeks after departure. Insect repellent and spray are helpful in controlling mosquitoes and other insects.

At times the heat is enervating, and even dangerous, if one is overexposed to the sun. Various forms of fatigue are associated with water depletion. Particularly during the hot season, everyone should wear a hat when out in the sun (especially children at play), drink plenty of water, and wear sunglasses to protect against the bright sun. A well-balanced diet, adequate rest, lightweight clothing, and moderate

exercise are the basic recommendations for helping to adjust to the climate.

Clothing and Services

Some ready-made clothing is available in Burkina Faso, but not in U.S. styles or sizes. Items for men, women, and children can be made by a tailor, with materials bought here or in nearby countries. It is advisable to bring sewing notions from home.

Cotton is much cooler than wash-and-wear fabrics. Women usually are more comfortable in dresses and skirts than in slacks, unless the slacks are of lightweight material.

Shoes can be bought, but the fit is different, and cost far exceeds quality. The most appropriate footwear items are tennis shoes for sports, open shoes for cool comfort, and durable closed-toe styles for walking. The majority of American women avoid wearing hosiery because of the heat.

Many of the supplies and basic services available in Burkina Faso are either too expensive or difficult to obtain. American-made brands are unavailable. There are some good hairdressers and barbers, and a few excellent tailors, although most tailors are not familiar with Western-style apparel. Shoe-repair service is scarce and the work is only mediocre. Sandals can be adequately mended.

Drugs and toiletries cost two or three times the U.S. price. Cosmetics available locally are limited and U.S. brands are unavailable. Games and playing cards are not available. American household gadgets are either rare or expensive. Typical French household equipment is available, but also expensive.

Local meats, such as beef, lamb, mutton, and pork) are of good quality and reasonably priced. The public market, grocery stores, and several butcher shops sell meat.

Butchers make their own fresh sausages and pates. Bacon, ham, seafood, and veal are imported and expensive. Local poultry tends to be tough. Some fish from nearby reservoirs is sold. However, most seafood is imported and always available.

Local vegetables are good, when available, but the season is short. Vegetables include potatoes, green beans, lettuce, green peppers, carrots, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, squash, radishes, cauliflower, and turnips. Local fruits include oranges, limes, avocados, papayas, guavas, pineapples, bananas, grapefruit, mangoes, melons, and strawberries. Apples, peaches, plums, and cherries are imported and they are expensive.

Fresh milk is not produced locally but powdered whole milk and French sterilized milk (similar to U.S. canned milk) is available. Imported butter, margarine, yogurt, fresh cream, and some excellent French cheeses are available. Local yogurt is inexpensive and usually good. Several bakeries provide a variety of pastries, made-to-order cakes, ice creams, breads, rolls, and candy.

A good selection of French wines is available. An inexpensive table wine imported by the case and bottled here is adequate for cooking. Coca-Cola, Sprite, orange soda, beer, tonic, and soda are bottled locally. Perrier, Evian, Pepsi, 7-Up, and some brands of tonic are imported.

Domestic Help

Domestic employees, usually men, are readily available. Most are Mossi and are good workers, but they have little training and must be well supervised. Domestic employees rarely speak or understand English, and few can read or write. Women domestics are rare, but girls work as children's nannies.

Burkinabe domestic employees tend to be indulgent with children. English-speaking domestics who have lived in Ghana and other

Anglophone countries are sometimes available, but they must speak some French and Moré to work in Burkina Faso.

A typical staff for a family with children consists of a houseboy/cook and a gardener/guard. A small family or single person requires less. Wages are low. Domestic employees do not live in. The employer provides uniforms.

Once domestic employees are hired unconditionally for a period longer than a month, they can be dismissed only with one month's notice, or the equivalent in salary. Many people hire domestic employees initially for a short trial period. Employers often become financially involved when major expenditures occur in their employees' families (weddings, births, illnesses, or funerals). Social security payments are 18.5 percent of the employee's salary for the employer, and 4.5 percent for the employee. Employees expect a month's bonus on New Year's Day.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

The easiest route to Burkina Faso from the U.S. is via Paris. There are two direct flights a week between Ouagadougou and Paris. Burkina Faso has international airports at Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. Several American airlines offer connections between New York and Paris. Direct flights are also available to Algiers, Bamako, Niamey, Abidjan, Lomé, and Dakar.

A passport and visa are required. Travelers should obtain the latest information and details from the Embassy of Burkina Faso, 2340 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 332-5577. There are honorary consuls for Burkina Faso in Decatur (Georgia), Los Angeles and New Orleans. Overseas inquiries should be made at the nearest Burkina Faso embassy or consulate.No

restrictions exist on the importation of dogs, cats, or other animals, although certification of rabies and distemper inoculations must be provided. A Burkinabe veterinarian operates an adequate animal hospital in Ouagadougou.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Ouagadougou on Avenue John F. Kennedy, and to obtain updated information on travel and security in Burkina Faso. The mailing address is 01 B.P. 35, Ouagadougou. The telephone numbers are (226) 30-67-23/24/25; the fax number is (226) 31-23-68.

Permits must be obtained from the Burkinabe Government to import firearms or ammunition. Requests should include specific information regarding the type of firearm, caliber or gauge, and the quantity of ammunition.

Catholic churches, missions, and a few Protestant congregations are found throughout the country. Ouagadougou has five Catholic congregations (masses in French and Moré, and occasionally in English), 25 Assembly of God churches, six Baptist missions, and one Seventh-Day Adventist mission. The English-language International Church, located in the Zone du Bois in the capital, includes both Catholics and Protestants in its congregation. Jehovah's Witnesses sponsor three missions in the country.

When traveling in Burkina Faso, it is advisable to inform friends and/or business associates of your travel plans. Travel with someone and only during the day since roads and lighting are poor. First-aid kits are available for travel outside of Ouagadougou.

Burkina Faso is a member of the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA), which gives its name to the local currency. The CFA *franc* is supported by the French *franc*, convertible at the ratio of 50 CFA to 1 FF.

The metric system of weights and measures is used. The time in Burkina Faso is Greenwich Mean Time.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Jan. 3 Revolution Day
- Mar. 8 Women's Day
- Mar/Apr. Easter*
- Mar/Apr. Easter Monday*
- May 1 Labor Day
- May/June Ascension Day*
- Aug. 5 Independence Day
- Aug. 15 Assumption Day
- Oct. 15 Rectification Day
- Nov. 1 All Saints' Day
- Dec. 11 Proclamation of Independence
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day
- Ramadan*
- Id al-Fitr*
- Id al-Adah*

*Variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Allen, C. *Benin, Congo, and Burkina Faso: Politics, Economics and Society*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988.

Countries of the World and Their Leaders Yearbook 1993. Detroit: Gale Research, 1993.

Cruise, O'Brien, Donal, et al., eds. *Contemporary West African States*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990.

Lear, Aaron. *Burkina Faso*. New York: Chelsea House, 1986.

Naylor, Kim. *West Africa*. 2nd ed. Edited by M. Haag. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1989.

West Africa. 7th ed. Traveller's Guides Series. Edison, NJ: Hunter Publishing, 1988.

BURUNDI

Republic of Burundi

Major City:

Bujumbura

Other Cities:

Bururi, Gitega, Ngozi

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated August 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of **BURUNDI** is a landlocked country in a mountainous, isolated region of central Africa. Once a German East African possession, it later was administered by Belgium as part of Ruanda-Urundi, first under a League of Nations mandate, and later as a United Nations trust territory. It became a constitutional monarchy in 1962 and a republic in 1966.

An unusual aspect of Burundi is the scarcity of towns and villages—its traditional social structure is based on scattered farmsteads. Life centers around hillside hut compounds, called *rugos*, where about 95 percent of the population lives, engaging

primarily in subsistence agriculture. A few coffee trees or tea bushes also provide cash income. The lyre-horned cattle, seen throughout the countryside, form another important part of Burundi's traditional rural life.

MAJOR CITY

Bujumbura

Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, is a small city in beautiful surroundings, with an agreeable year-round tropical climate. Its population is about 278,000. Downtown Bujumbura stretches along the flat northeastern edge of Lake Tanganyika, the second deepest lake in the world (after Lake Baikal in southern Siberia), and once thought to be the source of the Nile. The wealthier residential area slowly has been climbing the hillsides east of the city, and some of the villa-like homes have magnificent views of the lake, the Ruzizi River plain, and the beautiful mountains of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), just 15 miles away across the lake.

Bujumbura is a small but colorful city, which can be traversed by car in a matter of minutes. Many of the

main streets are paved, and traffic is rarely a problem, except during commuter hours. Streets throughout much of the residential area are not paved but remain passable, even during the rainy season. Flowering trees in Bujumbura include flamboyants, acacia, jacaranda, and frangipani. Tropical ornamental plants thrive here, and flowers are plentiful in any season.

In the downtown commercial area, the streets are lined with small shops, usually owned by Greeks, Belgians, or Asians. Among these are various food businesses, general dry goods shops, sales and service establishments, shoe stores, some European gift shops, pharmacies, and a flower shop. Street vendors sell fresh fruits and vegetables. A large open-air market thrives in the mornings, selling basketry, foods, charcoal, used clothing (much of it from the U.S.), cloth, and small items for African consumers.

Three hotels in Bujumbura, the Source du Nil, Novotel, and the Club des Vacances provide international rooms and service. Other hotels are available at much lower cost, but are not normally used by Americans.

Bujumbura's lakefront is dominated by a port area which is visited weekly by two steamers transport-

ing goods and passengers up and down the 400-mile lake under the Tanzanian flag. Just south of the port is a scenic beach area, where residents like to drive in the evenings to view the sunset and look for hippopotami who live in the reeds and waters along the beach.

The residents of Bujumbura live in and around the city in various "quarters" and suburbs which have developed according to ethnic origin and economic status. Large foreign groups include Zairians, Belgians, Indians, Ismaili Muslims, French, and a few Arabs. Although Kirundi and French are the official languages in Burundi, many of these foreign groups use Swahili for commerce. At least some knowledge of French is necessary for shopping and social life, as little English is spoken here.

The American community is limited to the U.S. diplomatic staff and a few business people and missionaries. There is little tourism in Burundi.

Food

Fresh tropical fruits (such as bananas, papayas, pineapples, mangoes, lemons, avocados, tangerines, strawberries, and oranges) and vegetables (including cucumbers, green beans, cabbage, tomatoes, artichokes, carrots, cauliflower, beets, lettuce, potatoes, turnips, onions, peas, leeks, green onions, green peppers, and parsley) are available at reasonable prices, although some are seasonal.

Lake Tanganyika provides Bujumbura with succulent whitefish, such as capitaine, sangala, and bangabanga, which are mild flavored and of varying size. An indigenous freshwater sardine that makes a tasty cocktail snack when deep fried can be found.

Local beef and poultry are expensive, and quality varies. Local pork and lamb are quite good. Three local European butcher shops make a variety of sausages and bacon and

several types of ham and lunch meat. Other sausages, ham, special meats, and shellfish imported from Kenya and Europe are expensive.

Local milk is not considered safe; yogurt and butter are good but not always available. Cheeses, when available, are good. European cheeses, ice cream, poultry, temperate zone fruit, and other special foods are available in food stores that cater to Europeans or can be special ordered from Europe, but prices are high because of air freight costs.

Bakeries in town produce a variety of European-type breads and some pastries. Bread always seems to be available locally, but flour shortages do occur.

Burundi's locally grown and processed arabica coffee is excellent. Good locally produced tea is also available. The local brewery makes fine light and dark beers in addition to bottling cola, orange and lemon sodas, tonic, and a good soda water. Brief shortages of these beverages sometimes occur.

Some stores carry a large selection of canned goods and other European and Kenyan food and household products, but prices are high.

Clothing

Summer clothes are worn throughout the year in Burundi. Little ready-made clothing is sold locally. Tailors are available, but the selection of yard goods is small, and any high-quality wash-and-wear fabric is expensive. All clothing should be washable, as dry cleaning is of questionable quality.

Lightweight suits, similar to those worn in summer in Washington, D.C., are appropriate year-round. Short-sleeved shirts are acceptable at work, but a coat and tie are preferred for special business visits. Men also wear safari suits, made to order in Bujumbura or in Nairobi. For most evening social occasions, a sport shirt without tie and coat is

worn. A dinner jacket is rarely needed. For trips into the mountains, a light jacket or sweater is useful. A variety of footwear is recommended.

Women find that summer dresses, slacks, or pantsuits are worn to the office or around town. Hosiery is unnecessary. A good supply of shoes is needed; open styles are best for this tropical climate, along with tennis or hiking shoes for outdoor activities. For most evening occasions, the dress is *tenue relaxe*, which for women usually means long dresses or evening pants outfits that range from casual to dressy, depending on the occasion and the host. One or two long dresses will serve for more formal occasions. A stole is useful for cooler evenings, and mountain trips call for a light jacket or sweater. Some find raincoats too hot in the tropics, but umbrellas are necessary.

A generous supply of washable children's clothing as well as shoes are needed for any extended stay. Jeans and T-shirts are as popular in Burundi as elsewhere. Boys of all ages wear shorts as well as long pants. Smaller children wear rubber boots during the rainy season. Sweaters are needed occasionally in the evening.

All family members should bring appropriate gear for swimming, boating, tennis, golf, horseback riding, or other sports in which they plan to participate.

Supplies & Services

There is a lack of some services and products in Bujumbura. Most basic hygiene items, such as soap, toothpaste, deodorant, and feminine hygiene products are available, but at high prices. Limited supplies of play materials and household products are also expensive, as are gift wrap and party favors (which are depleted rapidly during holiday seasons). Local pharmacies stock basic needs, but do not often have special items. Photographic supplies must be ordered from abroad.



Street in Bujumbura, Burundi

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Bujumbura has no reliable dry cleaning service. Some tailors are available, and best results can be obtained through personal recommendations. Four beauty shops and two barbershops operate in Bujumbura, and the beauty shops serve both men and women.

Some skilled European electricians work in the capital, but labor and materials are expensive.

Religious Activities

In Bujumbura, Catholic Sunday services are held in Kirundi or French at the Cathedral Regina Mundi. Protestant services are offered in Kirundi or French in various churches around town. In addition, a number of English-speaking missionaries in rotation conduct Protestant Fellowship services often featuring visiting speakers from all over the world. A children's English

Sunday School is held during the fellowship service.

Domestic Help

Reliable household help is available. Most households employ a combination houseboy/cook, who does the cooking, cleaning, and laundry. The employer is responsible for the medical care of the servant and his family. The employer may also provide work clothing and give an additional month's pay for a New Year's bonus.

Larger families often hire servants who specialize in particular functions, such as laundry, cooking, and child care. Servants generally are male, and speak French.

Education

Bujumbura has no English-language schools. However, American children at nursery, elementary, and secondary levels are successfully

pursuing their studies in French at the French School of Bujumbura, which is a member of the French overseas school system, and partially supported by the Government of France. Some American students also enroll in the Belgian School of Bujumbura, which is also highly regarded.

Because studies are conducted in a language other than English, supplemental tutoring in French is provided, as is additional course work to help students maintain their U.S.-system grade level. Tutors are also available for supplemental English classes to help school-aged children attain appropriate levels of reading, writing, grammar, and spelling in English. Some expatriate children attend school in Europe or return to the U.S. In addition, there are English-language boarding schools in Kenya, but matriculation is sometimes difficult.

Special educational opportunities are limited, or nonexistent, depending on the availability of qualified instructors which varies from year to year. Official Americans and their families are eligible for French and Swahili lessons, following the guidelines of the Foreign Service Institute program. Kurundi lessons are available from private tutors. Adult and child education in art, music, or dancing is available.

Recreation

Soccer is Burundi's national sport, and matches usually are played on Sunday afternoons. The various sporting clubs sponsor occasional competitions or tournaments but, otherwise, spectator sports are infrequent. Basketball and volleyball are played in the schools.

The few organized activities that take place center around private clubs, where dues are reasonable and where no special clothing is required, except for tennis whites. The clubs include:

Entente Sportive, a social and sports club with a large outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts, playgrounds, a nine-hole golf course, outdoor basketball, and a club house with an excellent restaurant that is the center of social activities in the city.

Cercle Hippique, a riding club where rates are reasonable and formal riding attire is not required. Lessons are available for adults and children.

Cercle Nautique, a small yacht club on the shore of Lake Tanganyika, with mooring for sailboats and power boats. Water-skiing is common here, and fishing from the pier is popular on weekend afternoons, although catches are marginal. Cercle Nautique is a gathering spot for drinks and snacks in the early evenings and on weekends. A good bar that serves light lunches on weekends is also available.

In addition to the club facilities in Bujumbura, there is a popular swimming beach located at the Club des Vacances Hotel. The hotel is situated on the northern shore of Lake Tanganyika, approximately four miles from Bujumbura. The Castle, near Rumonge, a 45- to 60-minute drive south from Bujumbura, features an uncrowded, pleasant, sandy beach and crystal-clear water, making it another popular spot. Bring any beach equipment, such as chairs and umbrella. Such items here, if available, are expensive.

All along the shores of Lake Tanganyika, some danger exists from crocodiles and hippopotami, as well as from bilharzia, a waterborne disease spread by a tiny snail that breeds near reeds in still water. Swimming from a boat in the middle of the lake is considered safe from these dangers. No restrictions on beach attire exist.

Hunting permits are difficult to obtain, and importation of firearms, even for use in a neighboring country, should not be done without consulting authorities.

Burundi has no proper campsites, but camping opportunities are extensive in neighboring Tanzania, as well as in Kenya. Campers should bring all necessary gear, including tents, air mattresses, sleeping bags, lanterns, camp stoves, and eating and cooking utensils. Tents can be rented at some campsites. Several attractive picnic areas are within a short drive from Bujumbura.

Burundi is a birdwatcher's paradise, with a region in the north noted for its various species. Bujumbura is full of colorful birdlife, as is the Ruzuzi River plain.

The mountainous interior of Burundi is beautiful. Except for the few paved truck roads, traveling is difficult. Hotels and restaurants are found only in three or four towns.

A 40-minute drive (21 miles) along the paved road to Bugarama leads to the over 6,000-foot crest between the Nile and Zaire River basins. The area offers many picnic sites, including the beautiful tea plantation at Teza.

Road trips outside the country are feasible to eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) and to Rwanda. Travel by car from Bujumbura north to Kigali, Rwanda, takes five hours. From Kigali, it is possible to reach the Akagera Game Park in northeastern Rwanda. The park has abundant wildlife, and its flora has not been damaged by elephants and giraffes, as is sometimes the case in East Africa. Rwanda also has the highly scenic volcano region in the northwest, around Lake Kivu, where gorillas can be seen. The nearby twin towns of Gisenye (Rwanda) and Goma (DRC) offer pleasant hotel accommodations.

The same Lake Kivu area can be reached by going from Bujumbura to Bukavu, DRC, (about 90 miles) and from Bukavu to Goma (about 150 miles) along the western shore of Lake Kivu. The Bukavu-Goma road is twisting, rough, and slippery during the rainy season, but the magnificent scenery is worth the effort. In the Goma vicinity, there are opportunities for hiking up to volcanos, some of which are still active. Two-and-a-half hours north of Goma is lovely Virunga Game Park, with a good hotel. The park is known for its hippos, elephants, lions, and Cob antelope. Bukavu has a park with a mountain gorilla group, just 24 miles from town. The sometimes exhausting hike through the thick forest to find and observe the gorillas is a unique experience.

The closest modern rest spot is Nairobi, Kenya, which is 500 air miles and 960 land miles from Bujumbura—much of it over difficult roads in Uganda. (Currently, travelers are discouraged from making this trip by land because of Ugandan political conditions.)

Many people take advantage of the proximity to Tanzania, which contains some of the best game parks in Africa. Travel by road, while sometimes difficult, provides an enjoyable and memorable experience.

Entertainment

Entertainment is limited in Bujumbura. Movies at the three cinemas are always in French. Several excellent restaurants are patronized by the American community; the menus are somewhat varied, and the cuisine is generally French, Greek, or Belgian. Prices range from moderate to expensive. Musée Vivant, a small museum with a botanical garden, reptile house, aviary, and crafts village is an interesting spot.

Private social activity is informal and frequent, usually revolving around home entertainment such as barbecues, poker nights, or dinner and a movie. There is some entertaining in private clubs or restaurants, but this is expensive. Two nightclubs in town have recorded or taped music. Bujumbura also has several discotheques, but private clubs offer the best opportunity for meeting new people.

Much of the American community is organized around the Bujumbura American Recreation Association (BARA). It operates the Torchlight Club, a nightclub-like place for parties and movies. BARA also has a video club with over 300 films.

Lions Club International, Rotary Club, and Round Table are represented in Bujumbura, and these groups also serve in forming international contacts.

Burundians value courtesy and good manners. At the same time, they do not necessarily follow Western conventions of social conduct. Personal contact generally plays a much greater role here. Burundians seem to enjoy the relaxed, informal style of entertaining favored by many Americans.

OTHER CITIES

Located in the southwestern section of the country, **BURURI** has sites of interest including mosques and Roman Catholic churches. The tropical climate allows the growth of various fruits, corn, and rice. Fishing on nearby Lake Tanganyika makes the production of smoked fish a major industry here.

Burundi's only community of appreciable size (other than the capital) is the small city of **GITEGA** in the central part of the country. Gitega is located approximately 40 miles (65 kilometers) east of Bujumbura and is connected to the capital by a major road. It is a center for education and religion. Several primary, secondary, and technical schools are located here along with places of worship for Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims. Crops such as sorghum, bananas, cassava, sweet potatoes, beans, and corn are grown in areas surrounding Gitega. Industrial enterprises in Gitega are limited to peat exploitation and a small tannery. It is the location of the National Museum, opened in 1955, with its well-displayed historical and folk exhibits, as well as the site of a library. A Catholic mission here operates an art school that sells some native carvings, bas-reliefs, and ceramic work. There also are a few hotels and restaurants in the city. Gitega's population is approximately 27,000.

NGOZI is a small town located in north-central Burundi. A government hospital is located here along with several churches and mosques. Cassava, sweet potatoes, beans, coffee, bananas, and tea are grown near the town. In recent years, tin mining has become a growing industry near Ngozi. Ngozi has a population of roughly 15,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Burundi, measuring 10,747 square miles, is about the size of Maryland. It is located in the heart of central Africa, along the northeastern shore of Lake Tanganyika. To the north is Rwanda, a country of about equal size, with the same local language and many of the same customs. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) is to the west, across the shared Ruzizi River and Lake Tanganyika, both forming a part of the western section of the Great Rift Valley. To the south and east lies Tanzania.

Mountains rise steeply from the Tanganyika shore to almost 9,000 feet along the Zaire-Nile watershed divide to the east of Bujumbura, which itself is situated at an altitude of 2,600 feet. Green valleys and hillsides—intensively cultivated in wheat, peas, corn, and tea—typify the rest of the countryside on the divide. East of the divide, the central plateau (3,500 to 6,000 feet) gradually becomes more open and rolling, with predominating crops of bananas, corn, beans, and coffee. Toward the Tanzanian border, the altitude drops sharply at some eastern points into largely uninhabited valleys, such as the Mosso in southeastern Burundi.

The Bujumbura area has a distinct dry season and two rainy seasons. The short rainy interval extends from October to December. The long rainy period begins in February and continues through mid-May. Average annual rainfall in Bujumbura measures about 31 inches, but twice that amount occurs in the mountains. During the long, dry, summer season (mid-May to early October), a haze often obscures the mountains and even much of the lake view, but a brisk breeze around midday helps to freshen the air.

Temperatures in Bujumbura generally range from about 72°F at night to between 85°F–91°F during the day. However, temperatures may be hotter at midday during the dry season or cooler (below 80°F) on cloudy days during the rainy period. The equatorial sun at Bujumbura's altitude can be intense and very hot, with attendant sunburn problems. Humidity during the rainy season is not as severe or oppressive as in coastal African towns. Cool evenings may require a light sweater or stole, particularly after acclimatization brings sensitivity to minor temperature changes.

Much cooler temperatures are recorded in the mountains of the interior, where there are occasional night frosts in June and July. Hailstorms sometimes occur during the rainy season. Daytime temperatures in the shade are usually in the upper 60s or low 70s along the crest, and nighttime lows are about 50°F. However, midday exposure of unprotected skin to strong sun—even for brief periods—at altitudes greater than 6,000 feet can result in severe burns.

Population

Burundi's population is estimated at 5.9 million. With a population density of approximately 600 people per square mile, Burundi is one of the most densely inhabited countries in Africa. Three ethnic groups comprise the indigenous population: Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, all of whom speak Kirundi as their native tongue.

The official languages of Burundi are French and Kirundi, although Swahili is spoken in Bujumbura and a few other commercial sectors. Because Kirundi is a difficult tonal language that requires a long learning process, most Westerners rely on French to communicate with Burundians. In recent years, the government has stressed English in schools, and some Burundian officials now have a good knowledge of English.

Government

Burundi, formerly known as Urundi, came under the German East African Administration at the close of the 19th century. In 1919, the area called Ruanda-Urundi (now Rwanda and Burundi) was ceded to Belgium under a League of Nations mandate, which in turn became a United Nations trusteeship after World War II. Burundi was granted independence July 1, 1962 as a constitutional monarchy.

A military coup d'état in November 1966 overthrew the king (*mwami*), and established a republic under the leadership of Capt. (eventually Lt. Gen.) Michel Micombero. A second military coup 10 years later ousted Micombero on charges of corrupt and inefficient government, and brought to power Col. Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, who had received university-level military training in Belgium. Bagaza was elected by direct suffrage in 1984. However, Bagaza's regime became increasingly repressive and unpopular. In September 1987, Bagaza was overthrown in a military coup. His replacement, Major Pierre Buyoya, suspended Burundi's constitution and named a 31-member Military Committee for National Salvation (CMSN) to govern the country. The CMSN remained the primary governmental authority until mid-1990, when it was replaced by a civilian-led National Security Council. A new constitution adopted in 1991 provided for a directly elected president, a prime minister, and an 81-seat National Assembly. It was supplanted on 6 June 1998 by a Transitional Constitution which enlarged the National Assembly to 121 seats and created two vice presidents.

Two national, mainstream governing parties are the Unity for National Progress or UPRONA; and the Burundi Democratic Front or FRODEBU. A multiparty system was introduced after 1998.

Burundi is divided into 16 provinces, each headed by a governor.

Provinces are subdivided into communes, communal subsectors called zones, and groups of hills and individual hills (*collines*) which traditionally organize along family lines.

The Burundi flag consists of a white diagonal cross on green and red quarters, with three red stars (for unity, work, and progress) on a central circle.

Arts, Science, Education

There is no compulsory education in Burundi. The country's literacy rate in 1995 was about 35 percent.

The University of Burundi, including the semi-autonomous Teachers College (ENS) in Bujumbura, has an estimated 3,300 students. Its law, arts and letters, economics, and agricultural departments, as well as the ENS, offer four years of study leading to a degree. The University of Burundi has a medical school. A large number of French, Belgian, Swiss, Russian, and other foreign professors teach at the university.

Five schools in Bujumbura operate for foreign students, offering classes from kindergarten through high school.

Four private kindergartens operate for preschool children aged three to five.

Commerce and Industry

Burundi's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture. Over 90 percent of Burundi's people are engaged in subsistence farming. Burundi's principal product is arabica coffee, most of which is sold to the European Community (EC). Coffee provides up to 80 percent of Burundi's export earnings. Other cash crops include tea, cotton, tobacco, and palm oil.

The manufacturing sector in Burundi is small and centered pri-

marily in Bujumbura. The city has a few light industries producing beer, soft drinks, soap, metal parts, insecticides, textiles, cigarettes, and paint.

High-grade nickel deposits and other minerals were discovered in the 1980s, providing new resource potential. The government, international organizations, and several firms are studying techniques for exploiting these minerals. In 1985, Amoco began a major oil exploration program in Burundi.

Wood is Burundi's main source of energy. The Mugere hydroelectric dam, constructed by the Chinese, was opened in 1986 and supplies part of the electrical power consumed in Bujumbura.

EC countries such as Germany, France, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Belgium are Burundi's main trading partners.

Burundi is extremely dependent on foreign aid. The EC nations, China, the United States, World Bank, and the United Nations have all contributed substantial amounts of economic assistance.

The Chambre de Commerce et de l'Industrie du Burundi has an office in Bujumbura. The postal address is B.P. 313.

Transportation

No domestic transportation system is acceptable except weekly Air Burundi flights to Gitega. A World War I era German navy steamer transports passengers and cargo around Lake Tanganyika. Bujumbura International Airport is located approximately 10 miles (15 kilometers) from Bujumbura. Direct air service exists between Bujumbura and Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), Uganda, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Russia, and Belgium. Participating airlines are Air France, Aeroflot, Air Tanzania, Air Zaire, Kenya Airlines, Cam-

eroon Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines, and Sabena.

Although all-weather roads provide access to the game parks in Zaire and Rwanda, as well as overland travel to Uganda and Kenya, political conditions may discourage such travel. Travelers can reach the game parks in Tanzania by car, but distances are great, and roads may be impassable.

Taxis are available within Bujumbura. Fares are negotiated at the beginning of a trip. A vehicle with a driver may be rented, but rates are high. Tips (always less than 10 percent) are welcome, but not mandatory.

The country's rudimentary public transportation system makes a dependable, personally owned automobile a necessity. Burundi, and its most easily reached neighbors, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), use left-hand drive, but right-hand-drive cars are permitted. A valid operator's license is the only requirement for obtaining a permit to drive in Burundi.

Most roads outside the city of Bujumbura are unpaved. However, there is a good, all-weather highway to Kigali, Rwanda; a fair road connects the city to Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire); and, within the country, roads to the cities of Rumonge, Gihofi, Nyanza Lac, Muyinga, and Gitega are paved. Generally rough roads dictate the need for a car with adequate ground clearance.

The Americans living in Burundi own an equal mix of American and foreign-made cars. Outside the U.S. community, predominant makes include Toyota, Nissan, Peugeot, Renault, Mercedes, Volkswagen, and Land or Range Rovers. Smaller cars prevail because of the extremely high cost of gasoline. Local dealers and service are available for the above makes, but there

is no guarantee of parts availability. Cars built for the American market have different specifications from those built for Burundi. Ideally, vehicles should be equipped with heavy-duty suspension, cooling systems, heavy-duty batteries, and tube-type tires.

Air conditioning is a welcome feature, but not essential. It is advisable to keep an extra supply of oil, gas, and air filters; spark plugs; oil, brake, and transmission fluid; fan belts; windshield wipers; and various bulbs and fuses to simplify maintenance and reduce costs.

Communications

Bujumbura has a relatively dependable local telephone service, although it is subject to interruptions. Service within the country is fairly good. Delays are often encountered when placing international calls, but a ground-satellite relay station usually produces clear connections.

Commercial cable service is available, but extremely expensive. The rate system is complex.

International airmail service to and from Burundi is generally good. Letters to Europe take about five days for delivery, and to the U.S., about 10 days. Surface mail is in transit four to eight months to or from the U.S. Packages are subject to customs problems, and service is often unreliable.

The one radio station in Burundi is the government-controlled La Voix de la Révolution. It broadcasts on several FM frequencies in French, Kirundi, Swahili, and English.

A shortwave radio is a must for international and sports news. A good receiver can pick up British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Voice of America (VOA), Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS), as well as non-English broadcasts.

Burundi's television service, Télévision Nationale du Burundi broadcasts from a station in Bujumbura. Programs are in Kirundi or consist of French-language news and films. Also, Zaire television can be seen on a set capable of receiving SECAM standard broadcasts for color or, CCIR standard for black-and-white. Many expatriates have American standard (NTSC) television and VCRs and order commercially or privately made tapes from the U.S.

The only local Western-language newspaper is *Le Renouveau du Burundi*, an eight-page, daily, French-language paper published by the Burundi Ministry of Information. It often features good and accurate international news, but generally arrives one day late. The most widely read English-language newspaper is the *International Herald Tribune*, which arrives from The Hague one to five days late. Editions of *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The Economist*, or Sunday editions of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* can be ordered by mail, but these subscriptions often are three to four weeks in arriving.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

General medical practitioners, both European and Burundian, can be consulted in Bujumbura. Local optometrical and ophthalmological care is not recommended, but good care is available in Nairobi. Burundi's hospitals do not meet Western standards and, except in emergencies, most Western expatriates use facilities in Kenya or South Africa.

Routine dental care is unavailable in Bujumbura. However, Nairobi, Kenya has good dental facilities. Orthodontic work cannot be done in Bujumbura. Western Europe or South Africa offer the nearest acceptable facilities.

Community Health

Malaria, viral infections, colds, insect bites, and easily infected cuts

are the most common ailments in Bujumbura. Those suffering from asthma or allergies also may have problems, particularly during the dusty dry season.

The level of public sanitation compares favorably with other developing countries, but falls below U.S. standards. Open drains, lack of a sewage system, garbage piles, open field burning, and other unsanitary practices are still common.

Preventive Measures

Malaria prophylaxis should be initiated at least one week before arriving in Burundi. Mefloquine is recommended because the mosquitoes are chloroquine resistant. The list of inoculations recommended by the U.S. Department of State for its employees includes those for yellow fever, smallpox, tetanus, typhoid, and polio; gamma globulin shots also are on the list. Yellow fever and cholera immunizations are required for entry into the country.

AIDS is a major problem, especially among prostitutes. In Africa, AIDS is primarily a heterosexual disease and extreme caution is urged.

Although the water supply in Bujumbura is considered safe, boiling and filtering is recommended because of the doubtful condition of pipes, particularly in the older downtown areas. In restaurants, locally bottled beverages are readily available (cola, soda water, tonic, orange and lemon-lime soft drinks, and an excellent beer). Scrupulous care must be taken in the preparation of food. Vegetables should be washed and all household staff members who handle food should receive periodic physical examinations.

The risk of bilharzia exists along much of the Lake Tanganyika shoreline, although some beaches and mid-lake areas are less dangerous.

Persons with pets should bring flea and tick collars, spray, or powder.

Competent veterinary care is available, but it is often necessary to purchase veterinary medicines and vaccines from Nairobi, Europe, or the U.S.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Feb. 5 | Unity Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| May/June | Ascension Day* |
| July 1 | Independence Day |
| Aug. 15 | Assumption Day* |
| Oct. 13. | Prince Louis Rwagasore Day |
| Oct. 21. | President Ndadaye's Day |
| Nov. 1 | All Saints' Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| | *Variable |

NOTE FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

Travel to Burundi is nearly always by air, although it is possible to cross the border by road or ferry. Travelers generally transit Paris, Brussels, or Nairobi, Kenya. Most flights go through Nairobi, and provide an opportunity for last-minute shopping.

A passport, visa, and evidence of immunization against yellow fever and meningococcal meningitis are required. Only those travelers resident in countries where there is no Burundian Embassy are eligible for entry stamps, without a visa, at the airport upon arrival. These entry stamps are not a substitute for a visa, which must be obtained from the Burundi Immigration Service within 24 hours of arrival. Travelers without a visa are not permitted to leave the country. Travelers should obtain the latest information and details from the Embassy of the

Republic of Burundi, Suite 212, 2233 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20007; telephone (202) 342-2574 or the Permanent Mission of Burundi to the United Nations in New York. Overseas inquiries may be made at the nearest Burundian embassy or consulate.

Travelers who wish to travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with visas and/or entry/exit stamps from Burundi, Rwanda or Uganda may experience difficulties at DRC airports or other ports of entry. Some travelers with those visas or exit/entry stamps have been detained for questioning in DRC.

Americans living in or visiting Burundi are encouraged to register at the Consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Burundi and obtain updated information on travel and security within Burundi. The U.S. Embassy is located on the Avenue des Etats-Unis. The mailing address is B.P. 34, 1720 Bujumbura,

Burundi. The telephone number is (257) 223-454, fax (257) 222-926.

Pets

All pets entering Burundi must have accredited rabies and health certificates. The rabies vaccination should be given 30 to 60 days before arrival, and the health certificate should be dated within 48 hours of the start of the pet's travel. Quarantine is not required for arriving animals.

Pet food is available, but extremely expensive and often past the date of expiration on the label. Most expatriates prepare pet food from meat products that are locally available.

The time in Burundi is Greenwich Mean Time plus two.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The official currency is the Burundi franc (BFr), linked directly to the U.S. dollar. Currency importation is not restricted, but must be declared.

No U.S. banks have affiliated offices in Bujumbura.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Africa South of the Sahara 1992. London: Europa Publications, 1991.

Kay, Reginald. *Burundi Since the Genocide.* London: Minority Rights Group, 1987.

Powzyk, J.A. *Tracking Wild Chimpanzees in Kibira National Park.* New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1988.

Wolbers, Marion T. *Burundi. Places & Peoples of the World Series.* New York: Chelsea House, 1989.



Yaounde, Cameroon

CAMEROON

Republic of Cameroon

Major Cities:

Yaounde, Douala

Other Cities:

Bafoussam, Bertoua, Buea, Dschang, Ebolowa, Edéa, Foumban, Garoua, Kumba, Maroua, Ngaoundéré, Nkongsamba

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2000 for Cameroon. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

An Africa in miniature, the Republic of Cameroon contains examples of all the geography and people south of the Sahara: steamy equatorial jungles inhabited by pygmy hunters and the great apes; vast plains alive with African wildlife; white sand beaches; and Mount Cameroon, a still active volcano, rising 13,428 feet above sea level.

Each region is characterized by distinct societies: from the Muslim traders and pastoralists in the north; to the farmers and craft-makers of the west; to the forest peoples of the south. A cultural mosaic containing over 200 ethnic groups speaking 24 major African languages and three world languages:

English, French, and Arabic. Cameroon's only common feature appears to be its variety.

Cameroon's two major cities are Douala and Yaounde. Douala, the most densely populated, is a major port of call along the coast of West Africa and is acknowledged to be Cameroon's commercial center. Yaounde, situated in a lush hilly region in the interior, is the political capital and seat of government.

While not considered a tourist destination, Cameroon offers the determined traveler a broad spectrum of African sights and insights into the sub-Saharan region.

MAJOR CITIES

Yaounde

Yaounde, the capital, is in central south Cameroon, 168 road miles inland, east of Douala. Yaounde is 4 degrees north of the Equator at an altitude of 2,500 feet and has a relatively mild climate. Daily temperatures can vary as much as 20 degrees Fahrenheit—from a high of 85-90 degrees Fahrenheit, to a low of 65-70 degrees Fahrenheit. Yaounde is situated amidst forested hills. The city stretches for 5 miles,

over seven hills, in an area of lush vegetation. While Yaounde has modern buildings and services, a lack of maintenance, especially on roads, and infrequent garbage pickup degrade the quality of urban life. An excellent highway system connects Yaounde with the other major cities of Douala, Bafoussam, and Bamenda, as well as the beaches at Kribi and Limbe.

Yaounde's population is about 1,446,000. The number of foreigners has steadily declined since Cameroon's mid 1980s economic downturn. Neither tourism nor business opportunities abound in Yaounde to attract significant numbers of visitors.

Food

Local produce (fresh fruits and vegetables) is plentiful and reasonably priced.

Most other foodstuffs are available locally, but generally are imported and more costly than in the U.S. Fresh milk is not available—only dried and sterilized (UHT) long-life milk. Locally produced coffee, tea, soft drinks, and beer are plentiful. Specialty or ethnic food items are not available locally.

Butcher shops, grocery stores, and the local open-air markets provide fresh meat, fish and shrimp, canned

goods, tropical fruits, and vegetables. Frozen meat from Europe is also available. Meats bought at the local market will need to be cleaned, trimmed, and cured before cooking. All fresh fruits and vegetables must be washed and properly soaked in an iodine or Clorox solution before being stored, peeled, or eaten.

General food items are priced higher, and certain items are unavailable.

Clothing

Bring an ample supply of all types of clothing for each family member. Although the climate is mild for the Tropics, with no real change of season, 100% cotton or cotton/polyester fabrics are recommended. A light jacket, wrap or sweater is useful on cool evenings. Drycleaning is expensive, and the service is poor. Umbrellas are a necessity. Local shoes are unreasonably expensive, of poor quality and durability, and selection is limited.

Women: Dresses, skirts, pantsuits, and slacks can be worn for office or everyday wear. Sometimes women wearing pantsuits are denied entry into Cameroonian Government buildings. At "American" casual gatherings, slacks, jeans, or informal dresses are typical. Americans are the casual dressers; Cameroonians rarely are! Shorts are appropriate only at the American School of Yaounde Recreation Center or for sports. Evening wear consists of long, casual-to-semiformal dresses, as well as short cocktail dresses. Long-sleeved dresses and blouses can be worn in the evenings. Shawls and sweaters are also useful for cool nights. Stockings may be worn, but they are neither necessary nor practical.

Supplies and Services

Most essential nonfood items, such as cosmetics, toiletries, drugstore supplies (excluding prescriptions), sports equipment, pet supplies, and sewing materials and notions are sold locally. However, few American brands are available, costs are normally higher than in the U.S., the quality of the goods is often ques-

tionable, and availability is always uncertain. For these reasons and to meet personal preferences, ship a 2-year supply or order these items periodically from the U.S. Bring an initial supply of photographic film and plan to reorder later as local film is expensive and may have been on the shelf in non-airconditioned stores for some time. Insect repellent is not available locally and it is advisable to bring products that contain at least 31.5% DEFT. Hardware stores are well stocked with French-made goods.

Ship sports equipment for golf, tennis, and swimming, i.e., balls, racquets, clothing, shoes, etc., with your household goods. Sports equipment or supplies may also be reordered from several U.S. companies. For children, consider bringing several swimsuits, masks, goggles, flippers, inflatable armbands and rings.

Repair of minor camera, radio, and stereo equipment is available, but the quality is questionable. Parts for most U.S.-made products are unavailable. Many local photo shops offer 25-minute developing of color film; quality varies from mediocre to very good, with prices around \$7.50-\$10 per 24-exposure roll.

Hairdressers with Western-style standards of cleanliness are available but limited in number and of middling quality. Pricing is comparable to a smaller U.S. city. Several barbers are available at reasonable prices. Shoe repair services are acceptable.

Yaounde has many tailors and dressmakers. In general, dressmakers charge reasonable prices, but tailors of Western-style clothing charge more. Local fabrics are reasonably priced and many people have African-style shirts, pants, dresses, and casual clothes made to supplement their wardrobes. Drycleaning shops are expensive with inconsistent results.

Domestic Help

Due to the additional and complicated procedures necessary

in food preparation, shopping, entertaining, gardening, and the extraordinary demands of house cleaning and laundry, domestic help is desirable. Most U.S. households employ at least one steward who may perform a combination of kitchen and household cleaning responsibilities. Depending on personal needs, one can also hire cooks, nursemaids, launderers, gardeners, and part-time help.

Both English-speaking and French-speaking domestics are available. Salaries for domestics range from approximately US \$50 to US \$150 monthly depending on qualifications, duties, and hours worked. Employers are responsible for payment into the Cameroonian equivalent of social security, CNPS (Casse Nationale de Prevoyance Sociale) at a rate of 12.95% of the salary paid to the domestic. A 54-hour week, with 1 day off, is the official Cameroonian workweek. Few domestics live-in.

Religious Activities

The Yaounde region is primarily Christian. Roman Catholic masses are held in French or a local language. English-language mass is held once a week at Mt. Febe monastery. Weekly English-language services are available at the Bastos Presbyterian Church, and Etoug-Ebe and Faith Baptist Churches. The Greek Orthodox Church conducts early masses in French followed by Greek masses. The American Jewish and Israeli communities jointly sponsor ad hoc Jewish holiday observances. The International Christian Fellowship (interdenominational) holds its services at the Hilton Hotel on Sunday mornings. A branch of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints holds Sunday morning services in French with English Sunday school classes.

Education

The American School of Yaounde is an independent coeducational school founded in 1964. It offers an educational program from prekindergarten through grade 12 for English-speaking students of all

nationalities. Grades 11 and 12 are supplemented by correspondence study from the University of Nebraska. The school year is made up of four terms extending from late August to late October, early November to late January, early February to mid-April, and mid-April to mid-June with 180 days of instruction.

The school is governed by an eight-member School Board elected for 2-year terms by the School Association. Half of the Board members are elected at each October meeting. The U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon also appoints a representative to the Board. Parents or guardians of children enrolled in the school are automatically Association members.

The curriculum is that of traditional U.S. public schools with the use of modern materials including micro-computers and up-to-date teaching techniques in all subject areas. All instruction is in English, with French being taught at all levels. English as a Second Language (ESL) support is offered through grade 10 to students whose English is not fluent. The school is accredited by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges and the European Council of International Schools. Currently, the school has no learning specialist on staff; so, students with moderate to severe learning problems may not be admitted if it is determined that our program is not appropriate for them.

There are 23 full-time and 1 part-time faculty members in the 1999-2000 school year, including 12 U.S. citizens, 3 host-country nationals, and 8 third-country nationals. All staff members are fully certified and registered with their respective country's educational department, and most of the teachers are U.S. certified and trained.

Enrollment at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year is 148. Of the total, 34% are U.S. citizens, 17.5% Cameroonian, and 49% are children of 20 other nationalities.

The school has 13 classrooms, 2 computer rooms, a second language center with 2 rooms, a library for student use with separate primary and secondary sections, a swimming pool, a volleyball/basketball court, and 4 tennis courts, a restaurant, and a large covered assembly area. The playground is divided into an area for the smaller children with modern BigToys playground equipment and an abbreviated soccer field. The school is located on property owned by the U.S. Embassy.

In the 1999-2000 school year, about 95% of the school's income is derived from tuition. The annual tuition rates are: Early Childhood: \$2,020; PreK: \$2,500; Kindergarten: \$6,780; Grades 1 to 5: \$8,850; Grades 6 to 8: \$9,090; Grades 9 to 12: \$9,260; and, ESL supplement: \$1,000. Transportation by school bus (optional) is \$1,250 per year per child. (All fees quoted in U.S. dollars). Rain Forest International School (RFIS) is a Christian high school (grades 9 to 12), associated with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), a large missionary group specializing in Bible translations. RFIS, which started in the 1991-92 school year, offers an international curriculum taught in English. Middle States Association of Colleges and the Association of Christian Schools International accredit RFIS. Current enrollment is 56 and RFIS has added 10 students in the past 5 years and is expected to continue to grow at that rate. Tuition charges for 2000 are US \$7,300. Separately managed hostels provide residences for boarding students.

Ecole Internationale Le Flamboyant is a private preschool and elementary school started in 1986. Accreditation is by MINEDUC of Cameroon and A E F E of France. Instruction is in French and tuition is \$1,900-\$3,300 for 2000.

Local schools, whether public or private, use the French language and teaching system. All local schools have large classes, minimizing individual attention. They are appropriate only for children who have a

firm knowledge of French and are accustomed to the French educational system. A French elementary school and high school have very high standards and admission is very difficult. A private nursery school and two technical schools also provide instruction in French.

The University of Yaounde provides a French-style education with instruction in both French and English.

Sports

The most popular sporting activities are tennis, golf, and swimming. Expatriates sometimes organize softball, basketball, soccer, and volleyball games.

American School of Yaounde Recreation Center (ASOY) has a membership that is open to the international and Cameroonian community to take advantage of the school's sports, restaurant and recreational facilities. Facilities include: a swimming pool and toddler's pool supervised by lifeguards; four tennis courts, two of which are lighted; a combination volleyball and basketball court; a Ping-pong table; Video Club (NTSC cassettes); The Parrot's Club Canteen, a bar and full-service restaurant; and, a multipurpose hall, which may be rented for private parties. Swimming lessons and TaeKwonDo are available. The Recreation Center is open 6 days a week, from 9 am to 6 pm except Mondays and holidays. The Club hosts special functions such as tennis tournaments and bazaars and will cater for private parties. The school's soccer field and playground are available outside of school hours. Membership fees vary according to family size. The 2000 annual fees for ASOY are about 70,000 CFA (US\$110) per adult & 35,000 CFA (US\$55) each per first 2 children, and 95,000 CFA (US\$150) for singles. ASOY students are automatically members of the Recreation Center.

Hilton Health Club is located in the basement of the Hilton Hotel. Their facilities include a sauna, jacuzzi, weight room, pool, and tennis

courts. They also offer a variety of exercise/fitness classes. Membership is based on family size, and can be arranged monthly or annually.

Tennis Club of Yaounde has four lighted tennis courts and a bar. Racquets can be strung here. Membership is usually full. The Club offers several good tennis exhibition matches every year and also sponsors various tournaments.

Club Noah has a serene hilltop location 10 minutes from Bastos, the primary residential area for most Americans and expatriates. It has three lighted tennis courts, a large swimming pool with poolside cabana offering snacks, and a squash court. Members are usually French speaking.

AMT, The French Military Club, offers three lighted tennis courts and a clubhouse. Judo lessons are given, and there is a boliche area.

Club Hippique offers stables and riding lessons for the beginner to the advanced rider. There are also competitive riding and jumping events.

Yaounde Golf Club, located at the foot of Mont Febe, has one of the most spectacular courses in West Africa. The Club offers an 18-hole course with sand greens, a practice range, and a clubhouse. Daily and weekend rates as well as annual memberships are available.

Par Cours Vita, located near the Mont Febe Hotel, is a one-kilometer outdoor course that offers various exercise spots along a scenic walkway.

Mont Febe Club, located in the Mont Febe Hotel, offers a swimming pool, two tennis courts, indoor and outdoor restaurants and a bar. Daily, monthly, or annual fees may include either tennis or swimming, or both.

Club France offers a wide range of facilities. The four tennis courts (three lighted), two squash courts, volleyball, basketball, semi-Olympic sized pool, kiddie pool, are only a

small portion of activities available. There is also a multipurpose gym, library, poolroom, bridge room, skateboard course, TV room (satellite dish), petanque, and a bar and restaurant.

Hotel Des Deputes offers two tennis courts and a swimming pool. Daily, monthly, or annual fees are available.

Bird and small-game hunting spots exist in the Yaounde area. Big-game hunting is possible in other parts of the country, although permits are expensive. While ammunition is available locally, it is expensive, limited in supply, and not the best quality. Bring all hunting equipment and ammunition from the U.S. The importation of firearms and ammunition requires the Ambassador's written approval in advance (see *Firearms and Ammunition*).

An abundance of colorful African birds in and around Yaounde affords frequent opportunities to bird watch. Bring a pair of binoculars. West African and sometimes South African bird books are used for personal reference in identifying birds as there is no Central African book in print. The Bird Club of Cameroon, which is a member of the American Birding Association, organizes birding walks and trips within the area.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Activities such as a visit to the Yaounde zoo, a piroque (dug-out canoe); ride on the Nyong River, swimming a Luna Park in Obala or viewing nearby Nachtigal Falls, guided tours of the Sanaga tobacco plantation in Batchenga and touring the Mbalmayo Art Institute are good diversions near Yaounde.

Long weekends to the beaches at Kribi and Limbe, trips to the mountains of the West and Northwest or the northern plains and Waza provide changes of atmosphere and climate. Good roads exist between most major cities, but once off of the main roads, the secondary roads are in poor shape. Four wheel drive is a

necessity on most secondary roads. Limited air transportation is available to all major cities.

Douala is 3 hours away by road and 30 minutes by plane. It is the biggest city in Cameroon- and because of its large expatriate population, Douala offers many good restaurants with various cuisines. Shopping is better than in Yaounde because of greater selection and slightly more reasonable prices.

Limbe, an oceanside town formerly called Victoria, is located less than 1-1/2 hours from Douala. Limbe is known for its wide, flat, black volcanic sand beaches; but white sand beaches also exist not far from the major hotels. Pleasant accommodations can be found at an oceanside hotel, which provides both fresh and saltwater pools and a tennis court. Another hotel about 6 miles out of town offers a quiet oceanside getaway near the site of the lava flow from when Mt. Cameroon erupted in early 1999. Several of the beaches in the area are tidal and do not exist at high tide.

Buea is a mountainside village located about 30 minutes from Douala. Situated at the foot of Mt. Cameroon, it offers a charming setting, cool climate, and adequate accommodations. This is the starting point for climbing Mt. Cameroon.

Mt. Cameroon, at 13,428 feet, is the loftiest peak in sub-Saharan West Africa and provides a challenging, yet not technically difficult (by alpine standards), hiking experience. The climb normally takes 2 days. You must have camping gear (i.e., sleeping bags, portable stove, hiking shoes, etc.), warm clothing, and be prepared to spend the night on the mountain in a primitive hut. Many Americans have made this climb during their tour and found it to be an exhilarating experience. The American School of Yaounde organizes an annual Mt. Cameroon expedition in February each year and adults from the American community are welcome to join this group.

Kribi is a beach resort, about a 3-to 4-hour drive from Yaounde. The white sand beaches are wide and virtually deserted for much of the year. Hotel accommodations are numerous but fill up quickly on weekends during the dry season months of December and January. Some families enjoy camping on campsites along the beach.

The West and Northwest Provinces are located in a mountainous and cool region about a 5-hour drive from Yaounde. This area is the home of the interesting Bamileke and Bamoun cultures. African art and handicrafts of the region are among its attractions, with handicraft centers in Bamenda and Foumban. Older precolonial European style hotels in Dschang, Bali, Bafoussam, and Bamenda offer limited accommodations of uneven quality.

A trip to northern Cameroon offers by far the most striking change of scenery, climate, and culture. Its sparsely vegetated savanna terrain, scorching temperatures, Moslem culture, and primitive ambiance contrast starkly with the more developed southern parts of the country. Among several game reserves, Waza is considered one of the best in West Africa. During the dry season, many varieties of wild game are easily viewed as the animals congregate at the few remaining waterholes. Although a journey to the north is long and expensive and the climate hot and dusty, these factors should not deter those interested in a unique African experience. About 12 days are needed if traveling entirely by road. Another option, which is more expensive but saves time, is to travel from Yaounde to Ngaoundere by train, which will also transport your car, and drive north from there on a good paved road. Even more expensive air package tours include accommodations and meals. Rental ground transport is available in the extreme North but quite expensive.

Entertainment

One modern, air-conditioned movie theater in Yaounde shows European

and American films—all dubbed into French. Although recent high-quality American films are shown occasionally, first-run European films are shown more often.

Yaounde has several discotheques that are loud, dark, crowded, smoke filled, and expensive, but provide good Western and African music for both dancing and listening. Several clubs provide live African music.

Major Cameroonian holidays provide colorful parades with native dancing and music.

The American, French, and German cultural centers and the British Council offer occasional concerts, films, and lectures. Some well-known entertainers of international fame come to Yaounde at least once a year.

Yaounde has numerous restaurants: Russian, Italian, Greek, Vietnamese, Chinese, Lebanese, and many others that serve standard French cuisine. Hilton Hotel and Hotel Mount Febe also have good restaurants at more expensive prices. A few restaurants offer take-out service and a couple of restaurants recently began pizza delivery services. Prices at most restaurants are comparable to the U.S., for example, a two-course meal usually costs between \$8 and \$15 each, excluding drinks, dessert, and tip. The tipping rate for service is much less than in the U.S. Don't miss the opportunity to try numerous African restaurants serving traditional Cameroonian dishes. "Chicken" or "fish" houses abound, serving chicken, fish, plantains, and/or fries. Most are good, some excellent, more reasonably priced than full-service restaurants.

Social Activities

Most entertaining is done casually in the home. Aside from representational entertaining, most get-togethers are informal dinners, luncheons, barbecues, and cocktail parties. Tennis, swimming, golf, board games, and charades are among the most popular activities here. Both Boy and Girl Scouts have programs

here. The American School of Yaounde (ASOY) has an excellent afterschool activity program as well.

Americans mingle freely with both the Cameroonian and European communities. Since the vast majority of both these groups are French speaking, knowledge of that language is essential for easy socializing.

Broadening your contacts within the diplomatic and local community greatly enhances your tour and provides further social activities as well.

Douala

Douala is a 3-hour drive west of Yaounde and is about four degrees north of the Equator at an altitude of roughly 40 feet. It is 12 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean on the Wouri River. The surrounding terrain is flat or gently rolling and crisscrossed with numerous creeks. A tropical rain forest begins at the edge of town and extends inland.

High heat and humidity characterize the climate. Temperatures fluctuate between the mid-70s and the low 90s. Relative humidity averages in the mid-80s. Dust can be a problem during the dry season for those with allergies.

Douala is a sprawling city of wide avenues crowded with cars and motor scooters during rush hour. Modern houses and buildings appear beside the prewar examples of traditional colonial architecture (with verandas, louvered shutters, and thick walls). A pleasant, cosmopolitan city, Douala is Cameroon's largest urban center, with a population estimated at 2,800,000. It has a sizable foreign community, with particularly large Nigerian and French populations. About 200 Americans live in the Douala area, many of who are employed in the petroleum sector. The consular corps includes the Consulate General of France; Consulates of Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, and China; and honorary consuls for Zaire, the Netherlands, Belgium, Togo, the



Joss College in Douala, Cameroon

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Central African Republic, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Italy, and Tunisia.

Douala is Cameroon's economic capital and its gateway to the world. The port handles some 4 million tons of cargo annually for both Cameroon and the inland countries of central Africa. Its airport serves as a major regional air hub. Douala is the terminal point for Cameroon's railroad lines. The city has considerable light industry located primarily in industrial zones on either end of the city, producing a variety of goods such as plastics, soap, perfume, household appliances, bags,

cigarettes, cement, chocolate, and cocoa powder for the national and regional markets.

An American Business Association and an International Women's Club hold monthly luncheon meetings.

Food

A wide variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, and fish are readily available and are moderately more expensive than in Washington, DC. A trip to the local fish market will reveal very fresh fish of several species, including capitán, flounder, barr, world-class shrimp, and others. Local paper products, cos-

metics, toiletries, and baby and pet food are limited in supply, of quality significantly less than you may be familiar with, and expensive.

Clothing

In Douala, there is little change in temperature and lightweight clothing is advisable due to the heat and humidity. Men usually wear a suit or jacket, shirt, tie, and slacks at the office. Women usually wear a lightweight suit or dress at the office. Cameroonians dress more formally in daily wear and do not normally wear shorts except when playing sports. Drycleaning services are plentiful and generally of good qual-

ity but more expensive than in Washington, D.C. Bring enough shoes to last an entire tour (or plan to mail order) because size, selection, and quality are limited. Umbrellas are necessary and available locally but raincoats are seldom worn due to the humidity.

Supplies and Services

Some items either not available or of limited availability are: cosmetics, paper products, contact lens supplies, common contraceptives, shower curtains, and fragrances. Prearrange delivery from the U.S. of prescription drugs to assure a continuous supply.

Douala has one recommended private medical clinic-Polyclinic Bonanjo. It is acceptable for general health care, but specialized treatment must be sought outside the country.

Competent tailors and dressmakers can be found and can copy existing clothing or make it from pictures you supply. Bring sewing notions (buttons, zippers, elastic, and favorite patterns) with you from the U.S. Colorful, locally produced cotton material is inexpensive; other materials are imported and costly. African-style dresses and caftans embellished with embroidery or batik are plentiful.

Shoe repair services are available and satisfactory. Barbershops and beauty shops in town are good, although expensive. Repair work on radios, videos, and electronic equipment is reasonably well done in Douala. Camera repairs are not generally done locally. Film is plentiful and local film development is good but expensive. Watch repair is limited to battery changes.

Although Douala has some specialty stores, sports equipment stores, and bookstores, bring sports and hobby equipment and supplies to avoid limited availability and high local prices. English-language books, records, and children's games are best brought or ordered from the U.S.

Automobile servicing is satisfactory for most Japanese and European cars. Service and parts for most U.S. vehicles are minimal at local Cameroonian dealers. Local mechanics are innovative and can usually be relied upon to keep your car, whatever make, running. Bargaining in advance and ability to pay determine the cost.

Taxis are readily available and inexpensive but due to increased criminal activity should be used with caution. Taxis cannot be summoned by telephone. There are some car rental agencies located in Douala.

Domestic Help

Domestic help is recommended and readily available. Male domestics are plentiful; female domestics are harder to find. It is a good idea to request recommendations from your predecessor. Salaries are paid in CFA at the equivalent of US\$75-\$100 a month for a house domestic and up to US\$150 for a cook/house domestic. They commonly work six 9-hour days a week. After serving a year they are entitled to 3-week's paid vacation.

Religious Activities

Catholic, Anglican, and Moslem services are normally conducted in French. Douala also has a large Baha'i community.

Education

The American School of Douala (ASD) provides an American-style curriculum for prekindergarten through grade 8. High-school students must plan to attend schools in Europe or the U.S. Present enrollment is about 100 students. The other private school attended by expatriate children is the French-run Ecole Dominique Savio, which provides a traditional French education for nursery through the Baccalaureate. Aside from admission of 2- to 4-year olds to the nursery school, Ecole Dominique Savio only enrolls students with a firm knowledge of French.

Sports

Outdoor sports activities are somewhat curtailed during the heavy rainy season from June through October. Many people jog or swim throughout the year

single joggers should use caution. There is a weekly Hash House Harriers run and a Scottish dancing group. There are several active tennis clubs and Tiko has a 9-hole golf course nearby. The local marina has water ski and wind surf areas. In addition, there are riding clubs as well as several modern exercise/dance studios offering aerobic, circuit training, and other activities.

Entertainment

Perhaps the chief form of entertainment in the city is dining out in Douala's fine restaurants, which offer French, Chinese, Southeast Asian, Lebanese, Indian, Russian, Italian, and Cameroonian cuisine. Douala also has three modern air-conditioned movie theaters that show movies in French.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Three nearby towns (1 to 1-1/2 hours drive from Douala) offer quiet diversions from the bustle of the city. Buea is charmingly situated at the base of Mt. Cameroon, West Africa's highest mountain, and is the starting point for hikes to the summit. The Mountain Hotel has a swimming pool and good food. Limbe is a quaint oceanside town with black volcanic sand beaches and a botanical garden. Several hotels are available and have swimming pools. Kribi has sparkling white sand beaches and is the beach most frequented by expatriates. There are many hotels available. A good highway connects Yaounde and Douala in about 3 hours. Distant drives can also be made to Foumban, Bamenda, and Dschang in the western, mountainous sections of the country.

Social Activities

Much of social activity revolves around informal at-home entertaining and slackens as people vacation

during summer. The International Women's Club of Douala organizes weekly and monthly activities for members including French, English, and Spanish lessons, bridge, badminton, gourmet club, sewing, exercise classes, and Bible study. It raises funds during the year for charitable endeavors. Spouses are invited to participate in some activities.

OTHER CITIES

BAFOUSSAM, with a population estimated at 113,000 in 2000, is located in the western part of the country, north-northeast of Douala. Bafoussam is a major trading area for the Bamiléké peoples. Trades include coffee (growing and processing), kola nuts, tea, and tobacco. The town has a hospital, wood and construction industries, a trade school, an airfield, and coffee processing plants.

BERTOUA is located in the southeastern section of Cameroon. Its airport, opened in 1976, has allowed the city to communicate with the rest of the country. Under major development, Bertoua now has better roads and a peanut oil factory. The population is over 20,000.

Near Limbe on the coastal region of western Cameroon, **BUEA** has points of interest for the history enthusiast. A former capital of German Kamerun between 1884 and 1919, historic sites of that period have been preserved. Such sights include the Prime Minister's Lodge, the Old Secretariat, the Bismarck Fountain, the Native Authority School, and the German Burial Ground. Buea served as the seat of the British commissioner for Southern Cameroons in 1922. Today, it is an administrative and trading center. Industries include textile, wood, and construction. Buea has an estimated population of over 30,000.

DSCHANG is located on a forested plateau in northwestern Cameroon. With its high altitude and airfield, Dschang is a tourist spot attracting

both the traveler and the health seeker. This city has ample rainfall and a rough landscape. Dschang is a local trade center for agricultural products and livestock. There is a brick-making industry in town and bauxite deposits nearby. Tea processing is a relatively new project. The town has an agricultural college, hospital, and an airfield. The population is roughly over 22,000.

EBOLOWA, situated in the southwest, is roughly 70 miles (112 kilometers) south-southwest of Yaoundé. Ebolowa is a major producer of ivory and cocoa. This city has an airport, hospital, and a museum. Local sawmills prepare timber for export to the coastal town of Kribi. There were about 22,000 residents in 1981.

EDÉA, a city of almost 80,000 people in 1991, is an aluminum industry headquarters. Aluminum ingots, household products, and sheet metal are produced in Edéa. Surrounding the city are several cocoa and rubber plantations, stone quarries, and palm oil factories. Industries in and around Edéa are powered by an electrical power dam on the Sanaga River. Located near the far western border, it is linked by rail with Douala to the north and Yaoundé to the east.

FOUMBAN, a historic city, was once the capital of the Bamum kingdom. Located approximately 140 miles north-northwest of the capital, Foumban has an estimated population of over 45,000. A palace dating back to the 18th century now houses the Foumban Museum of Bamum Art, containing examples of wood carving, bamboo and raffia furniture collections, and copper and terrá-cotta masks. This city is a center for art and artists. The local crafts are known for their quality throughout Cameroon. Foumban holds coffee, tobacco, and cocoa to be sent on to Douala for export. The town has a hospital, airfield, and customs station.

Located in the northern part of the country, **GAROUA** had an estimated population of 142,000 in

2000. Services available in the city include an airfield, banks, a hospital, insurance companies, and a junior college. Garoua is near the Benue River, which makes it a good spot for fishing. Other industries include textile, cotton, peanut, and leather. Tourism is an important industry due to Garoua's close proximity to the Bénoué, Bouba Ndjida, and Faro game reserves.

KUMBA is a transportation hub that connects the city with Douala, Buea, Mamfe, and Bafang. It is located in the west and is known for its waterfalls and the nearby picturesque Lake Barombi Mbo. Industries include cocoa (Kumba's major export), bananas, oil palms, rubber, tea, and plantains. Forests and farms near Kumba supply resources for the town's lumber, construction, and food processing industries. Kumba has over 60,000 residents.

MAROUA is not as modern as some of Cameroon's southern cities, but it still serves as a major trade center. This calm and peaceful city is situated in the northern part of Cameroon, just below the Mandara Mountains and near the Kaliao River. Mud houses abound on the shaded streets of the neighborhoods, in contrast to the center of town where there are hotels, restaurants, and entertainment. The city's museum houses artifacts from the 10th century as well as new exhibits. Maroua's artisans are noted for their pottery, jewelry, metalwork, leatherwork, and embroidery. The town has a hospital, several mosques, a Protestant church, and a veterinary hospital. The Waza National Park is located several miles to the north. Maroua had about 123,000 residents in 2000.

NGAOUNDÉ is located in the north-central Cameroon on the Adamawa Plateau. Large game reserves to the northeast (Bouba Ndjida National Park) and northwest (Benoue National Park) make this city a fairly popular tourist attraction. The main industries include perfume manufacturing, animal husbandry, dairying, hide preparation, and cotton ginning.

Ngaoundéré, a traditional capital of the Fulani people, is equipped with an airport, a hospital, and a customs station. Formerly part of the Adamawa kingdom, Ngaoundéré has about 61,000 residents..

Near the western coast and north of the capital, **NKONGSAMBA** is the final destination for the railroad coming north from Douala. Exports include tobacco and coffee, which are sent by rail to Douala. The city is a commercial hub, the home of large banana, coffee, and palm oil plantations. Nkongsamba is serviced by a hospital, banks, airfield, sawmill, insurance companies, and food processing plants. Situated at the foot of Mount Manengouba, the city has an estimated population of over 125,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

The Republic of Cameroon covers an area (184,000 square miles) slightly larger than the size of California and is located just north of the Equator at the hinge of the West African coastline. Shaped like an irregular triangle, Cameroon extends north-eastward from the Gulf of Guinea to Lake Chad, and borders six coastal and inland countries: Nigeria to the northwest; Chad and the Central African Republic to the north and northeast; and the Congo, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea to the south.

Cameroon has four distinct topographical regions. The low coastal plains in the south are blanketed with equatorial rain forests extending to the Sanaga River. In central Cameroon, the rain forest yields to the Adamaoua Plateau—a vast, sparsely vegetated region. Stretching northward from the foot of this plateau to Lake Chad are the great northern plains, where savannas contrast starkly with unusual rock formations in the Mandara Mountains. To the west and northwest are rolling hills and volcanic mountains cloaked in lush vegetation. Here lies Mt. Cameroon, the highest

peak (13,428 feet) in sub-Saharan West Africa.

Cameroon's climate is as varied as its geography. High humidity and temperatures with little seasonal variations characterize the coast and southern lowlands. In the Douala area, these conditions may cause household goods to rust, mold, or mildew. In the north, extremely high temperatures and little or no humidity are normal, although seasonal fluctuations occur.

In Yaounde, humidity and temperatures are lower, but fluctuate daily. Two rainy seasons are interspersed with two relatively dry periods. April and May bring the “mango rains.” These moderately heavy rains average 8 inches monthly, then taper off into the drier months of June and July. Rainfall then increases to more than 12 inches monthly for August through November and recedes to as little as 2 inches monthly during the dry season of December through March. During the dry season temperatures may peak above 100°F and dust is a serious problem. This causes discomfort and health problems, especially for people that suffer with hay fever, allergies, and asthma and results in higher than normal incidences of respiratory infections, coughs, and colds. High humidity, temperature fluctuations, rust, mold, or mildew may damage household goods and personal effects such as stereo equipment, paintings, and books.

Population

As of 2000, the population totaled about 15.9 million, with a growth rate officially estimated at 2.79% annually. However, the urban population in the two major cities has grown at a faster rate due to migration from rural areas. Nearly one-third of the populace resides in Littoral and Central Provinces—the location of the two largest cities in the country, Yaounde and Douala. Cameroon's population is young with 46% ages 14 and under. Life expectancy of the total population is

short—only 51 years (males 49 and females 52).

About 11,000 Europeans (predominantly French) and 1,250 Americans live in Cameroon, including some 150 Peace Corps volunteers stationed throughout the country. There are also large immigrant populations of Chadians, Congolese, Senegalese, and Nigerians.

Cameroon and its neighbors have received countless human migrations. Cameroon's western highlands are widely thought to be where the Bantu migrations originated some 2,000 years ago. In the 18th and 19th centuries further migratory movements resulted from Islamic holy wars waged by the Fulani. As a result, Cameroon has become a meeting place of important cultural groups: Puelis from the coast of Guinea; Fulani and Arab people from western Sudan; and Bantus from the Congo.

Because of the intermixture and absorption of these peoples, Cameroon has more than 200 identifiable ethnic tribes. In the north, one finds Moslem Fulani and Hausa groups as well as animist, Christian, or Moslem “Kirdis,” the name given to the peoples who inhabited the region before the Fulani conquests. The western highlands are the home of the Bamileke and Bamoun peoples, among many others. The south is inhabited by the Beti, of which the Eton, Ewondo, Bulu, and Fang are the most important subgroups. The Bassa and Douala groups inhabit the coastal plains. The pygmies, the earliest inhabitants of the southern forests, still survive in that area.

Cameroon is unique among African nations because it is bilingual—French and English are the official languages. The elite generally speaks French in 8 of Cameroon's 10 provinces. English, most commonly pidgin, is predominant only in the Northwest and Southwest Provinces. Fulant is widely spoken in the three northern Provinces. Throughout the country, 24 African lan-

guages plus assorted dialects are spoken.

Christianity and Islam are practiced in Cameroon. Christians are estimated to constitute 33% of the population and Moslems approximately 16%; the balance (51%) practice animist or traditional beliefs.

Public Institutions

Cameroon became independent January 1, 1960, when East Cameroon (formerly French) became the Republic of Cameroon. On October 1, 1961, West Cameroon (formerly British) joined with East Cameroon to form the Federated Republic of Cameroon. With adoption of the constitution of May 20, 1972, the East and West formed a unitary republic. In January 1984, the National Assembly officially changed the country's name by dropping the word "United" before the Republic of Cameroon. The 1972 constitution was amended in 1996.

The President can name and dismiss Cabinet members and judges, negotiate and ratify treaties, accredit ambassadors, commute sentences, grant pardons, lead the armed forces, declare states of national emergency, and be invested with special powers. If the President dies or is permanently incapacitated, the speaker of the National Assembly becomes Acting President for up to 40 days until elections are held.

In the National Assembly, laws are adopted by majority vote of members present, except for cases where the President calls for a second reading. Adoption then requires approval by a majority of the Assembly's total membership. Only the President may ask the Supreme Court to review a law's constitutionality.

Each of the 10 provinces has a governor and an administrative staff appointed by the President, and each province's divisions and subdivisions have chief officers also appointed by the President. This internal administrative system is

under the Ministry of Territorial Administration. Other ministries may have representatives at each level.

The legal system in eight provinces formerly under the French mandate is based on the French civil law system. The President, the Minister of Justice, and the President's judicial advisers (Supreme Court) top the judicial hierarchy. Next are the provincial appeals courts, chief judges for the divisions, and local magistrates. Traditional courts still play a major role in domestic, property, and probate law. Tribal laws and customs are honored in the formal court system when not in conflict with national law. Traditional kingdoms and organizations also exercise other functions of government. Traditional rulers are treated as administrative adjuncts and receive a government allowance.

Under pressure from the opposition, the government introduced several reforms in the 1990s to liberalize public institutions. These reforms provided for the creation of a bicameral legislature and the establishment of Provincial Assemblies. They also permitted formation of opposition political parties, independent newspapers, nongovernmental civic associations and ended censorship. While the government continues to occasionally impose restrictions on those with dissenting views, open public debate has increased greatly. Cameroon last held multiparty parliamentary elections on May 17, 1997. The former single party, the Cameroon Peoples' Democratic Movement (CPDM), which once held all 180 seats in the National Assembly, won 116 seats in the multiparty election with six other parties accounting for the remainder. In October 1997, Cameroon held the second multiparty presidential election in its history. According to official results, President Biya was reelected with about 93% of the vote, while major opposition parties boycotted the election. Credible local and international observers found flaws due to irregular campaign practices and vote tabulations. The Government has been

singled out by domestic and international human rights monitors for serious abuses, including unlawful detention, torture, and occasional extrajudicial killing by security forces.

Arts, Science, and Education

Cameroon's art reflects the ethnic diversity of its people. Although ancestral traditions form the basis for most art forms, certain crafts, such as carving and painting calabashes, bas relief sculpture, engraving abba stones, weaving baskets, and embroidering cloth and traditional batik works illustrate the presence of art in the daily lives of Cameroonians. Traditional art forms consist mainly of wood sculpture. Objects such as carved masks, statues; various ethnic groups thus translate decorative panels, beds, chairs, and doors into a multitude of expressions in wood. Two other interesting art forms are brasswork/bronzework and wood sculpture embroidered with glass beads by the peoples of the western highlands. In the northern provinces, local specialties include cloth weaving, leather goods, and decorative traditional arms made of brass. Copies of traditional art and native handicrafts are being encouraged by the Government to promote the country's development efforts.

The Government wishes to combine the British and French educational systems into an integrated national education program, but the French system still prevails in most of the country. A comprehensive English program has been incorporated into the national curriculum to enhance Cameroon's official bilingual policy. The educational structure consists of primary, secondary, postsecondary professional, and university levels. Education in public primary schools is technically free and widely available, but expenses are incurred for books, materials, and uniforms. Primary education is compulsory for ages 6 to 14 and the enrollment rate is one of the highest in Africa. However, regional dispar-

ities exist with enrollment in the center and south higher than in the north. Further, enrollment drops off dramatically at the secondary level.

Most Cameroonians consider a university degree as a prerequisite for social and professional advancement, and education is highly valued. The government dedicates a large portion of the national budget to education, though universities are still woefully underfunded.

Cameroon has six national universities. The universities are officially bilingual though French is the dominant language at all of them except at Buea, which is the country's sole "Anglo-Saxon" university and is modeled on the British system. The six institutions are Yaounde I University, Yaounde II

University, the University of Douala, the University of Dschang, the University of Ngaoundere, and the University of Buea. There are also several highly regarded special institutions, the Grandes Ecoles. Two are affiliated with Yaounde I University: the Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature (which trains much of the ruling elite and the senior technocrats), the Ecole Normale Supérieure (which trains educators and administrators). Three of the institutes are affiliated with Yaounde II: the Institut des Relations Internationales du Cameroon (which trains all of the country's diplomats, as well as diplomats from 10 other African countries), the Ecole Supérieure Polytechnique (which specializes in engineering and information technology), and the Ecole Supérieure des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information et de la Communication (which trains journalists). Douala University houses the Ecole Normale Supérieure de l'Enseignement Technique (which specializes in business management and economics), while Buea University is the home of the Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters.

The Catholic University of Central Africa is the country's sole accred-

ited private university. Established in 1994, it is well funded and managed and aims to have regional importance. Other private universities have been established in recent years, but the Government does not recognize degrees from these universities. The most important of them are the Bamenda University for Science and Technology and the Ndi Samba Private University of Yaounde.

Commerce and Industry

Cameroon has abundant natural resources, but it is a poor country whose estimated per capita income in 1999 was about \$590. Cameroon is in the African Financial Community along with six central African and eight west-African countries and France. Through special arrangement, these African countries have as their currency, the African Franc, which provides for unlimited convertibility into the French Franc at a fixed rate (currently, 1 French Franc equals 100 African Francs). Cameroon is the largest economy in central Africa, and Yaounde hosts the regional central bank for the six central African countries that use the African Franc.

The government, in cooperation with the IMF and World Bank, has pursued since 1997 an economic reform program to reduce government control over the economy and stimulate more private-sector investment and growth. Between 1997 and 1999, Cameroon's economy grew annually at a 4%-5% annual rate, while at the same time the government more strictly controlled its own spending and allowed government employee salaries to decline relative to inflation. Cameroon's economy depends on agriculture, and Cameroon is a major exporter of bananas, coffee, cocoa, cotton, and rubber. Low world prices for cocoa and coffee in 1999 hurt Cameroonian farmers, while banana exporters faced stiff competition from Latin American producers. In some areas, farmers found

export prices so low that they began to uproot cash crop acreage to produce food. Cameroon is generally self-sufficient in terms of food production. Cameroon exports a relatively small quantity of oil and its petroleum sector accounts for about one-fourth of export earnings and one-fifth of the government's budget. Cameroon's existing oil fields are nearing depletion, and the government adopted a new petroleum code in December 1999 to attract new foreign exploration of potential commercial fields in the Gulf of Guinea and in Cameroon's far north.

The government has been privatizing large state-owned companies such as banks, utilities, and food processing firms. Cameroon had suffered a major banking sector crisis in the middle of the 1990s, but by the end of the decade insolvent banks had been closed and the government privatized all state-owned banks. Today, Cameroon has nine banks, most of which are owned by foreign banking companies. The telecommunications infrastructure is overburdened and there are long delays for customers trying to establish phone service. The hope is to attract buyers for the state-owned telephone company to upgrade equipment throughout the country. Cameroon also has two new mobile telephone service companies. Internet service is relatively new, and the connections are very slow by Western standards.

Almost half of the country is covered by forest, but an inadequate transport system impedes the development of the agricultural sector because farmers cannot access larger markets. The rail network, totaling some 700 miles nationwide, is the most important element of the transport infrastructure. The main rail line links Douala Port to Ngaoundere in central Cameroon. Douala also serves as a landing point for much cargo ultimately destined for Chad and the Central African Republic.

Cameroon trades mostly with Europe and Asia; the U.S. accounts

for only about 10% of Cameroon's foreign trade. Most of Cameroon's \$73 million in exports to the U.S. in 1999 were crude oil, while the U.S. sold Cameroon about \$38 million in goods in 1999, including machinery, cereals, and chemicals. U.S. firms operating in Cameroon include Del Monte, Dole, Mobil, Texaco, Citibank, and DHL. The government in 2000 is working with international donors on a national strategy to reduce poverty with special emphasis on education and health programs and rural infrastructure. Cameroon is also seeking foreign debt relief as part of its poverty reduction program.

Transportation

Automobiles

An automobile is essential for Americans in Cameroon. Cars with high clearance are good for within the city driving given the numerous deep potholes and unpaved streets. Many people prefer 4-wheel-drive vehicles for out of town driving especially during the rainy season. High-end vehicles such as Land Rovers or Toyota Land Cruisers are not recommended because they have been specifically targeted by carjackers. Standard shift cars can be easier to repair.

Several European and Japanese automobile companies have sales and service facilities in Cameroon (Renault, Peugeot, Mercedes, Toyota, Nissan, Mitsubishi, Hyundai). Spare parts for American cars are rarely available locally but can be shipped through the pouch subject to restrictions, weight, and size limitations. Spare parts for standard European models and some Japanese models, when available, are priced substantially higher than in the U.S. For these reasons, bring spark plugs, points and condensers, oil filters, windshield wipers, fan belts, water hoses, extra tubes for tires, etc., for your vehicle.

Gasoline costs about US\$2.75 per gallon (US\$.75 per liter). High-octane gas is equivalent to low-octane gas in the U.S. Both leaded

gas and diesel fuel are readily available throughout Cameroon. Automobiles equipped with narrow fuel tank filler necks and catalytic converters will require modification. The narrow filler neck can easily be replaced by requesting a regular one from the car manufacturer, or a neck filler adapter can be purchased locally. If the car is to be shipped back to the U.S., an Environmental Protection Agency waiver must be obtained before a U.S. garage can modify the equipment. If you operate the vehicle without first removing the catalytic converter, the leaded gas will damage it, and it will have to be replaced before the car can again be operated legally in the U.S. The cost for replacement is reimbursable, if done after returning to the U.S.

Local

Yaounde has no bus transportation. Local taxi service is available in most cities and towns at reasonable rates. However, because of overcrowding, lack of safety precautions in taxis, indirect routes, frequent accidents, and increased criminal activity travelers are advised not to use the local taxi. If it is necessary to use a taxi for personal errands, it is possible to arrange for a taxi through known, reputable, persons for an hourly rate for sole use only.

Regional

Air service between the Cameroonian cities of Yaounde, Douala, Ngaoundere, Garoua, and Maroua is provided by Cameroon Airlines. A new airline service, National Airways Cameroon, began offering flights to some of the same cities in early 2000. IntraCameroon flights may be delayed or canceled. Most flights to other African destinations depart and arrive from the Douala airport. All fares are generally high with flights often delayed.

Trains run twice daily between Douala and Yaounde, and once daily to Ngaoundere. Each trip takes between 6 and 12 hours. "Bush taxis" or small vans provide intra-country travel between cities; however, they are usually overcrowded and should be used only as a last

resort. Foreign and Cameroonian freighters sail frequently between the major European ports and Douala. American freighters sail between the U.S. and various West African ports, including Douala, but due to lack of cargo, stops in Douala are infrequent. Several French and American freighters accept passengers.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

An automatic dialing system exists between Yaounde, Douala, and most large towns. Local telephone service is poor because existing lines cannot handle the demand. Cameroon and the U.S. have a direct telephone link via satellite. Telephones and telephone lines are difficult to obtain.

Direct calls to the U.S. are about \$7 a minute. Long distance charges can be minimized by the use of a "callback" service. Direct calls are also possible to other African and European countries. Internet access costs about \$60 for 20 hours usage per month or unlimited access for approximately \$150 per month. Internet connections are slow and unreliable by Western standards.

Mail

International airmail letters take from 8 to 15 days to arrive from Europe or the U.S. International surface mail takes from 3 to 6 months, because of Customs complication, pilferage, and unreliable service.

Radio and TV

A shortwave radio is necessary for reception of BBC, VOA, and European stations. The three local stations (two AM, one FM) provide mostly domestic news and recorded music. Broadcasting is primarily in French, with three English newscasts daily. Cameroon television was inaugurated in March 1985 on the German PAL system, which is incompatible with the American NTSC system. The American School of Yaounde operates a tape video club of over 1,000 selections in VHS, NTSC format. Many Americans

have VHS video machines in American NTSC format and bring videos or have family and friends mail videos. To enjoy both Cameroon television and American videos, two separate systems or a multisystem (with PAL and NTSC) TV (monitor-receiver) are necessary. Such equipment can be ordered from major European duty-free stores or purchased from base exchanges at U.S. military installations in Europe.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The International Herald Tribune (published in Paris) is available by subscription or may be purchased in Yaounde and Douala through local bookstores. Although subscriptions cost much less than issues purchased locally (US\$630 for 14 months versus US\$2.50 per issue), delivery time is slower and more sporadic (7-14 days versus 3-5 days after publication). Several French newspapers and selected British journals are available. The government-run Cameroon Tribune is published 5 days a week mostly in French but with some English content. Some private Cameroonian newspapers are published weekly or bimonthly in French and English.

Bookstores and street vendors sell the international editions of Time and Newsweek. Several French and British magazines are available. Cameroon does not have any public lending libraries, but some English-language books, newspapers, and magazines are sold at local bookshops, newsstands, and hotels. The French Cultural Centers in Douala, Yaounde, Buea, Bamenda, Ngaoundere, and Garoua have a wide selection of French-language materials, which are also available in the cities' larger bookstores. The American Cultural Center in Yaounde has a good selection of English-language books, as does the British Council. The American School library is also well stocked with classics and contemporary materials of interest. It is open to the American Community.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

You are advised to bring an adequate supply of over-the-counter medications and updated prescriptions with at least a 90-day supply for all long-term medications. Prescriptions for maintenance medications can be ordered through Merck-Medco with most insurance plans. It is important to review your health policy and bring the necessary forms with you. Many well-stocked French pharmacies are located in Yaounde.

Hospital and medical services available locally are well below accepted U.S. standards. U Hopital General de Yaounde, is used for emergency intervention and stabilization. The hospital has a 24-hour on-call service, with medical and surgical specialists with U.S. and European training. The hospital suffers from inconsistent funding and inadequate medical supplies. Etoudi Clinic is a clean, fairly well equipped, private hospital that is primarily used for ophthalmology consultations. Good quality radiology services are available at Cabinet de la Cathedral. Women are strongly encouraged to have all necessary mammography screening completed before leaving the U.S.

We are fortunate to have a U.S. - trained dentist in Yaounde who provides standard American dental services in a completely modern U.S. equipped clinic. There are several French-trained dentists in Yaounde and an excellent Belgian dentist in Douala.

Community Health

The following tropical diseases pose a threat to those living in Cameroon: chloroquine-resistant malaria, amebic and other forms of dysentery, hepatitis, meningitis, filariasis, and fungal infections. HIV infections are increasing in Cameroon. All individuals relocating to Cameroon are strongly advised to begin antimalarial medicine prior to arrival. Individuals are encouraged to wear shoes at all times due to the

increased risk for contracting parasitic or fungal infections.

During the dry season (December-March) there is an increased incidence of respiratory allergies, coughs, and colds. Individuals with allergies or asthma may be more likely to experience illness during the dry season. Normal childhood illnesses occur, but unusual problems among American children have been minimal.

Community sanitation in both Yaounde and Douala is comparable to that found in other West African cities, but is well below U.S. and European standards. Both Yaounde and Douala lack a central sewage system and garbage collection is inconsistent. The city water supply has been plagued by multiple problems and is not considered safe to drink. Although the water is chemically treated, the poor condition of water transport pipes and sporadic interruptions in service provide sources of contamination. A distiller and a source for filtered water are provided in each home. Bottled water is locally available for purchase.

Two Western-style grocery stores that have adequate refrigeration facilities and acceptable sanitation and health controls. Fresh milk is unavailable, but long-life sterilized milk, or powdered milk can be purchased locally. Local fruits and vegetables are abundant and generally excellent. They must be washed thoroughly with soap and water, and soaked in a Clorox or iodine solution before storing, peeling, or eating. All meats should be thoroughly cooked.

Preventive Measures

Yellow fever immunization is required for entrance into Cameroon. In addition, immunizations against polio, tetanus, typhoid, Hepatitis A and B, and meningitis are recommended before arrival. Antimalarial medications should be started 1 week before arrival.

First-aid supplies, aspirin, vitamins, insect repellent, sunscreen,

Q-tips, and cotton balls may be unavailable locally.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

Travelers from the U.S. or Europe fly directly to Yaounde Nsimalen Airport from Paris, Brussels or Zurich. Travelers around Africa must frequently go via Douala and sometimes an overnight stay in Douala is required. Travelers flying via West Africa should avoid Lagos as a transfer or stopover point if at all possible. International carriers serve Douala with direct air service from Brussels, Paris, Frankfurt, Rome, Zurich and Geneva on Sabena, Air France, Air Afrique, and Swiss air. Yaounde Nsimalen Airport has weekly direct flights from Zurich on Swissair, from Paris on Air France and Cameroon Airlines, and from Brussels on Sabena.

All airfreight should be well packed, waterproofed, and banded to protect against rough handling and tropical weather conditions. Good packaging also discourages pilferage. Airfreight shipments take 2-6 weeks to reach Cameroon from Europe or the U.S.

A valid passport and visa are required. Travelers should obtain the latest information and details from the Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon, 2349 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 265-8790/94. Overseas, inquiries should be made at the nearest Cameroonian embassy or consulate

While photography is not officially forbidden, security officials are sensitive about photographs taken of government buildings, military installations, and other public facilities, many of which are unmarked. Photography of these subjects may result in seizure of photographic equipment by authorities. Due to the threat of harassment and the lack of signs designating sites pro-

hibited for photography, photography is best practiced in private homes and among friends.

Cameroonian customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Cameroon of items such as large quantities of medicine; customs restrict the importation of ivory. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Cameroon in Washington or one of Cameroon's consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Yaounde or with the Embassy Office in Douala, and to obtain updated information on travel and security in Cameroon. The Embassy is located on Rue Nachtigal in Yaounde. The mailing address is B.P. 817, Yaounde, Cameroon, telephone: (237) 23-40-14, fax (237) 23-07-53. The Embassy Office in Douala can be contacted at (237) 42-53-31; fax is (237) 42-77-90.

Pets

Cats and dogs must have current certificates of good health and rabies vaccination. There is no quarantine imposed upon entry. To ensure speedy processing, animal should, if possible, be brought in a; accompanied baggage. African Gray parrots can be imported into Cameroon but must be accompanied by a CITES certificate and a health certificate. Yaounde has a few veterinarians with varying degrees of equipment, supplies, and training. Heartworm medication is recommended for dogs as a precaution. Bring medication with you from the U.S. Fleas and ticks can be a problem for dogs during certain times of the year.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

Cameroon's currency is the CFA (Communaute Financiere Africaine) Franc. One hundred (100) CFA Francs equals one French Franc. The CFA is linked directly to the French Franc and is thus a fairly convertible currency. As a

result there is no problem with artificial exchange rates in Cameroon.

Credit cards and checks are rarely accepted. Cash, in local currency, is usually the only form of payment accepted throughout the country. Credit card cash advances are not available and most banks do not cash personal or traveler's checks. Two banks in Douala, Societe Generale des Banques du Cameroun, telephone (237) 43-00-02 and Cofinest, telephone (237) 43-10-53, have wire transfer services through Western Union.

No limitations exist on travelers checks, dollars, or other currency you bring or import after arriving. Dollars and other currencies are exchanged freely. The Cameroonian Government does not prevent export of currency previously declared or of amounts normally carried for travel expenses. Exportation of CFA Francs beyond moderate limits requires the permission of the Ministry of Finance.

The metric system of weights and measures is used exclusively in Yaounde and Douala and is the official system in Cameroon. Unofficial use of English measures is still encountered in parts of West (formerly British) Cameroon.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Feb. 11 Youth Day
- Mar/Apr. Good Friday*
- Mar/Apr. Easter*
- Mar/Apr. Easter Monday*
- May 1 Labor Day
- May 20 National Day
- May/June Ascension Day*
- Aug. 15 Assumption Day
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day
- Ramadan*
- Id al-Fitr*
- Id al-Adah*

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on Cameroon.

Barley, Nigel. *Innocent Anthropologist: Notes from a Mud Hut.* and *A Plague of Caterpillars.* Penguin Publishers.

Beti, Mongo. *Mission to Kala. The Poor Christ of Bomba. King Lazarus.* Heinemann Publishers.

Bjornson, Richard. *The African Quest for Freedom and Identity: Cameroonian Writing and the*

National Experience. Indiana University Press, 1991.

DeLaney, Mark W *Cameroon: Dependence and Independence.* Westview Press, 1989.

DeLaney, Mark W and Mokeba, H. Mbella. *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon* (2nd Ed). Scarecrow Press, 1990.

Denis, Alain. *Beyond Legends: West Cameroon. Beyond Sight: Cameroon.* Editions du Damalisque.

Durrell, Gerald. *Bafut Beagles.* Available in English and American paperback editions, 1954.

Etienne-Nugue, Jocelyne. *Crafts and the Art of Living in the Cam-*

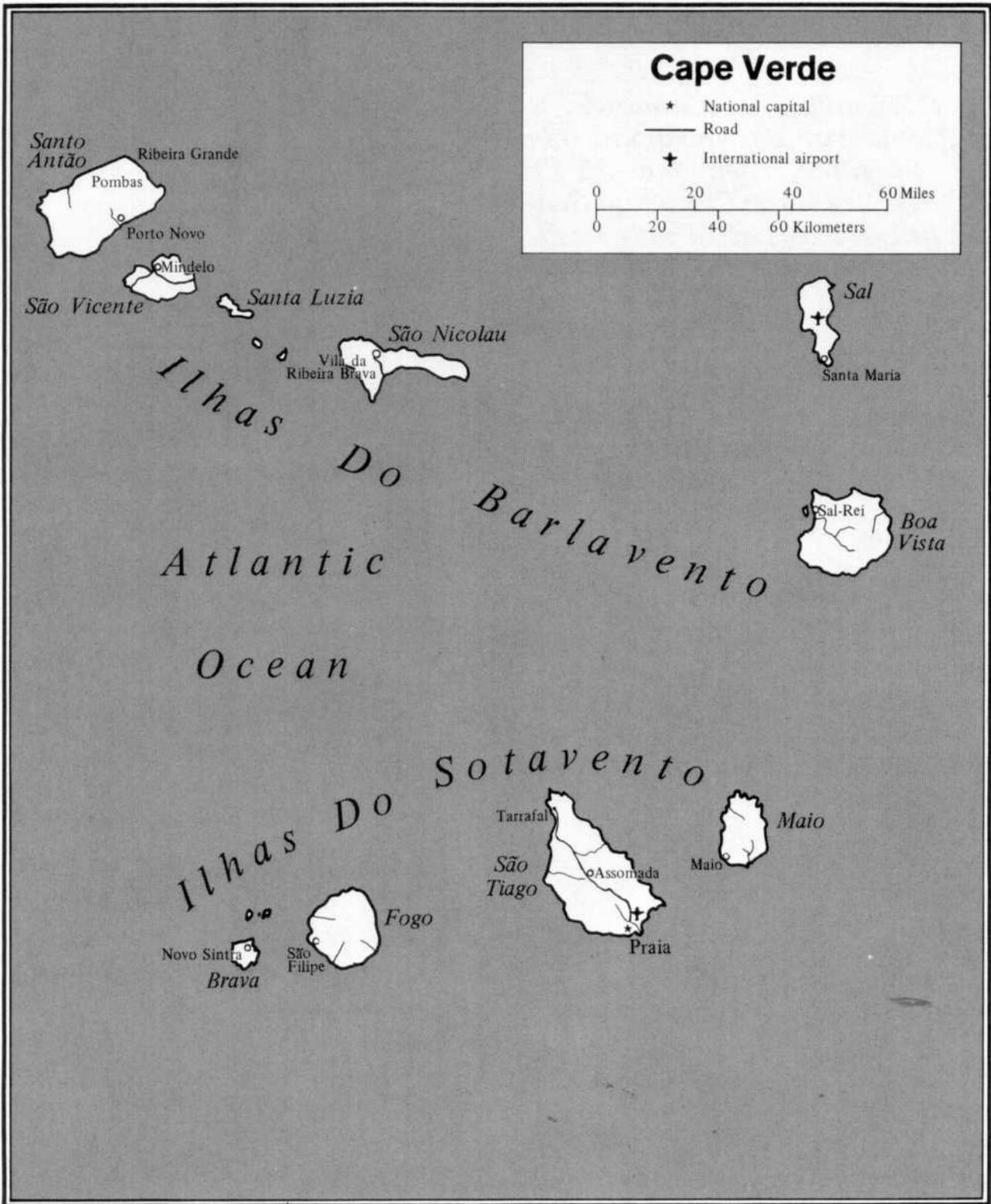
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LeVine, Victor T. *The Cameroons From Mandate to Independence.* University of California Press: Berkeley.

LeVine, Victor T. *The Cameroon Federal Republic.* Cornell University Press: New York, 1971.

Nelson, Harold, et al. *Area Handbook for the United Republic of Cameroon.* Government Printing Office: Washington, D. C., 1974.

Northern, Tamara. *Expressions of Cameroon Art.* The Franklin Collection. Rembrandt Press, 1986.



Praia, Cape Verde

CAPE VERDE

Republic of Cape Verde

Major Cities:

Praia, Mindelo

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report for Cape Verde. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

CAPE VERDE, in the central Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Africa, is one of that continent's youngest republics, having gained its independence from Portugal only in 1975. It is a small, archipelagic nation of few natural resources, struggling to develop its 10 disparate islands. A transitional society with a unique heritage, Cape Verde is a blending of African traditions with a culture which reflects a long history as part of the Portuguese colonial empire.

Portuguese navigators discovered the uninhabited archipelago in the mid-15th century. They established plantations and founded Ribeira

Grande (*Cidade Velha*) in 1462, the earliest European city in the tropics. The area prospered from transatlantic slave trade during the next century, but the settlements were subject to occasional pirate attacks. Sir Francis Drake sacked Ribeira Grande in 1585. After a French attack in 1712, the community declined in importance.

MAJOR CITIES

Praia

Praia, a city of approximately 68,000 on the island of São Tiago, has been the capital of Cape Verde since 1770. It is the largest town on the islands and also serves as São Tiago's port. The principal employer in Praia is the Cape Verdean government.

The charm of Praia lies in its unique character; it is neither fully African nor European. It retains some of the atmosphere of a small, 19th-century town in southern Europe, combined with the people, foods, and traditions of West Africa. While far from a modern city, Praia is growing rapidly. There are noticeable positive gains in both the public works and private sectors. Businesses are

attempting to modernize and new housing is going up, although the housing shortage remains acute.

Clothing

Dress in Cape Verde follows general Western patterns and is less formal than in Washington, DC. In general, clothing suitable for tropical or subtropical climates is appropriate, but warm sweaters and jackets are sometimes necessary in the cool season. Simple clothing can be made inexpensively by local tailors.

Praia has no dry cleaning facilities, so do not bring dry-clean-only clothes. Wash-and-wear items are the easiest to maintain. Dust and dirt make frequent washing necessary. Some travelers use garment bags to protect their clothing.

The usual dress for men is slacks and sport shirts; coats and ties are worn on more formal occasions. Cotton bush shirts and wash-and-wear suits are popular for work and social events. A dark suit is used for formal wear (dinner jackets or tuxedos are never needed). Lightweight fabrics, such as cotton or a mixture of cotton and synthetic fibers, are preferred.

For women, lightweight slacks, skirts, blouses, or sundresses are comfortable for everyday wear. The constant sun and wind necessitates



Street in Faja d'Agua, Brava, Cape Verde

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

some sort of hat or head scarf, and many women find culottes more practical than wraparound skirts. Short cocktail dresses are suitable for more formal occasions; long dresses are rarely worn.

American-style clothing (jeans and T-shirts) is both appropriate and

popular with the island youth. Lightweight, washable fabrics are the most practical. Sports clothing, including a good supply of beachwear, tennis clothes, and hiking shoes, is recommended. Praia's picturesque cobblestone streets and sidewalks are slippery, making it advisable to include crepe-soled

shoes in every wardrobe. Most shoes tend to wear out quickly. Shoes are expensive locally, selection is limited, and sizes vary. High heels are not recommended.

Some ready-made clothing is available in downtown stores, both in

Praia and Mindelo. Materials for sewing can be purchased in Dakar.

Supplies and Services

A limited selection of European toiletries, cosmetics, and other sundries can be bought locally, but American brands are not stocked. Patent medicines are rarely found. Prescription drugs often are in short supply. Household products (soap powder, dishwashing detergent, etc.) are not always available.

Travelers and expatriates are advised to bring sports clothing, including a good supply of beachwear (bathing suits, beach shoes, goggles, fins, masks, beach towels, etc.), tennis clothes and shoes, and hiking clothes and shoes. Sports clothes and equipment are expensive locally, and selection is limited.

Those planning an extended stay in Cape Verde should be prepared to be more self-reliant than would be necessary in a more developed country. There are shoe repair, barber, and basic beauty services. Radio and auto repair is not reliable. Many services and products, unavailable in the islands, can be found in Dakar, which is readily accessible.

Religious Activities

Cape Verde is predominantly Roman Catholic, and Catholic churches abound in most towns. Some Protestant groups, such as Seventh-Day Adventist and Church of the Nazarene, are represented on all islands. All services are in Portuguese or Crioulo.

Domestic Help

As in most West African countries, it is customary to hire domestic help. Most expatriate families have a full-time maid or cook, and some hire a driver. Wages are quite reasonable. Government regulations set minimum pay scales and require two months' severance pay upon termination of employment. There are no pension or social security requirements. All household ser-

vants should have medical examinations, including chest X-rays.

Education

There are no international or American schools in the country. The Cape Verdean educational system has primary and secondary schools only; post-secondary training is not offered, except in religion. Both the primary and secondary schools are crowded, and operate three shifts each day to accommodate the number of students. Instruction is in Portuguese. No athletic facilities are available. In short, local education is not suitable for most American dependents.

The school calendar runs from October to June. Overall facilities are limited in comparison to schools in the U.S.

A number of European children in Praia study via correspondence courses from France; Americans could consider a similar course of study through the Calvert School (Tuscany Road, Baltimore, MD 21210), which is designed to teach children at home. It offers a complete curriculum for kindergarten through grade eight. Each level comes with all necessary books and supplies. A detailed guide is provided for the home tutor, and a teacher-advisory service is available. The Division of Continuing Studies of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln (Lincoln, NE 68583) offers a similar correspondence course for secondary students. The success of home study depends greatly on the motivation of the student and the quality of the tutor.

Some expatriate parents find it necessary to send their children to boarding school in Europe or the U.S. Direct air connections to Lisbon, London, Paris, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, and Boston from Sal Island allow convenient travel for the students.

Dakar, Senegal has two English-language schools, but neither offers

boarding facilities. Boarding must be arranged privately.

Praia has no colleges or universities. Most adult education programs are limited to adult literacy courses. Private English-language tutoring is hard to find. No special schooling exists for handicapped persons.

Recreation and Entertainment

Cape Verde offers a wide variety of water sports, such as fishing, sailing, boating, diving, wind surfing, and snorkeling. São Tiago Island has some attractive beaches near Praia and at Tarrafal, as well as at other locations. Cape Verde's volcanic mountains, valleys, and beaches are ideal for exploring, hiking, and picnicking. The national sport of Cape Verde is soccer, and matches are held regularly. Inter-island competitions and an occasional international match are also held. Cape Verde also sponsors tennis, handball, and basketball teams. Praia has an active tennis and golf club, where membership cost is minimal. There is no grass on the golf course, and the constant wind adds a challenging dimension to tennis matches. The hotel in the Prainha section of town, where most Americans live, also has a tennis court; lessons are available and inexpensive. Cricket is played at Mindelo.

Travel between the islands provides a change of pace and scenery from Praia. The national airline, TACV, serves the major islands at reasonable prices. The island of Fogo offers interesting landscapes dominated by its volcano. Boa Vista has Cape Verde's most beautiful beaches. Brava, the smallest of the inhabited islands, lies in the southwest of the archipelago. Each island is unique, and provides fine photographic opportunities.

Travel to Dakar offers a different climate and culture. Shopping is excellent in that city, but prices are high. Dakar also has many museums and cultural attractions, as well as good beaches and restaurants.

Entertainment in Praia is limited. The city has two cinemas (one outdoor) which often show English-language films with Portuguese subtitles. Brazilian or European films also are screened. The French Cultural Center in Praia offers a weekly French movie.

The major hotels have adequate restaurants with varied menus. Small local restaurants tempt the more adventurous and are becoming more sanitary and modern. Several discotheques of varying quality are also located in Praia.

Local competition in music (vocal and instrumental) and dance are popular. State functions are rare.

Fast becoming the most popular form of entertainment is the home video recorder (mostly VHS systems). The American Community Video Club, open to all Americans, has an ever-increasing library of VHS tapes. A multi-system receiver allows a mutual exchange of tapes with European expatriates.

The international community in Praia is small. Fewer than 12 comprise the official U.S. representation. There is the American Embassy and a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) office. Other countries diplomatically represented here are France, Portugal, China, the former Soviet Union, Cuba, Brazil, and Senegal. Additional multi-national aid experts number more than two dozen. Language fluency in Portuguese, French, or Spanish is an asset in mixing with the international community.

Social life is quite active. Dinners and lunches are common, and picnics and beach outings are popular. The Cape Verdeans themselves often have limited resources for entertaining, but clearly like to be invited to private homes. Many opportunities exist to become acquainted with the people, customs, and culture of the host country.

Mindelo

Mindelo is the second largest city in Cape Verde, and the only other center of appreciable size. It is located in the northwestern part of São Vicente and, although its population (about 47,000) is smaller than Praia's, the city is busier and more cosmopolitan.

Mindelo is a commercial center, mostly because of its excellent harbor. The city's deep-water harbor on Porto Grande Bay is an important refueling point for transatlantic freighters. A new shipyard, financed by a loan from the European Investment Bank, was completed in Mindelo in the early 1980s. Mindelo has shops, restaurants, some hotels, a small newspaper, and facilities for sports. There is no resident American community here, nor are there opportunities for English-language education.

Carnaval, the pre-Lenten festival and one of Cape Verde's major events, takes place in Mindelo.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Cape Verde Islands lie in the Atlantic Ocean 385 miles (620 kilometers) off the African coast, directly west of Senegal. The archipelago consists of 10 islands and five islets, which are divided into windward (*barlavento*) and leeward (*sotavento*) groups. The six islands of the windward group are Santo Antão, São Vicente, Santa Luzia, São Nicolau, Sal (Sal Rei), and Boa Vista. The four leeward islands are São Tiago, Maio, Fogo, and Brava. Of the 10 islands, only Santa Luzia is uninhabited. The capital city, Praia, is on São Tiago.

Although the islands are volcanic in origin, the only active crater is on Fogo. Fogo is the site of the most

recent eruption, which occurred there in 1951. In March 1981, the crater showed activity, and seismic tremors occurred on the nearby island of Brava.

Three islands—Sal, Boa Vista, and Maio—are flat, and lack natural water supplies. Mountains higher than 4,200 feet (1,280 meters) are found on São Tiago, Fogo, Santo Antão, and São Nicolau.

Temperatures and humidity vary with altitude, but the climate is warm, dry, and windy. The average temperature in Praia is 75°F (24.4°C). The hottest month, September, has an average temperature of 79°F (26°C); the coolest month, February, averages 72°F (22°C). The ocean has a major stabilizing effect on temperatures.

All of the islands, especially the windward, have been eroded by sand carried by high winds. On several of the mountainous islands, sheer, jagged cliffs rise from the sea. The uplands and coasts have no natural vegetation: most vegetation is in the interior valleys.

In the islands, there are only two seasons—the dry season, November to July, and the rainy, August to October. Insufficient rainfall has led to drought conditions for more than 17 years, but rainfall has been more plentiful in the last few years. In Praia, the average annual precipitation is only about 9.5 inches. The dry season is marked by gusty winds; dust, originating in the distant Sahara Desert, reduces visibility, damages eyes and respiratory passages. The dry climate discourages mosquitoes and most insect pests, but some thrive despite drought and wind.

Population

Cape Verdeans are of mixed African and Portuguese origin; vestiges of African culture, the legacy of the slaves brought to the islands to work on the settlers' plantations, are most pronounced on São Tiago.

Because of the limited land area and lack of natural resources, emigration has been traditional. There are sizable Cape Verdean communities in the United States (mainly Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island), and in Senegal, The Netherlands, Portugal, Argentina, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, and Angola.

Although the official language is Portuguese, most Cape Verdeans speak Crioulo, a mixture of Portuguese and African. The predominant religion is Roman Catholicism, but the Church of the Nazarene and the Seventh-Day Adventists also are represented.

The 2000 population estimate for the islands was 411,500. Annual population growth is about three percent, and density is approximately 111 people per square mile. Praia, the capital and largest urban area, had approximately 68,000 residents in 2000. The commercial center, Mindelo, on São Vicente, with roughly 47,000 inhabitants, is second in size. Nearly half of the total population lives on São Tiago—the remainder, on Santo Antão, São Vicente, and Fogo.

The islands have experienced recurrent drought and famine since the end of the 18th century, and the fragile prosperity slowly vanished with the declining slave trade. The worst drought in Cape Verdean history hit the islands in 1968, crippling the economy and making Cape Verde heavily dependent on foreign, principally Western, aid for survival.

The archipelago's position astride Atlantic shipping lanes made Cape Verde an ideal location for resupplying ships in the early days, and Mindelo's excellent harbor became an important commercial center. In the first half of the 19th century, it was the headquarters of the U.S. Navy Africa Squadron. As early as 1810, U.S. whaling ships recruited crews from Brava and Fogo to hunt the whales abundant in Cape Verdean waters.

The first American consulate in Cape Verde was established in 1816, and consular representation continued throughout the 19th century. A submarine cable station was established at Mindelo in 1875, but later was moved to Sal Island.

Government

In 1951, Cape Verde's status was changed from that of Portuguese colony to overseas province. Five years later, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (Partido Africano da Independência do Guiné e Cabo Verde, or PAIGC) was organized in Bissau under the leadership of Amílcar Cabral. It sought to make demands on Portuguese authorities to improve economic, social, and political conditions in Cape Verde and what was then Portuguese Guinea.

The PAIGC's armed struggle against Portugal began in 1961 with acts of sabotage, and eventually grew into a war in Portuguese Guinea that pitted 10,000 PAIGC soldiers, supported by the Soviet bloc, against 35,000 Portuguese and African troops fighting for Portugal. The PAIGC had a clandestine organization in Cape Verde, it did not attempt to disrupt Portuguese control of the archipelago. It became an overt political movement there after the Portuguese revolution of April 1974.

In December of that year, an agreement was signed in Lisbon providing for a transitional government to prepare Cape Verde for independence. On June 30, 1975, Cape Verdeans elected a National Assembly and gained independence from Portugal on July 5, 1975.

After a political coup in Guinea-Bissau in November 1980, Cape Verde abandoned its hope for unity with that country, and formed a separate party, PAICV. Since then, the two countries' relations have been as one sovereign state to another.

From 1980 to 1990, the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV) was the country's only legal political party. All legislative authority was held by the PAICV-dominated National People's Assembly, which elected the president of the Republic to a five-year term. However, in April 1990, substantial political changes were announced. President Aristides Pereira called for the abandonment of Cape Verde's one-party system. Also, in September 1990, the PAICV's National Council declared that future presidents would be elected by universal suffrage and that opposition parties would be allowed to participate in elections to the National People's Assembly.

In January 1991, Cape Verde held its first multi-party elections for the 79-member National People's Assembly. An opposition party, the Movement for Democracy (MPD), won 56 seats while the PAICV captured only 23 seats. One month later, Cape Verde held its first free presidential elections. The new constitution came into force on September 25, 1992, and it underwent a major revision in November 1995, substantially increasing the powers of the president. The president is elected by popular vote for a five-year term. The prime minister is nominated by the National Assembly and appointed by the president. In the National Assembly there are currently 72 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms.

The judicial system is composed of a high court, Supremo Tribunal de Justica, and separate courts which hear civil and criminal cases.

Cape Verde is divided into 14 districts (*conselhos*); in each district a government delegate (*delegado*) is responsible for local administration and operation.

The Cape Verdean flag is comprised of three horizontal bands of light blue (top, double width), white (with a horizontal red stripe in the middle third), and light blue; a circle of 10

yellow five-pointed stars is centered on the hoist end of the red stripe and extends into the upper and lower blue bands.

Arts, Science, Education

Since the discovery and settlement of the islands, the intellectual, technological, and artistic trends have often followed those of Portugal.

The country's educational system consists of various tiers: a semi-autonomous kindergarten network exists for children from four to six years of age; elementary education is organized in two cycles, for those aged seven to nine, and others 11 and 12; and secondary education is available in high schools in Praia, Assomada, and Mindelo, or in programs for technical and commercial studies.

The adult literacy rate in 1995 was approximately 70 percent. Cape Verde's education system is plagued by overcrowding and inadequate instruction, although significant improvements have been achieved. As there is no university in the islands, students have traditionally gone abroad to pursue technical and advanced studies.

Cape Verde has a rich tradition in the arts. It is particularly famous for its poets, and for the hauntingly melancholic musical compositions known as *mornas*. The poets of Cape Verde write in both Portuguese and Crioulo.

A national artisan center in Mindelo is attempting to reintroduce native crafts, including weaving and pottery making. A small ethnological museum also is located there.

Panos, hand-woven fabrics famous during the slave-trading days and used as a form of money, are still made by few artisans, and are worn by women as waistbands.

Commerce and Industry

The majority of the work force of Cape Verde is employed in the rural sector.

The dearth of material resources, aggravated by a long period of drought, has resulted in agricultural production consistently falling far below consumer needs. Mineral resources are salt, pozzolana (a volcanic rock used in cement production), limestone, and kaolin (a fine clay used as a filler).

Subsistence crops—bananas, corn, beans, sweet potatoes, and manioc—occupy most of the arable land. During drought and normal conditions, Cape Verde produces only a small proportion of its dietary staple, corn. In years of adequate rainfall, small quantities of bananas, sugarcane, and Arabica coffee are exported. Livestock production includes goats, chickens, pigs and, in fewer numbers, beef cattle. Goats are especially adapted to the rocky terrain and provide a vitally needed source of protein.

The plentiful fish and shellfish in the archipelago's seas provide local consumption, small quantities for export. There are cold storage and freezing facilities at Mindelo and Praia, and on Sal Island. The government is examining ways to further develop its fishing industry.

Cape Verde's strategic location at the crossroads of central Atlantic air and sea lanes has been enhanced by a new harbor in Praia, improvements at Mindelo's harbor (Porto Grande), and at Sal's Amílcar Cabral International Airport. In addition, ship repair facilities were opened at Mindelo in 1983.

The islands' location, climate, mountain scenery, and extensive beaches offer possibilities for the development of tourism. The basic infrastructure for this sector was improved in 1983 with the completion of the U.S.-financed desalination and power plant.

Because of the archipelago's meager resources, many Cape Verdeans seek work abroad.

In June 1985, Cape Verde signed an Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) agreement with the United States. It also has economic accords with Portugal, the European Community (EC), the Arab Development Bank, Sweden, The Netherlands, and the African Development Bank. Since Cape Verde's independence, the U.S. has provided grant aid for food, technical assistance, soil and water conservation, agricultural research, rural development, school construction, and training and desalination facilities. In 1988, bilateral agreements between the U.S. and Cape Verde established a Peace Corps program and military training for Cape Verdeans at U.S. military schools.

Retail trade within the islands is handled by numerous shopkeepers and market traders. Food is the largest imported item and, with few exceptions, all consumer items are imported.

The National Union of Cape Verdean Workers (União Nacional dos Trabalhadores de Cabo Verde, or UNTC) is comprised of the membership of six trade unions. While these are guaranteed the right to strike, they do not do so. UNTC has only a few thousand members.

Cape Verde's commercial office, Associação Commercial Barlavento, is in Mindelo, São Vicente, at P.O. Box 62; telephone: 31-22-81.

Transportation

The larger islands of São Tiago, Sal, São Vicente, Boa Vista, São Nicolau, Santo Antão, Maio, and Fogo are served by Transportes Aéreos de Cabo Verde (TACV), the national airline. TACV flies small Hawker-Siddeley and Twin Otter aircraft several times weekly (except Sundays) between the major islands at reasonable prices. Intercontinental flights also exist weekly or bimonthly on various national

and international aircraft between Cape Verde and Lisbon, Amsterdam, Paris, Frankfurt, Moscow, Dakar, Banjul, Bissau, Johannesburg, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, and Boston. Small, regularly scheduled shipping vessels link Brava, the only inhabited island without an airport, to Fogo and São Tiago. Ferry boats also travel regularly between São Vicente and Santo Antão. There are no railroads. All islands have similar cobblestone road systems.

Public transportation in Praia is inadequate. A few taxis (black and green) are available, but not at all hours. Bus service is available and set schedules exist, but are not always followed.

Public transport to the interior towns of São Tiago is by bus and small passenger trucks or "alugueres." All of the major towns are connected by cobblestone roads; dirt roads and paths connect the rest.

Automobile traffic in Cape Verde moves on the right. Narrow roads, people on foot, and wandering livestock make driving somewhat hazardous.

A car brought into Cape Verde by a nonresident is considered in transit, and no taxes are levied; a second car, however, is subject to all duties.

Small European and Japanese automobiles, such as Fiat, Volkswagen, Renault, Leyland, Nissan, Volvo, Peugeot, and Toyota, are the vehicles most commonly used. American cars are seldom seen, as servicing is difficult. Those importing cars are advised to bring a supply of spare parts such as spark plugs, points, condensers, fan belts, and the like. A heavy-duty battery is essential and air-conditioning is useful in warmer months.

Rough cobblestone roads cause tires and suspension systems to wear rapidly. Rust is a severe problem because of ocean breezes. Therefore, any vehicle shipped to Cape Verde should have heavy-duty suspension,

radial tires, and undercoating. Carburetors should be for low-octane leaded gas, since locally available gasoline is of lower octane than American brands. It is unwise to ship car radios and stereos with any vehicle.

The national tourist agency, Secretaria de Estado de Comércio e Turismo is at C.P. 105, Praia, São Tiago; telephone: 573; telex: 6058.

Communications

Telephone & Telegraph

Cape Verde's internal telephone and telegraph system is limited, but improving. Local telephone calls in Praia are inexpensive and connections are good. Inter-island connections are less reliable, and lengthy service outages occur periodically. Telegrams can be sent from Praia to any other island.

External communication links are good. A new communication satellite system with added lines and modern switchboard equipment in Praia and Mindelo has improved all communication services. Direct dial from the U.S. to Cape Verde began in 1988.

International telegraph service is carried by submarine cable. All mail is by air.

Radio & TV

Cape Verde's has two radio transmitters—in Praia and on São Vicente. Praia's local station broadcasts on FM only, from 6:30 am to midnight. Programs concentrate on popular music and local news; international news coverage is incomplete, but shortwave broadcasts can be received from Europe, North America, and Africa.

Cape Verdean television (TEVC) is in color, transmitting every evening, except Monday, from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Programming consists of news, sports, cartoons, cultural programs, and weekly movies (subtitled in Portuguese) from the U.S., Europe, and the former Soviet Union.

The television system is not compatible with American sets but, with some sacrifice in quality of reception, U.S. sets can be converted. A booster and a large antenna make reception possible from Dakar (Senegal) and Morocco.

Newspapers, Magazines and Technical Journals

Cape Verde is served by a government-run newspaper, *Voz do Povo* (Voice of the People), which is published weekly. Newspapers and magazines from Europe or the U.S. are rarely available. Subscriptions to English-language periodicals are good supplements to the limited reading material available in the country. There is a small library at the U.S. Embassy.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

General medical services are available at the government-operated central hospital in Praia, but this 300-bed facility falls far below U.S. standards. In addition to the Cape Verdean staff, there are medical personnel here from France, Brazil, Cuba, the former Soviet Union, and China. A 140-bed hospital is located in Mindelo.

Some specialists practice in Praia, but they are hindered by inadequate facilities and training, and lack of supplies. A priority of the Cape Verdean Government is to increase the quality of health care, but it remains inadequate by U.S. standards.

Americans (U.S. Government employees, tourists, merchant seamen, etc.) have been treated successfully here on an emergency basis, but more complex medical situations are handled in Dakar, Lisbon or, in some cases, the U.S.

Community Health

Community health in Praia is relatively good compared to other West African countries, but is well below American standards. Praia has

weekly garbage collection. The city water is obtained from springs and is filtered. Many local residents use tap water for drinking but, as a safeguard against waterborne diseases, all drinking water should be boiled and filtered. Fruits and vegetables should be soaked in iodine solution if they cannot be peeled before eating raw. Meat (especially pork) needs thorough cooking.

There is no city sewage system, although one is being planned and developed; septic tanks are the alternative. During drought conditions, flies and cockroaches flourish.

Preventive Measures

A good supply of strong sun block, skin creams of all kinds, eye drops, sunglasses, and common first-aid medications is needed. These precautions are especially important, as the sun is intense six months of the year, and the sandstorms blowing from the Sahara can cause eye and throat irritations. Visitors are strongly advised to bring extra pairs of eyeglasses and contact lenses, and a generous supply of contact lens soaking and cleaning solutions. Neither eyeglasses nor contact lenses are made in Cape Verde.

Americans traveling to Praia must have inoculations against typhoid, yellow fever, typhus, hepatitis, and tetanus. Gamma globulin injections should be kept current. Malaria suppressants are recommended after the rainy season and for those who travel often to Senegal and other West African countries.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

There are three air routes to Cape Verde's capital: New York/Lisbon/Sal/Praia; Boston/Sal/Praia (direct via TACV); and New York/Dakar/Praia. It is best to avoid the latter, as the Dakar/Praia flight is difficult and luggage is strictly limited to 40.4 lbs. (20 kilos) per person. Cape

Verde's international airport is on Sal Island, a one-hour flight on TACV, the domestic carrier, from Praia. TACV does not fly on Sunday, and a wait of eight hours is common during the week. Two good hotels are located in Santa Maria, approximately 11 miles (17 kilometers) from the airport, where the wait is more pleasant.

A passport and visa are required. Travelers should obtain further information from the Embassy of the Republic of Cape Verde, 3415 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington D.C. 20007, telephone (202) 965-6820, or the Consulate General of Cape Verde in Boston. Overseas, inquiries should be made to the nearest Cape Verdean embassy or consulate.

Airport police and customs officials routinely inspect incoming and outgoing luggage. Travelers in possession of prescription drugs should carry proof of their prescriptions, such as labeled containers. Police have been known to arrest foreigners carrying unlabeled pills. For a complete list of prohibited items, please contact the nearest Cape Verdean embassy or consulate.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy at Rua Abilio M. Macedo 81, C.P. 201, Praia, telephone (238) 61-56-16 or 17, fax (238) 61-13-55, and to obtain updated information on travel and security in Cape Verde.

Pets

Quarantine is not required for pets imported to Cape Verde. Dogs and cats should be inoculated against rabies within six months prior to arrival. There are several veterinarians in Praia, but no kennels. Pet food is not available locally.

Firearms & Ammunition

Importation of firearms and ammunition is prohibited; only occasionally is an exception made.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The Cape Verdean currency is the *escudo*, which is not convertible outside the country. Praia is the main banking center; the head office is Banco de Cabo Verde.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Jan. 23 | National Heroes' Day |
| Feb/Mar. | Carnival* |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| May 19 | Municipal Day |
| July 5 | Independence Day |
| Aug. 15 | Assumption Day |
| Nov. 1 | All Saints' Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |

*Variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

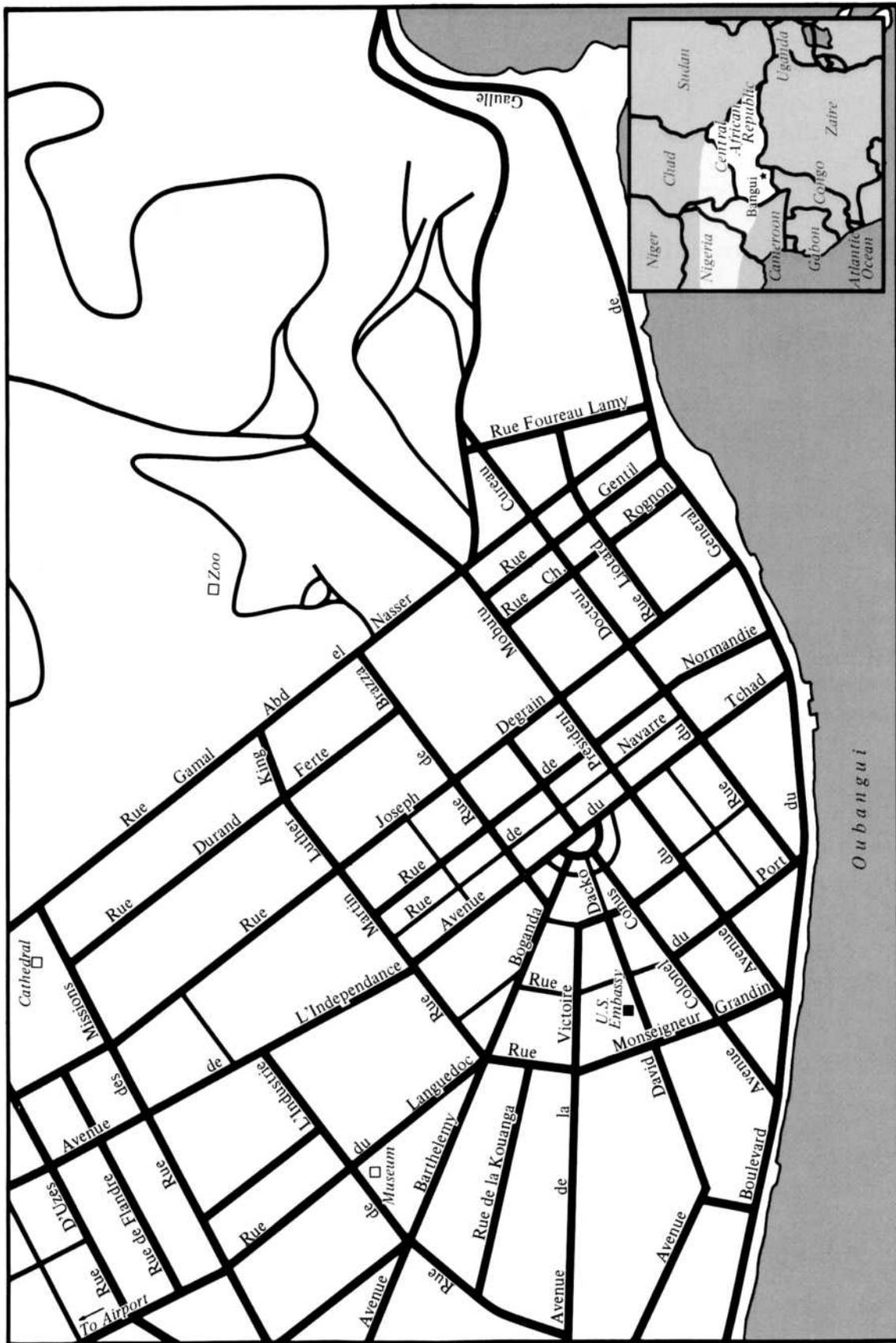
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Foy, Colm. *Cape Verde & São Tome & Príncipe.* Marxist Regimes

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Bangui, Central African Republic

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Major City:

Bangui

Other Cities:

Bambari, Bangassou, Bouar, Bria

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated November 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**, once known as the Territory of Ubangi-Chari, was one of the four provinces of French Equatorial Africa. It became an autonomous republic within the newly established French Community in December 1958, and became a fully independent nation two years later.

On December 4, 1976 President Jean-Bedel Bokassa, who seized power in a 1965 military coup, proclaimed himself "emperor" and renamed the country the Central African Empire. Gross abuses of power, corruption, and human rights violations characterized his rule. In September 1979, Bokassa was overthrown and replaced by his

cousin David Dacko. Dacko had previously served as President from 1960 to 1965. The country's name was changed back to the Central African Republic. Dacko remained in power until 1981, when he was ousted by military authorities during a period of severe economic crisis.

A military government, headed by General André Dieudonne Kolingba, took power. Early in 1985, a new constitution was drafted and ratified which promised the introduction of civilians into the military government.

In 1990, several violent demonstrations broke out in the country in support of a return to a civilian, multi-party government. Gen. Kolingba appointed a new prime minister in 1991, but expressed the view that a multi-party government would bring chaos and civil war to the country.

The Central African Republic is a young and struggling country, trying to create a nation out of a multitude of tribes, and to raise the level of economic development in an isolated and poorly endowed land. Against a background of colonial heritage, it seeks to form institutions and procedures appropriate to a modern, independent state.

MAJOR CITY

Bangui

Bangui, the C.A.R.'s only major city, is the country's economic and industrial center and has the only major river port and airport. It is located in a picturesque setting on the north bank of the Oubangui River, about 1,100 miles upstream from the Atlantic Ocean.

Founded in 1889 as a French military post, the city takes its name from a native word meaning "the rapids." It nestles beneath low-lying hills at the water's edge near rapids that prevent all but small boats and very shallow barges from plying the river further upstream.

The city is surrounded by a vast savanna of high grass and thickets of low trees spread over rolling hills to the north and west. Little villages are strung along the roads like beads. The nearest heavy equatorial rain forest lies about two hours (60 miles) to the southwest. To the south, across the Oubangui River from Bangui, lies Zaire.

Since Bangui is situated 4 degrees north of the Equator and 1,300 feet above sea level, its climate is humid and unchanging except during the

brief, violent thunderstorms of the rainy season.

The average high temperature for March, in the dry season, is 92.5° F; the low is 67° F. Average rainfall is 5 inches in January and 6.5 inches in July; August has the greatest average rainfall at 13 inches.

Most of Bangui's population of about 533,000 live in agglomerations of huts dispersed over a wide area several miles from the city's modern core. The core consists of European style residential districts; the downtown shopping, banking, and office area; government offices; and river port installations.

The city has a pleasant and colorful appearance. Many main avenues are lined with huge overhanging mango trees, which bear fruit in the spring, or the somewhat smaller but exotic "flame" trees with brilliant red blossoms in season. Most of Bangui's foreign population is French, principally business representatives or those connected with the government in advisory or technical capacities, or military personnel. Other foreign nationals include Portuguese, Greeks, Chadians, Cameroonians, Congolese, Ivoirians, Nigerians, Sudanese, Togolese, Zairians, Lebanese, and Syrians.

Food

Local vegetables and fruit are fresh, reasonably priced and good, but seasonally limited. Produce must be carefully washed, soaked, and cooked. Carrots, green onions, cabbage, string beans, eggplant, lettuce, tomatoes, squash and lima beans are sold in season. Cassava (manioc) is always available. Locally grown potatoes are available, but are somewhat costly. Local fruit, some of it seasonal, includes bananas, pineapples, papayas, mangoes, avocados, oranges, grapefruit, guavas, passion fruit, and custard apples. Home gardening is popular and African seeds are available.

Some stores carry imported goods from France and South Africa, such as canned fruit and vegetables, flour, salt, sugar, dried beans, noodles, packaged cookies and candies,

paper goods, soap, and cleaning products and toiletries. There are occasional shortages and prices can be breath-taking.

Pasteurized fresh milk is not available. Sterilized cream and whole and low fat milk in paper cartons or bottles are imported but are only irregularly available. Powdered and evaporated milk, fresh eggs, butter, and cheese are also available.

Beef, pork, lamb, smoked meats, and a good selection of cold cuts are carried in the supermarket. The best local fish is the capitaine, a large (and expensive) river fish with firm white flesh. Fish, shrimp, lobsters, oysters, and other seafood arrive once a week from France and the African coast. Also included in the weekly 'arrivage' are fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables at very high prices.

The most widely available fresh bread is of the French "baguette" type. Croissants, pastries, and some sandwich-type bread may be purchased at a price, and an Arab bakery offers pita bread which is quite good.

Wines, liquor, imported beer, and soft drinks are sold locally. Beer, soda, water, and soft drinks, including Coca-Cola, are bottled locally.

Clothing

Bring only enough winter clothing for travel to colder climates. Winter clothing mildews easily in Bangui. Since bedrooms are air-conditioned, bring appropriate sleepwear.

Men: Lightweight summer clothing is worn year round. A set of woolen clothing is useful for traveling or for very occasional chilly weather. Men wear long- or short-sleeved shirts, ties, or sports shirts. Wash-and-wear clothing is most practical. Dry cleaning is available but very expensive, slow, and of dubious quality. Daytime wear is usually in darker rather than lighter shades. Dark blue or gray suits are worn in the evenings. Loose fitting, open-neck sports shirts are practical but should be in conservative prints or color for evening wear. European-

style men's clothing is available but expensive.

Women: Light, informal washable dresses, skirts, and blouses are worn year round. Dressy cottons, informal dresses, and pants are often worn at informal functions. Attractive but expensive women's clothing in limited variety is sold locally and dresses can be made locally from attractive local fabrics. Bring a few sweaters and long-sleeved dresses and blouses for cool weather. Coats are needed only for traveling in colder climates. Bring a light-weight, non-plastic raincoat if you have one, but an umbrella is usually sufficient. Hats are needed for sun wear. Slacks and shorts are quite acceptable for sports. Bring some khaki shirts, skirts, or pants for bush trips and a good supply of shoes. Sandals with or without heels and regular summer footwear are worn most of the time.

Children: Children's clothes are expensive and quantities limited. Each child should have a few sweaters, a large number of T-shirts, and some flannel pajamas. School-age boys wear cotton shorts or blue jeans and shirts; girls wear simple cotton dresses and shorts. Sandals and sneakers are sold locally at about U.S. prices but are only fair quality, and sizes are limited. Children dress as they would in the U.S. No school uniforms are worn.

Special Clothing: Bring all sports clothing and footwear, as none are available in Bangui. Day trips and travel into the bush are popular activities in the Central African Republic, for which sturdy walking shoes and/or tennis shoes, khaki shirts, and skirts or pants are recommended.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: Some cosmetics and toilet articles, facial tissue, toilet paper, and feminine hygiene supplies are sold in Bangui at double or more U.S. prices. If you have favorite brands, bring a supply. European cigarettes and a few American brands are sold but are expensive.



Street in Bangui, Central African Republic

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

Pipe tobacco can be found, but it is generally not packed for the tropics and suffers accordingly.

Basic Services: There is one European-style beauty shop, expensive by U.S. standards. Shoe repair work is often slow, expensive, and poor. Americans have used the services of local dressmakers but with varying results.

Religious Activities

Catholic and Protestant churches in Bangui hold services in French and Sangho. American missionaries (Baptist and Grace Brethren) have informal services in English once a week.

Education

No English-language primary or secondary education is available in Bangui. American children attend Charles de Gaulle Primary school which follows the French curriculum, is accredited by the French Government, and supervised by the French Embassy in Bangui. A preschool program is offered as well as the primary grades K-6. Other students are European and African. Teachers are French, mostly spouses of French aid personnel. The cost is about US\$250 per trimester.

On the same compound is the Lycee (high school) Andre Malraux, with grades 7 through baccalaureate (graduation). The school is open to Central Africans and other foreigners. All classes are in French, with English taught as a foreign language. The system is geared to prepare students for entry into higher educational institutions in France. The cost is higher, but again all covered by the education allowance. If your child does not speak or understand French well, it will be necessary to hire a tutor at first.

The school year runs from October through mid-June. School is held 6 days weekly, Monday-Saturday, 7:30 a.m. to noon. The quality of education in both schools is good and comparable to schools in metropolitan France, but many subjects normally available in American schools are not offered. American children with no previous French have successfully adjusted in the early grades of primary school.

Another preschool offers a morning program for children 2 to 6 years old for \$200 per trimester, with a \$40 registration fee.

The College Preparatoire International (CPI) offers an English program for grades K-12, in addition to their regular French curriculum.

Sport

Tennis, swimming, squash, boating, horseback riding, golf, and water skiing are available. Soccer is played locally.

The Rock Club, on the Oubangui River, has a clubhouse with lounge and snack bars, tennis and squash courts, table tennis, large swimming pool, small boat marina, and classes in ballet, gymnastics, judo, etc., for adults and children. Videotape recordings and bridge games are also scheduled. Monthly dues are about US\$40, with an initiation fee of US\$350.00.

A private tennis club has courts which are well maintained and lit. Tennis lessons can be arranged at about US\$15 per hour, for members only. Annual dues are about \$375, with an initiation fee of US\$175.

The country's only golf course, amidst rolling hills, is about six miles from the city center, and has 18 holes with rough grass fairways and sand greens. Cost to join is about US\$186. Monthly dues are US\$40 per person.

Boating is almost exclusively outboard-motorboating, since the hills near the river, the swift current, and many whirlpools make sailing impossible and canoeing hazardous. Water skiing is possible, but river water sports carry the risk of exposure to bilharzia.

Spectator sports are soccer and basketball matches, bicycle racing, tennis tournaments, horse shows, and occasional boat racing.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

One-day trips can be made by car to the falls at Boali, 62 miles northwest of Bangui along a good, paved road (except for the last three miles). Pygmy villages 1-2 hours southwest of Bangui, via a paved road, can also be visited. Since air travel is the only feasible mode of transportation for a comfortable trip of any distance from Bangui, frequent changes of scene and relief from climate are not economical.

Entertainment

Public entertainment is limited. Several restaurants offer fair to good French cuisine at high prices. Several restaurants specialize in African food, and one in Lebanese dishes. No local legitimate theater exists, but infrequent theatrical performances by visiting French or local Central African troupes can be seen. Concerts are very rarely given, so music lovers should bring a good collection of records, tapes or CDs; they are unavailable in Bangui. The two movie theaters show French or French-dubbed films, some current, some older. Admission prices, as well as quality of sound, vary.

Three European-style discotheques operate in Bangui. In non-European quarters, several nightclubs offer open-air dancing, sometimes with live bands.

Good but expensive European photo equipment is sold locally. Camera enthusiasts should bring a good supply of film, flash bulbs, and batteries.

Social Activities

Among Americans: Most entertaining is in the home. Informal dinners, buffets, and cocktail parties are frequent.

International Contacts: Social activity in the Central African and European Community occurs, consisting mainly of receptions and small dinner parties at home. It is necessary to speak French. Social affairs are generally informal, with only a few more formal functions annually.

Hotels have facilities that can be rented for large receptions and dinner parties. Catering services are also available but expensive. The Rotary and Lions Clubs are active. Most recreational clubs occasionally sponsor special social events for members and guests.

Special Information

No particular hazards to travelers exist other than those connected with bush trips in any country with-

out a system of paved highways. When taking photographs, exercise discretion. Local authorities are often sensitive about photos being taken which they believe would compromise the country's security or reflect unfavorably on the country. Avoid these subjects: the Palace, private residences owned by the government, airports and military installations, as well as beggars, physically deformed people, convicts (who are often seen performing outdoor labor tasks), and bare-breasted women.

OTHER CITIES

Located approximately 150 miles northeast of the capital, **BAMBARI** is representative of cities in the central region of Africa. It was once a thriving community that has now fallen victim to its environment. The city does, however, boast of green hills, picturesque scenery, and the Ouaka River. Fishing, coffee, and other crops support the city's 87,500 (2000 est.) residents.

BANGASSOU is the home of the beautiful Kembe Falls on the Kotto River. Swimming is not advised here, but the view is awesome. The city is located in the southern section of the Central African Republic very near to Zaire. The population is estimated at 36,000.

Located near the western border, north of the capital, **BOUAR** is rich in history. The stone monuments that appear to be thousands of years old have mystified archaeologists with their similarity to monuments found in Egypt and western Europe. In Bouar's not so ancient past, it was a French headquarters and a German outpost. Ivory and wood are used for handicrafts here, and are sold in the markets. Trade items include food, cotton, and animals. Bouar has about 95,200 residents (2000).

The diamond-mining city of **BRIA** is located approximately 250 miles northeast of the capital. Along with diamonds, Bria produces cotton, sesame, gold, and coffee. It is easily

accessible by road and air. The population is estimated to be over 25,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Central African Republic, formerly known as the territory of Oubangui-Chari, was one of four territories of French Equatorial Africa. It became an autonomous republic within the newly established French Community on December 1, 1958 and was renamed the Central African Republic two years later. It transformed itself into the Central African Empire on December 4, 1976, and again became a republic (Republique Centrafricaine) on September 20, 1979.

The Central African Republic is a landlocked country on a broad plateau in the heart of the African continent. With an area of 238,000 square miles, it is slightly smaller than Texas. It is bounded on the north by Chad, on the east by Sudan, on the south by Zaire and Congo, and on the west by Cameroon. Most of the country is between 1,300 and 3,600 feet above sea level, with an average altitude of about 2,000 feet.

The country is a watershed for the Lake Chad/Chari River basin to the north and the Congo River basin to the south. Although rivers are numerous, they are small and do not lend themselves to heavy commerce. The Oubangui River is commercially navigable year round only south of Bangui.

Vegetation varies from tropical rain forest in the extreme southwest to semi-desert in the northeast. The bulk of the country is wooded savanna.

Average monthly temperatures range from a low of around 66° to a high of as much as 93°. Most of the country's precipitation, usually characterized by short, violent

thunderstorms, occurs in two seasons: April-May and August-November. Although it rains hard at times, the sun shines almost every day. Dust, generally sunny skies, and warm weather are the forecast for the major dry season (December-March) and the short, dry season (June-July).

Year-round daylight hours are 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The country is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. Daylight saving time is not observed.

Population

The estimated population is 3.5 million. Almost two-thirds of these people inhabit the western region, which includes Bangui, and most of the remaining population live in the central region. The eastern region has a density of less than one person per square mile. The country's overall density is 6-8 persons per square mile.

More than 80 percent of the people live in rural areas. Bangui, with about 553,000 people, is the only large city. Five other towns have populations exceeding 20,000; all are in the western or central regions.

Although many different ethnic groups exist, two main groups (the Baya-Mandjia, who inhabit the western and northern part of the country, and the Banda, who inhabit the center of the country) account for two-thirds of the population. A third group (riverine group of M'Bakas, Mbatis, Yakomas, and Sangos, located in the Bangui area and in several areas along the Oubangui River) comprises about 15 percent of the population but supplied the first four Chiefs of State. Pygmies, the country's original inhabitants, live in the forests of the southwest.

Each ethnic group has its own language, but Sangho, the language of a small riverine group along the Oubangui, is the lingua franca of the country and the "national" language. Only a small minority of the population has more than an ele-

mentary knowledge of French, the country's "official" language. Catholic and Protestant missionaries have been active since the late 19th century, and both churches are well established. According to church attendance records, about 50 percent of the population is Christian (roughly half Catholic and half Protestant). Moslems constitute about 15-20 percent and are important to the trade of the country. The balance of the population adheres to traditional religious beliefs.

Significant foreign communities in the country include the Chadian, Cameroonian, Zairian, and Nigerian colonies in the Bangui area. Most of the country's 4,000 non-African residents are French citizens living in Bangui; of the remainder, about 400 are Americans, mostly Peace Corps Volunteers or missionaries in the interior.

Public Institutions

The Central African Republic is a constitutional democracy. The constitution was passed by referendum on December 29, 1994 and was adopted on January 7, 1995. The president is elected by popular vote for a six-year term, and the prime minister is appointed by the president. There is a unicameral National Assembly with 109 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms (note - there were 85 seats in the National Assembly before the 1998 election).

For administrative purposes, the country is divided into 14 prefectures, which in turn are divided into two or more sub-prefectures. Officials of these units (prefects and sub-prefects) report directly to the Ministry of the Interior. The army, the gendarmerie and the national police maintain public order.

There is universal suffrage for those aged 21.

Arts, Science, and Education

Cultural and intellectual life is developing. Institutions of higher

education include the University of Bangui, the National School of Administration and Magistrature, and the National Teachers Training College.

Local culture reflects outside influences to some degree, particularly from neighboring countries. Native dancing is gaining recognition as an integral part of the culture. The Boganda Museum in Bangui houses a collection of items of cultural interest, including ethnic artifacts.

Commerce and Industry

The economy is predominantly subsistence agriculture. Manioc, millet, and sorghum are the leading food crops. A number of light industries located in the Bangui area include plants for processing agricultural products; cigar and cigarette factories; a tee shirt factory; a brewery; and a diamond-cutting facility. The country has no heavy industry. Leading exports are diamonds, coffee, timber, and cotton. Uranium deposits exist, but they are located in a remote area and are not regarded as exploitable in the near future. Petroleum exploration has resulted in no exploitable discoveries. French and Lebanese businesses control much of the commercial activity of the country, and France is responsible for about 40 percent of the C.A.R.'s foreign trade.

As a former French colony and an associate member of the EC, the Central African Republic receives substantial foreign aid from France and the EC's European Development Fund. In addition, Germany, Japan, Taiwan and the U.S. provide more modest levels of technical and project assistance. The World Bank, the UNDP, and other UN agencies have important development projects here.

Transportation

Local

Bangui has no public bus service, but intercity minibuses, which are infrequent and dangerous, connect

principal towns. Buses are invariably crowded. Taxis operate primarily on fixed routes on a share-the-cab system.

Regional

Air transport is expensive, but generally reliable. Bangui airport handles scheduled passenger and cargo flights. Air Afrique and Air France operate between Paris and Bangui, with flights also stopping in N'Djamena, Chad or Douala, Cameroon. Air Afrique operates scheduled passenger and cargo flights from Libreville, Gabon and Douala, Cameroon, to Bangui. Air Afrique also operates a weekly flight to Lagos/Lome/Abidjan/Niamey/Dakar and once a week also to Lome.

Irregularly scheduled internal air service and small charter planes are available.

The water transport route from the Atlantic Ocean to Bangui begins with a long railroad trip from Pointe Noire, Congo, to Brazzaville where cargo is transshipped on barges up the Congo and Oubangui Rivers to Bangui. Above Bangui the Oubangui is navigable only by shallow draft barges in the rainy season. Motorized "pirogues" (African dug-out canoes) and a vehicle ferry cross the Oubangui River at Bangui to the town of Zongo, Zaire, to connect with the Zaire road system, such as it is.

The principal land transport route from the Atlantic to Bangui goes from Douala and Yaounde, Cameroon. Roads also connect to neighboring Chad and Sudan. Except for roads connecting Bangui with Yaloke (148 miles), Bangui with Sibut (68 miles), and Bangui with M'Baiki (64 miles), all roads outside Bangui are unpaved. Even Bangui has many unpaved streets. Road surfaces deteriorate in the rainy season, so a four-wheel-drive vehicle with high road clearance is a distinct advantage.

Most freight for Bangui is shipped by truck from Douala, Cameroon. A small amount of trans-Saharan road traffic, mostly overland tourists,

pass through Bangui on travels further south or east.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Bangui has dependable dial telephone system with a capacity of 5,000 lines. Overseas direct dialing is available. Basic monthly charges for a telephone are about US\$12. Subscribers are billed about US\$0.33 for each local call. Bills run months late.

Calls to the U.S. of usually good quality are routed through Paris. A long-distance call costs about US\$28 for 3 minutes. Commercial telegrams are available to the U.S. and are routed via Paris.

Radio and TV

The Government radio station, Radio Centrafrique, broadcasts music, news, and announcements on mediumwave and FM from Bangui in French and Sangho. News in French is broadcast four times per day. Radio Afrique Numero Un broadcasts music and news in French on the FM band.

Voice of America, BBC and other international services can be received on shortwave bands.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Several French language newspapers are published irregularly in Bangui.

A few English-language publications are sold locally. *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *Economist* and the *International Herald Tribune* are available every week. A large number of French newspapers, magazines, and books are sold locally.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Bangui has two large government hospitals, staffed primarily by French and Central African doctors; most speak only French. Although the specialists at the hospital are often consulted, the in-patient facil-

ities are not used because of the questionable sanitary conditions and nursing care.

While there are specialists in ophthalmology, orthopedics, OB/GYN, general surgery, pediatrics, and ear, nose and throat problems, they are rarely used by Americans.

Competent emergency dental work is available, but all dental work should be done before arrival, if possible.

Two local pharmacies are fairly well stocked with French medicines. Eyeglasses can be ordered from one of the pharmacies but are very expensive and entail substantial delay. It is advisable to bring a spare pair of glasses.

Preventive Measures

Tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, schistosomiasis and intestinal parasites are prevalent, but foreigners rarely contract such endemic diseases if they observe simple preventative measures. Dysentery (Amoebic and bacillary), skin infections, malaria, and hepatitis are a constant risk. Viral ailments such as colds and flu are common. Those with respiratory, skin, or sinus problems may find these conditions aggravated.

Local authorities require yellow fever immunizations for entry into the country. The Department of State advises hepatitis A and B, tetanus, typhoid, polio, and rabies shots.

Chloroquine-resistant malaria has become a problem during the last few years. Thus, careful prevention of exposure to mosquitoes and malaria suppression is essential. A new anti-malarial, Mefloquin, is recommended. A weekly dose of Chloroquine in addition to daily doses of Paludrine is also used by some people. Malaria suppression should be started two weeks before your arrival.

It takes most people some time to adjust to the climate. Children generally adapt well, but heat rash and childhood diseases can occur. Mod-

erate physical exercise and active social interests help maintain good health. Avoid too much sun.

Snakes, scorpions, tarantulas and other spiders, ants, and mosquitoes make it necessary to take precautions when walking outdoors, including wearing shoes and using insect repellent, particularly at night.

Bangui's water is purified in a modern plant, but because of the condition of the city pipelines, water must be boiled and filtered before drinking or using for ice cubes.

Local vegetables, particularly leafy ones, should be washed in a detergent or bleach ("javel" in French) solution, or should be peeled or cooked before eating. Local meats should be cooked thoroughly to avoid parasites such as trichina or tapeworms.

Fruits and vegetables imported from Europe should be treated for possible contamination in transit. They need not be peeled. Fresh milk is not available, although long-life milk is frequently stocked in one or two food stores.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

A valid passport and visa are required. Current information on entry requirements may be obtained from the Embassy of the Central African Republic, 1618 22nd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 483-7800/7801, fax (202) 332-9893. Overseas, inquiries should be made to the nearest Central African Republic embassy or consulate.

To enter into the country, travelers must have the standard international certificate of vaccination or its equivalent and yellow fever and occasionally cholera immunization certificates. (Note that the yellow fever immunization does not become effective until ten days after injection.)

Americans living in or visiting CAR are encouraged to register with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Bangui at Avenue David Dacko, and to obtain updated information on travel and security within the CAR. The mailing address for the U.S. Embassy in Bangui is American Embassy Bangui, Avenue David Dacko, B.P. 924, telephone (236) 61-02-00; fax (236) 61-44-94; after-hours telephone for U.S. citizens (236) 61-34-56 or 61-69-14.

No quarantine requirements exist for pets. They must have a rabies vaccination certificate and a certificate of good health. Pets must be shipped as accompanying baggage, and are normally cleared and delivered to the owners immediately upon arrival of the plane carrying them. Limited veterinary service is available.

The unit of currency is the CFA (Communaute Financiere Africaine, African Financial Community) franc issued by the Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale et du Cameroun (Central Bank of Central Africa and Cameroon). France guarantees unlimited convertibility of the CFA franc into metrofrancs at the rate of 100 francs CFA to 1 French franc. The rate of exchange in January 2001 was 669 francs CFA=US\$1.

Following the French Government's enactment of exchange controls in 1968, the CAR adopted similar restrictions. Under present regulations, an unlimited amount of foreign currency and travelers checks can be imported or exported, but no more than the equivalent of 50,000 CFA francs per person in currency.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1 New Year's Day
 Mar. 29 Boganda Day
 Mar/Apr. Easter*
 Mar/Apr. Easter Monday*
 May 1 Labor Day

May/June. Ascension Day*
 May/June. Whitsunday*
 May/June. Whitmonday*
 June 30 National Day of Prayer
 Aug. 13. Republic Day
 Aug. 15. Assumption Day
 Nov. 1. All Saints' Day
 Dec. 1. Proclamation Day
 Dec. 25. Christmas Day
 *variable

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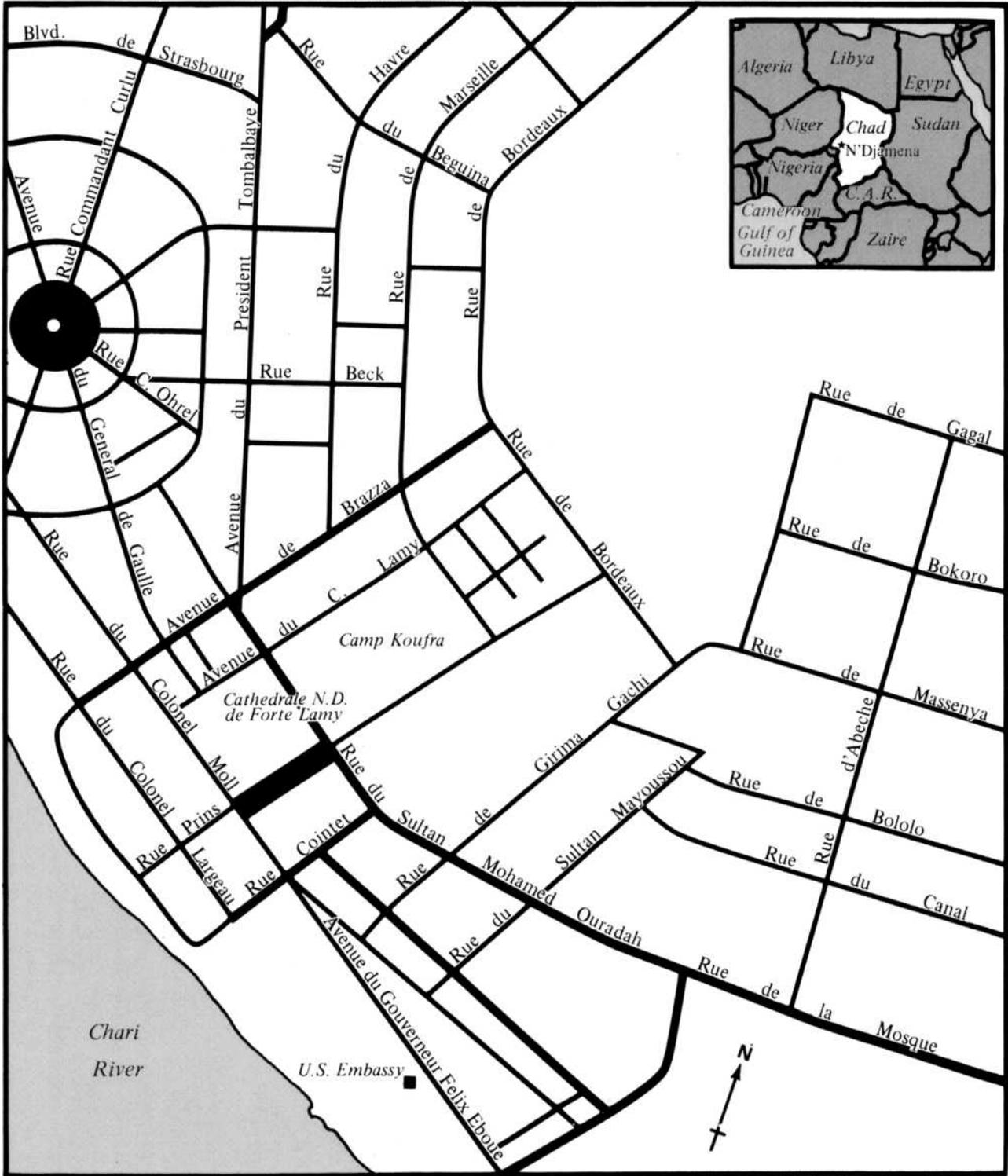
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N'Djamena, Chad

CHAD

Republic of Chad

Major City:

N'Djamena

Other Cities:

Abéché, Bongor, Faya, Moundou, Sarh

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated July 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

CHAD, the largest of the countries to develop from former French Equatorial Africa, has an ancient history that tells of well-developed societies dwelling around Lake Chad as long ago as a thousand years. Arab elements probably migrated from the north, across the Libyan desert, in the eighth century, but it was not until the French arrived in the middle of the 19th century that Europeans settled the region. With what are now Gabon, Central African Republic, and the Republic of the Congo, Chad had French colonial status until 1958. It became independent two years later.

The nation has been battered by several civil wars, invasions from Libya, political instability, and famine for nearly three decades. In November 1990, a variety of anti-government forces calling themselves the Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS) launched a military attack on the government of President Hissein Habré. The MPS, led by Colonel Idriss Déby, quickly overwhelmed troops loyal to Habré. On December 2, 1990, Déby and the MPS marched into N'Djamena. Habré and other government officials fled to Cameroon.

Prior to the overthrow of the Habré regime, Chad's sole legal political party was the National Union for Independence and Revolution (UNIR). In May 1991, President Déby stated that he would favor the creation of a multi-party democracy in Chad. After several years of delays, Chad's first multiparty democratic elections were held in 1996, and President Déby was reelected.

Chad (in French, Tchad) offers broad geographic variety: desert, savanna and forest, mountains, rivers and plains, as well as the mystique of its location in the heart of Africa. Its people, as varied and interesting as its topography, include nomads, herdsman, fishermen and farmers, Muslims, animists, and Christians.

MAJOR CITY

N'Djamena

Chad's capital city, N'Djamena, formerly Fort Lamy, is located at the confluence of the Chari and Logone rivers. It lies nearly 1,000 feet above sea level on a 300-mile-wide arid savanna belt that stretches across the country. This strip separates the Sahara Desert in the north from the subtropical areas of the south. N'Djamena is the center of Chadian government, commerce, banking, communications, and foreign trade. The city was largely destroyed during the 1979–82 civil war. Many buildings still standing are bombed-out shells, although rebuilding is underway and much reconstruction has been completed. N'Djamena has a population of approximately 1,044,000.

Physically and architecturally, N'Djamena is two cities in one: French colonial and Chadian. The European portion of town is characterized by wide, tree-lined streets and white cement homes set in ample gardens. Here are found also most of the government buildings, embassies, and larger stores. This section fills in the area along the river from the city center to the airport.



Marketplace in N'Djamena, Chad

© Paul Almasy/Corbis. Reproduced by permission.

The Chadian section, which is much larger, stretches to the south and east and is characterized by narrow, busy, unpaved streets and one-story mud houses, some with corrugated tin doors and roofs.

The large, sprawling city market is probably one of the most varied and interesting in the African Sahelian zone. Not only does it offer a wide variety of foods and spices from all parts of Chad, but it also houses an extensive, if rudimentary, manufacturing activity. Visitors can see basket weaving, blacksmithing, rug and mat making, pottery decorating, cloth dyeing, and peanut grinding, all within the market enclosure. The colors, sounds, and smells of the market are unforgettable. While the market does not have the plenitude of goods evident in earlier days, it remains the center of N'Djamena's commerce.

One landmark that has been rebuilt is the architecturally striking Cathedral of Notre Dame. Another

is the Eboué Monument at Place Eboué, opposite City Hall, honoring Félix Eboué, Governor of Chad from 1938–40 and Governor General of French Equatorial Africa from 1940–44.

Aside from the U.S. Embassy staff and their dependents, there are roughly 180 Americans in Chad. Most of these Americans are from private voluntary organizations, the U.N., missions, or employees of two U.S. oil exploration firms.

Schools for Foreigners

The American International School of N'Djamena (AISN) is a coeducational school offering an American-style curriculum for students from kindergarten through grade 8. Extracurricular activities include art, music, school newspaper, soccer, volleyball, and swimming.

École Montaigne is a private school following a French curriculum. Staffed by French cooperants and other qualified expatriate teachers,

it has children from the international community at large as well as French children and some Chadians. With the AISN, it is the only other accredited school in Chad.

Other local primary/elementary schools are not considered suitable because of massive overcrowding in most classes and lack of materials and qualified instructors.

After passing the government exams in grade six, Chadian primary pupils go on to "college" (junior high school) or "lycée" (junior and senior high school). The best of these is College Sacre Coeur, a public school closely supervised by the teaching order of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. This carries students to a grade 10 equivalent; following graduation, students attend one of three lycees (high schools).

Recreation

Spectator sports in N'Djamena are limited to occasional local soccer matches, horse races, volleyball games, softball games, and tennis matches. The extreme heat and absence of suitable facilities makes participation in sports rather difficult in the hot season. A swimming pool at the U.S. Chancery is sometimes open to visitors.

The International Club of N'Djamena offers four well-kept clay tennis courts, one of which is adequately lighted for evening play. Other activities offered include Ping-Pong, karate, volleyball, riding stables, a swimming pool, and an outdoor bar with tables and chairs.

A private horse club, the Equestrians of Chagoua provides horses for riding enthusiasts. The AERO Club provides flying lessons and dining facilities.

Abundant game and wide open spaces once made Chad attractive to European hunters as a safari site. Populations of larger game animals have been greatly reduced, though duck hunting remains good. Douguia is a resort north of N'Djamena on the Chari River which still has something to offer. Driving time in

the dry season is about two hours one way from N'Djamena. A hotel and a restaurant are located at the resort. You can try your luck at fishing or water skiing or just take a walk through the village. By traveling roughly 20 miles (30 kilometers) further to Lake Chad, you can go for a tour in a motorboat.

The Nadjer of Khamiss Rock formations, or Elephant Rocks, with small caves are located near the village of Karal, about three hours north of N'Djamena, and are worth a trip.

N'Djamena's fascinating, sprawling open market is well worth a visit. Spices, a wide variety of foods from all parts of Chad, carpets, clothing, brightly patterned African materials, kitchenware, and other items are available.

Some African art and handiwork can be purchased at the Centre Artisanal, at the Catholic Mission, and close to major hotels. Also, vendors are located in front of the food stores, the Post Office, and other major buildings. Bargaining is a way of life, and consequently, the first price quoted is highly inflated. Visitors can buy ready-made jewelry in gold, silver, filigree, or ivory, or have them made to order in several *bijouteries* (jewelry stores) around town. Some jewelry is imported from Saudi Arabia.

A number of short excursions can be taken from N'Djamena. They do not offer much of a change of landscape or climate, but are interesting. Among them are:

- Kale Maloue/Maroua, a small park inhabited by deer, elephants, monkeys, wild pigs, and a variety of birds. It is approximately eight miles from Kousseri, Cameroon, across from N'Djamena on the Logone River. Guided tours are available during the dry season.

- Waza, a large game park in North Cameroon with elephants, giraffes, lions, and a great variety of antelopes, gazelles, and birds. After crossing the Chari River by ferry or bridge, the park can be reached

over a reasonably good road in about two and one-half hours. A small, but adequate hotel and restaurant, consisting of a series of air-conditioned *boucarrous* (round adobe cottages with thatched roofs) is available.

- Logone Birni, the ancient capital of the Sao sultanate, and an hour's trip to the south on the Cameroonian side of the Logone River. Some mud fortifications are still intact here.

- Logone Gana, sister city of Logone Birni, on the Chadian side of the river. This is an ancient, but thriving, town of fishermen about a one-and-a-half-hour drive to the south.

- Goulfey, a Kotoko village of fishermen and farmers down-river toward Lake Chad, and best reached by boat. Some of the mud walls and houses are more than 400 years old.

- Maroua, a pleasant town with two excellent hotels is located in northern Cameroon, about four hours from N'Djamena. It has a trading center noted for hand-embroidered tablecloths and items of clothing.

- Ourdjila, a mountaintop village an hour south of Maroua, also in northern Cameroon. Tourists visit the chief's *sare* and the quarters of his 40 wives.

- Rhumsiki, where spectacular rock formations can be seen in the hills along the Cameroonian-Nigerian border. There is a small hotel here.

Entertainment

N'Djamena has two popular movie theaters, the Normandie and the VOG. Both theaters occasionally show fairly good but older movies in French, along with Kung-Fu and Hindi epics. Theaters are outdoors, so insect repellent is recommended.

N'Djamena has several amateur theatrical groups: Chadian Anglophone Theatrical Society (C.A.T.S.)

began performing in 1985 with three plays. Most of the members are Americans and Canadians. Les GANTS (Groupe Amateur N'Djamena Theatre et Spectacles) perform in French at the French Cultural Center several times a year. Plays and cabaret shows are offered. Its performances are predominantly by and for expatriates. Baba Moustapha Theatre Vivant gives several performances in French annually, often by Chadian authors. Smaller groups also give plays in French and occasionally in local languages.

The Chadian National Ballet performs dances representative of Chad's different regions. In addition, several smaller dance bands play; the best known are "Chari Jazz" and "Africa Melody".

Le Centre Cultural Francais, supported by the French Embassy, offers annual memberships at very reasonable rates. It has a good library (fiction, nonfiction, reference) in French, offers monthly educational expositions regarding aspects of life in Chad, has a good stage for occasional concerts or plays or other visiting performers, a video club, a bridge club, chess, game nights, and movie nights for children and adults.

N'Djamena has several good French-style restaurants, a restaurant specializing in Oriental cuisine, and several small places that serve good Chadian food. Also, two discotheque night clubs offer a variety of African, French, disco, and rock music.

Photography is not allowed without a permit.

A good deal of casual entertaining is done among Americans in this growing community. Small dinner parties are common. Other activities include luncheons, dinners, cocktail parties, sports, and watching video films. Parties are sponsored for children and/or adults for the Fourth of July, Halloween, Christmas, Easter, and various other occasions. Chad's expatriate

community also holds a Thanksgiving Day service.

N'Djamena is an informal city where friendships are easily formed. Official and social contacts, participation in sports, religious activities, and other social functions all contribute. Professional contacts frequently lead to social invitations for cocktails or dinners. Any contact outside the American community usually requires a working knowledge of French.

OTHER CITIES

ABÉCHÉ, located 350 miles northeast of the capital, is large and desert-like. There are several mosques and old markets. Abéché was once the capital of the Ouaddai empire. The palace and the sultan's tombs are still standing. Abéché is surrounded by a savanna-type terrain that is conducive to cattle-raising. However, the development of a substantial cattle industry has been hampered by Abéché's distance from suitable markets. Abéché's craftsmen are known for their famous camel-hair blankets. The town has a secondary school, the Lycée Franco-Arabe, as well as a hospital and small airport. The population in 2000 was roughly 95,800.

BONGOR is located at the far southwestern border of Chad. It is situated in a cotton-growing region where recent attempts have been made to produce rice in the Logone floodplain. During the dry season, Bongor's wells and pools attract nomads from north of Lake Chad. There is an airport, and other community services are available. The city has an estimated population of over 195,000.

FAYA, formerly known as Largeau, is a major oasis town in the Borkou region of northern Chad. It is located roughly 490 miles northeast of N'Djamena. Originally called Faya, the town was renamed Largeau in 1913 in honor of a French army officer who captured the Borkou region. The original

name was restored in the 1970s when Faya became a center for date palm production. The town has a small electric plant and a hospital.

MOUNDOU is a major city located on the Logone River in southeastern Chad. The city's warm, seasonally wet climate makes it one of Chad's major cotton-producing centers. Moundou is also the site of one of Chad's largest commercial enterprises, a brewery established in 1964. The city has a hospital, local air service, and a secondary-school branch. Moundou's estimated population in 2000 was 117,500.

SARH is located in the southeastern region of Chad. It takes its name from the ethnic group, the Sara. The city has a bustling marketplace offering cotton, fish, and textile products.

Sarh has an airport, schools, and a hospital. On the Chari River, the climate of Sarh is wet and warm. The population was approximately 129,600 in 2000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Covering an area of 496,000 square miles, landlocked Chad is twice as large as Texas. With an estimated population of nearly five million in such a large area, it has one of the world's lowest population densities. The country, situated in the heart of the widest part of Africa, is over 900 miles long, and is 450 miles wide at the latitude of N'Djamena.

Chad has roughly two climatic zones separated by a wide transitional belt; wooded, humid river valleys in the south, and the desert climate of the barren Sahara in the north. N'Djamena lies in a sub-Saharan savanna region of grasslands and scrublands, with dry and rainy seasons, between the forest and the desert. Chad's topogra-

phy is generally flat, except for a range of hills along the eastern border and relatively high, barren mountains in the far northwest.

Most of the country's drainage system flows into Lake Chad, which lacks an outlet. Geologists say that the lake, the world's 12th largest when full, once covered a substantial portion of what is now the Sahara, and that the climate was then one of high humidity and lush tropical growth. Although the lake's salinity is increasing, it still contains large numbers of freshwater fish. As a result of a Sahelian drought beginning in 1971, the water level declined further until the lake was split into two shallow basins in 1973. Another severe drought, which assaulted much of central Africa in 1984, caused Lake Chad to shrink to one-third of its normal size, but heavy rainfall the following year contributed to re-establishing the water level.

N'Djamena has three seasons. The July to October rainy season is characterized by some humidity, periodic heavy rains, tall green grass, and by a great variety and number of insects which arrive in September and do not depart until early November. Although rains are heavy, they do not fall every day, and most storms do not last more than an hour. Rains are usually preceded by high winds with much dust and sand. At either end of the rainy season, July and October, maximum temperatures are about 98°F, but drop to 89°F in mid-season. Minimums are 72°F to 74°F throughout this period. From mid-July until mid-October or early November, rains may close roads outside of town and make unpaved city streets all but impassable to anything other than four-wheel-drive vehicles.

From November to February, the weather is dry and pleasant, with daytime temperatures seldom over 90°F. Nighttime temperatures often drop to 60°F or below, and blankets are needed. The pleasantness of this season is marred only by occasional *harmattans*, dust storms off the

Sahara that settle over the city like a London fog.

During the hot season, from the end of February to early June, average noon temperatures reach 110°F to 120°F in the shade. Direct sunlight is extremely strong, plants die, and the earth dries up. Nighttime temperatures seldom drop below 90°F, or possibly 80°F during early morning.

Population

Chad's population is divided among a large number of tribes and racial types. The country's total population in 2000 was estimated at 7,760,000. The north and center are inhabited primarily by Muslims, many of them nomadic or seminomadic. The more densely populated south and southwest are inhabited by sedentary farmers, animists, and Christian farmers. Arabic is the language of the north and Sara is the most common tongue in the south. Eight other indigenous languages are spoken in Chad. Rudimentary French is fairly well understood in the towns, and remains the official language of Chad.

Islam is the predominant religion. Strife and tension between Arab north and non-Moslem south, going back to the time when slavery existed in this part of Africa, has left a legacy of problems.

Outside the country's main cities and towns, the Chadians live principally *en brousse* (in the bush). Depending on their location, they pursue agricultural village life, herding, or a nomadic existence. Millet, sorghum, beef, mutton, and fish constitute the main diet. Great variety in clothing can be seen, and Chad's markets are particularly colorful. As throughout Africa, families are usually large. The Chadians also observe the extended-family concept and refer to the most distant cousin as "brother" or "sister." Often, only one or two breadwinners in an extended family will be supporting a large number of people.

Government

In 1988, former President Habré commissioned a new constitution. This constitution called for a strong presidency and an elected National Assembly. It was adopted by referendum in December 1989. On July 8, 1990, a 123-member unicameral National Assembly was elected to a five-year term.

On December 3, 1990, one day after the overthrow of President Habré, Colonel Déby suspended the 1989 constitution and dissolved the National Assembly. In its place, Déby proclaimed a National Charter on February 28, 1991, that confirmed his status as president and established an advisory Council of the Republic. After lengthy delays, a new constitution was adopted in 1996, and Chad held its first democratic multiparty elections since becoming an independent nation. The last presidential election was held on May 20, 2001, and the next is to be held in 2006. General Déby was reelected president in 2001 with 63% of the vote.

The president is elected by popular vote to serve a five-year term; if no candidate receives at least 50% of the total vote, the two candidates receiving the most votes must stand for a second round of voting. The prime minister is appointed by the president.

The legislative branch consists of a unicameral National Assembly with 125 seats. Members are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms.

The Chadian flag consists of vertical bands of dark blue, yellow, and red.

Arts, Science, Education

The educational system was severely affected by the 1979–82 civil war. Elementary and secondary schools throughout the country are still overcrowded, understaffed, and poorly equipped. The one institution of higher learning has lim-

ited facilities and mostly part-time professors.

An examination given at the end of the equivalent of grade 10 determines entrance into specialized schools: the *École Nationale des Travaux Publics* (public works), the *École Nationale des Infirmiers*, and *Sages Femmes et Assistantes Sociales* (nurses, midwives, and social workers), both in N'Djamena, and the *École Nationale des Télécommunications* in Sarh. That examination also allows entrance to one of Chad's five normal schools, which train elementary school teachers in Abéché, N'Djamena, Moundou, Sarh, and Bongor.

Students completing high school (13 years), take the baccalaureate examination, a national test similar to the ones given in France and other francophone countries. Those who pass (known as "bacheliers") are eligible for admission to the University of Chad, which offers courses in humanities, arts, sciences, social sciences, and law. Bacheliers may also take very competitive entrance examinations for admission to the *École Nationale d'Administration* or the *École Normale Supérieure*, which train high school teachers. All three institutions are in N'Djamena.

"Les Centres Artisanals" were created to help Chad rebuild its tourist industry and preserve native craftsmanship. Craftsmen produce animal sculptures, pots, and jewelry made from brass, silver, leather, and wood.

Commerce and Industry

Confronted with a long drought, Libyan aggression, and civil strife, Chad is one of the world's poorest nations. The country has fewer than 200 miles (300 kilometers) of paved roads, no rail system, and only two airfields capable of handling modern commercial jet aircraft. The 1985 opening of a bridge across the Logone River provided the Chadian

capital with its first land link to neighboring Cameroon.

A major effort is underway to improve Chad's road system. Several donors, including the World Bank, France, Italy, and the U.S. are engaged in road repair and improvement projects. According to World Bank estimates at least 300 million dollars was needed to fund urgent road repairs in the 1990s, involving over 1,100 miles of roadway.

Chad's commercial truck fleet is woefully inadequate, consisting of approximately 400 vehicles. The fleet transports its cotton crop to the port of Douala or the railhead at N'Gaoundere (both in Cameroon), and provides for the internal movement of goods and passengers. Additional trucks belonging to Nigerian and Cameroonian transporters are allowed to operate in Chad after paying a fee to the Chadian Transporters Cooperative (CTT).

Chad's industrial sector consists mainly of seven companies, five of which are joint ventures between the Government of Chad and private investors. COTONTCHAD, the national cotton company; SONASUT, the national sugar company; Societe Textile du Chad (STT), a textile company; Manufacture des Cigarettes du Tchad (MCT), a tobacco firm; and Societe Industrielle de Materiel Agricole (SIMAT), a agricultural equipment firm, are joint ventures. A brewery, Brasseries du Logone (BDL), and a soft drink firm, Boissons Gazeuses du Tchad (BGT), are under private ownership.

Chad's principal traditional exports are cotton, cattle, textiles, and fish. The country imports petroleum products, foodstuffs, light machinery and transport equipment, and a limited number of consumer goods.

Chad relies heavily on massive amounts of foreign aid for food and other necessities. Although some irrigation systems have been constructed in Chad, most agricultural production continues to be rain-fed.

The industrial sector is making moderate gains in production. However, it is still extremely underdeveloped.

Local and expatriate merchants are again investing in the retail and service sectors. Many war-damaged buildings have been rebuilt in N'Djamena's main commercial areas. Although the modern sector has not fully recovered from the war period, more is now Chadian-owned rather than French-owned as was the earlier case.

The Chadian economy depends upon the agricultural sector, which accounts for 40% of the estimated Gross National Product and almost 100 percent of export earnings. Eighty-five percent of the labor force is engaged in agricultural production. The most productive farmland is in the five southernmost prefectures. Cotton is the principal cash crop and accounted for 40 percent of Chad's export earnings in 1999. However, the world market price for cotton has fallen sharply in recent years. As a result, export earnings have fallen drastically to less than one-third of their previous level. Animal husbandry is the traditional domain of the nomads who populate northern Chad, and cattle exportation is Chad's second largest source of export earnings.

Most of Chad's cotton exports flow to Germany, Portugal, Spain, and France. Other Chadian products such as cattle, hides, and small quantities of beer are exported to the neighboring states of Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, Zaire, and the Central African Republic. Nigerian and Cameroonian fuel is Chad's largest import. Building materials, light machinery, spare parts, and foodstuffs are also imported from Cameroon and Nigeria.

Partnerships in COTONTCHAD, SONASUT, and STT make France the largest foreign investor in Chad. Three oil companies—Mobil, Shell, and Total—operate a joint facility in N'Djamena for the storage and distribution of refined petroleum products. The Esso consortium (Exxon,

Chevron, and Shell) and its subcontractors are currently engaged in exploration activity in southern Chad. Future plans call for the construction of a mini-refinery in N'Djamena that will use Chadian petroleum to satisfy much of the country's domestic needs.

An oil extraction project underway in southern Chad is hoped to reduce energy costs and attract additional trade and investment to the country. In October 2000, the Doba Basin Oil Project began its construction phase. Between 2000 and 2003, an American-led consortium will invest \$3.7 billion into the project. The consortium plans to produce between 150,000 to 250,000 barrels of oil a day from three fields in southern Chad by 2003-2004. This will reduce Chad's dependence upon foreign oil.

The Chad Chamber of Commerce can be reached at P.O. Box 458, N'Djamena.

Transportation

N'Djamena's only scheduled airline services are by Air Afrique, UTA, Sudanese Airways, Ethiopian Airlines, and Air Tchad.

Three flights per week come from Paris via Air Afrique and Air France. Air Afrique flies between Paris and N'Djamena twice a week, and Air France flies once a week.

During the dry season, trucks and "bush taxis" ply Chad's dirt roads hauling goods and people. In the rainy season, most roads out of town are impassable. The country has no rail service, and the Trans-Cameroonian railroad from Douala does not reach Chad. The closest railheads to N'Djamena are Maiduguri, Nigeria, and N'Gaoundere, Cameroon.

Some commercial river traffic exists on the Chari River when the water is high enough to float a barge. Bridges across the Chari and Logone rivers now provide N'Djamena with a land link to neighboring Cameroon.

Taxis in N'Djamena are plentiful, but fares must be negotiated in advance. The aggressive drivers try to fit as many passengers as possible into a single taxi. Private autos, motorbikes, bicycles, two-wheel push carts, donkeys, and walking are the main forms of transport for local residents. Travel between towns is usually done by catching a ride on a passing truck, "bush taxi," bus, or aircraft.

The basic need for private transportation is in the city. There are few places to drive outside of town. For those interested in exploring, an off-the-road vehicle, such as a Chevrolet Blazer, Ford Bronco, or Jeep Wagoneer is a necessity for travel outside of N'Djamena. City driving requires only a simple and sturdy car. Small models, especially French Peugeot 504s and Japanese models predominate. Color restrictions for vehicles do not exist, but light colors that reflect heat should be selected. Driving is on the right.

If an American automobile is shipped to N'Djamena, it should be equipped with all available hot-weather and heavy-duty options. French-type yellow headlights are required. Air conditioning is recommended, but no local repair or recharging facilities exist. Since unleaded gas is not sold, the deactivation of catalytic emission control systems becomes necessary.

Cars must carry liability insurance that is available only from "La Star Nationale" in N'Djamena, but at a reasonable cost. A certificate from previous insurance stating no liability automobile claims within a specified period may help one secure a lower rate. Some persons find it worthwhile to insure against loss to their own vehicle; this is available from some firms in the U.S.

Gasoline stations outside the capital are few and far between. Occasionally, some sections of Chad are without auto fuel. Two jerry cans, one for fuel and one for water, should be carried on any trip outside of town.

A Chadian drivers license will be issued to anyone holding a valid U.S. drivers license. Some people drive in Chad with an international drivers permit. International permits can be obtained locally to use in neighboring countries, but are expensive. They should be acquired prior to arrival from the American Automobile Association, or through a travel agency.

Although the main streets of N'Djamena are paved, potholes are common. Secondary dirt surfaces are smoothed out once a year by a road grader after the rainy season. They deteriorate rapidly and become quagmires during the next rainy period.

Communications

Local and international telephone service has improved somewhat since late 1987. Most expatriate homes are equipped with a telephone. Telex facilities are available at Office des Postes et Télécommunications, N'Djamena and other main post offices in Moundou, Abéché, and Sarh.

Telegraph service is available at the Poste, Telegraphie, et Telephone (P.T.T.) office. International airmail is generally fair for letters, taking about 10 days from Washington, D.C. to N'Djamena. During the holiday season, service is slow. Packages sent by international mail must go through Chadian customs; loss or pilferage is highly probable.

One local radio station, Radiodiffusion Nationale Tchadienne (RNT) broadcasts the news in French three times daily. RNT also broadcasts news and other programs in Chadian, Arabic, and several local languages. Radio stations are also located in Abéché, Moundou, and Sarh. A shortwave radio is required to receive in English from Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) and other distant stations.

There is one television station, Tele-Tchad, which transmits from N'Dja-

mena. Coverage is limited, with only a few hours of broadcasting daily in French and Arabic. A multi-system television is necessary in order to receive Chadian and Cameroonian television programs. Cameroonian programming is much more extensive.

Info-Tchad, a daily news bulletin in French, primarily covers Chadian and African events. It is possible to purchase some French newspapers in local bookstores or at some hotels. *Al Watan*, a government publication featuring political and socioeconomic information about Chad, is available in French and Arabic. Many resident Americans subscribe to the *International Herald Tribune* from Paris and the European airmail editions of *Time* or *Newsweek*. All are expensive.

Health

A general hospital in N'Djamena is staffed by Chadian and foreign doctors. However, the standard of care in the hospital is low: poor funding, training, and lack of equipment and facilities contribute to levels of care well below Western standards. An emergency office located next to the hospital is staffed 24 hours daily by doctors. A list of doctors in N'Djamena includes those practicing in general medicine, surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, ophthalmology, and dentistry. Also, a Peace Corps doctor stationed in Niamey, Niger makes quarterly visits and will see patients by appointment when in N'Djamena. A French dentist also has an office in the city. Local pharmacies stock mainly French medicines at high prices, and the selection is limited. Those planning to stay in N'Djamena should have an ample supply of household remedies and first-aid items.

Chad is a reasonably healthy place to live in comparison with coastal African countries and, if a few basic precautions are taken, it is not difficult to stay well. Up-to-date immunizations, cleanliness, insect control, prompt attention to scrapes and cuts, balanced diet, increased

consumption of liquids, adequate rest, and avoidance of overexertion in the extreme heat are wise precautions.

Apart from sporadic outbreaks of cholera, only two diseases have occurred in epidemic proportions in the last few years—measles and meningitis. Cholera, while always serious, is less of a threat to those living near adequate medical facilities.

No sewage treatment plant exists, but houses occupied by Europeans and Americans have septic tanks. Garbage can be deposited in large metal containers positioned throughout the city. These containers are sometimes missing or not very visible. Regrettably, much of the population finds it easier to use the ditches along the side of the street.

N'Djamena draws its water supply from three enormous wells that have never failed the city, even during the drought, although the pressure is sometimes very low. Water is not potable without boiling and filtering. This includes water used for ice cubes and the preparation of food. Bottled water may be purchased locally, but is rather expensive.

Animals are slaughtered under primitive, although supervised, conditions. Meat is sold at the local central market, where hygiene is poor. Therefore, all meat should be cooked thoroughly. Raw fruits and vegetables, especially cabbage and lettuce, are particularly difficult to free from contamination. Fruits and vegetables should be soaked in a bleach solution for roughly twenty minutes before eating. Avoid salads in restaurants.

Infections of the gastro-intestinal tract are the most common ailments found here. Eye diseases, leprosy, malaria, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, dysentery, tropical ulcers, pneumonia, bilharzia, influenza, measles, cholera, polio, hepatitis, and fungal infection are suffered in varying degrees by the local popu-

lace. Aside from a few cases of stomach ailments, Americans here generally have been spared these diseases because of adequate hygiene measures. Occasional light attacks of malaria and diarrhea, head colds, and sore throats (caused by dustborne germs and aggravated by the extreme dryness) may occur.

Malaria is another prevalent disease that should not affect foreigners if suppressants are taken regularly. Prophylaxis should be started two weeks before arrival in Chad and continue for four weeks after departure.

Gamma globulin shots are given at four to five-month intervals to guard against hepatitis.

Clothing and Services

Because of the strength of the equatorial sun and the local laundry methods, the life span of clothing is short in Chad. Washable fabrics are essential, as no dry cleaning is available. Enough lightweight clothing to last the length of a stay should be in every wardrobe. Cottons and cotton blends are recommended for coolness. Both men and women should bring lightweight sweaters for the cooler, dry season and umbrellas for the rainy season. Hats are also useful, especially if one is sensitive to the sun. Bring a good supply of socks, underwear, shoes, and sandals. Good shoes are hard to find in N'Djamena and the gravelly, dusty streets can cause rapid deterioration.

For men, safari suits, short-sleeved sport shirts and slacks, and similar dress is suitable for both the office and social events. However, business suits are needed in some instances. Women wear smart, casual clothes. Stockings are seldom worn.

Children's clothing should also be washable and lightweight but, occasionally, warmer clothing is useful, depending on travel. Some lightweight sweaters should be on hand

for the cooler, dry season. Clothing styles for children are generally very casual. However, older children should have dressier outfits for school and special occasions.

Few items are available locally, and it is necessary to keep a good supply of household and toilet articles, home medicines, writing materials and greeting cards, insect repellent, and the like. An adequate choice of basic drugs imported from Europe can be found in several pharmacies around town. Also, a small "perfumerie" in N'Djamena sells expensive perfumes and cosmetics. It is recommended that one have a flashlight and candles in case of power failure.

Basic hand-tailored clothing such as safari suits, shirts, and African dresses, are available in N'Djamena. Dry cleaning and commercial laundry services are not available. Three hairdressers are located in N'Djamena. Services offered include men's and women's haircuts, shampoo, set, and manicure. Rudimentary shoe repair is also available.

Local beef, pork, and mutton are relatively good, somewhat expensive, and available in ample supply. Some meats are currently imported into N'Djamena. Only French and European-style cuts are offered. Local chickens tend to be small and somewhat tough if bought at the market. A farm operating from a small village near N'Djamena offers better quality poultry. Large Nile perch, known locally as "capitaine," and other high-quality freshwater fish from the Chari River are available in season but are somewhat expensive. Two of the food stores sell imported pates, salami, sausages, frozen fish, and shellfish, and a good selection of imported French cheeses, butter, ice cream, and a few other frozen foods. All are expensive. Eggs can be bought in some of the food stores.

The food stores in N'Djamena (two general food stores and two mini supermarkets) offer an adequate range of merchandise imported from Europe (mostly France), Cameroon, and Nigeria. In addition to

meats and frozen foods, one can find milk, yogurt, canned fruit drinks, canned vegetables, jams, pasta, coffee, tea, cookies, candies, chocolate, potato chips, and other items. All are expensive.

The “supermarkets” and one of the general stores offer a small selection of wine and liquor, as do several specialty shops. Gala beer, brewed in southern Chad, is outstanding. It is sold by the case (12 one-liter bottles) at several places in N'Djamena that also sell a selection of soft drinks: bottled Coke, Sprite, Fanta Orange, soda water, and tonic.

A selection of locally grown vegetables, such as lettuce, tomatoes, eggplant, potatoes, carrots, green beans, squash, zucchini, onions, and radishes, is available. Pineapples, melons, grapefruit, oranges, mangoes, papayas, avocados, lemons, limes, and bananas are sold in season. The “supermarkets” offer a very limited quantity of expensive imported vegetables (lettuce, artichokes, tomatoes) and fruits (apples, tangerines, pears, strawberries, and grapes).

Bread, including French “baguettes” is sold fresh several times during the day in little kiosks or stalls at street corners all over N'Djamena. A pastry shop offers crescent rolls, apple turnovers, raisin buns, and French-style pies and cakes. Some American and foreign brands of cigarettes are available from street vendors.

Domestic Help

Good servants, particularly cooks, are hard to find. Usually they are willing but untrained, and must be carefully supervised to insure that hygienic measures are followed; they are not accustomed to American standards of cleanliness. Most domestics are honest but, naturally, should not be unduly tempted.

Houseboys and laundry boys are available for hire. Nannies can be found. Gardeners can be hired part-time. A family will probably need a cook and a houseboy.

Servants may work eight hours daily, six days a week. Food and lodging are not provided, but most expatriate houses have shower and toilet facilities for employees. Generally, servants speak basic French, although a few English-speaking Nigerians may be found. Wages are paid bimonthly. The employer must buy accident insurance and contribute to a social security-type fund; conditions of domestic employment are regulated by a labor code. All servants should be given a medical examination upon first employment and at regular intervals thereafter.

made at the nearest Chadian embassy or consulate.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Chad are urged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Chad immediately upon arrival. The Embassy can provide updated information on travel and security in Chad, and strongly recommends that travelers contact the Embassy prior to travel outside N'Djamena. The U.S. Embassy is located in N'Djamena on Avenue Felix Eboue; mailing address is B.P. 413; telephone (235) 51-62-11, 51-70-09, 51-77-59, 51-90-52, 51-92-18 and 51-92-33, fax (235) 51-56-54.

Pets may be brought into Chad if accompanied by a veterinarian's health certificate and proof of anti-rabies vaccination dated at least one month before arrival. Quarantine is not imposed. Bring adequate supplies of such things as kitty litter, flea collars, treats, etc., for the animal's health and contentment.

Firearms can be legally imported after they have been registered and a *permis de port d'armes* has been issued. Hunting licenses may be obtained for small or big game hunting. The fees vary depending on the type and size of the animal.

A Catholic Mass is held every Sunday morning at the Cathedral. Saturday evening Mass is held there every two weeks. The Catholic Mission in the Kabalai neighborhood celebrates Mass Saturday evenings in the Mission House and Sunday mornings in the large church. In the Chagoua neighborhood, an outdoor service is celebrated on Sunday mornings. Services are in French, but a Mass in English is said once each month at the Sacred Heart School.

The Assemblée Chretienne and the Foyer Fraternal both offer Protestant services on Sunday mornings in French. The Mennonite Central Committee offers Bible study to the English-speaking one evening a week. Eglise Evangelique has services on Sunday in local dialects, depending on the week.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan.1 New Year's Day
- Mar/Apr. Easter*
- Mar/Apr. Easter Monday*
- Apr. 13 National Day
- May 1 Labor Day
- May 25 Africa Day
- Aug.11 Independence Day
- Nov. 1 All Saints' Day
- Nov. 28 Proclamation of the Republic
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day
- Id al-Adah*
- Ramadan*
- Id al-Fitr*
- Mawlid an Nabi*

*Variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

The only air connection to Chad from the United States is via Paris on Air Afrique.

A valid passport and visa are required, as is evidence of a yellow fever vaccination. Visitors must check in with the National Police and obtain a registration stamp within 72 hours of arrival. Further entry information may be obtained from the Embassy of the Republic of Chad, 2002 R St. N.W., Washington D.C. 20009, telephone (202) 462-4009. Overseas, inquiries should be

Members of the Baha'i community hold weekly prayer meetings in French in the Baha'i Center. Muslim services are held in the Grand Mosque and other local mosques. There are no Jewish religious facilities.

The time in Chad is Greenwich Mean Time plus one.

The official currency unit is the *Communauté Financière Africaine franc*, called and written *CFA franc*. It is issued by the Banque des États de l'Afrique Centrale, and used interchangeably by the former French Equatorial African countries, as well as by Cameroon. Former French West African countries (except Guinea) use the *franc*

CFA of a different issue, but of the same value.

Chad uses the metric system of weights and measures.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Azevedo, Mario, ed. *Cameroon & Chad in Historical & Contemporary Settings*. African Studies, vol. 10. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989.

Chad. Let's Visit Places & Peoples of the World Series. New York: Chelsea House, 1989.

Collelo, Thomas, ed. *Chad: A Country Study*. 2nd ed. Area Handbook Series. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990.

Decalo, Samuel. *Historical Dictionary of Chad*. 2nd ed. African Historical Dictionary Series, no. 13. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987.

Kelley, Michael P. *State in Disarray: Conditions of Chad's Survival*. Special Studies on Africa. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986.

Wright, John L. *Libya, Chad & the Central Sahara*. Savage, MD: Barnes & Noble Bks.-Imports, 1989.

THE COMOROS

Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros

Major City:
Moroni

Other City:
Mutsamudu

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Islamic Republic of the **COMOROS** is one of the world's poorest nations. Comprised of four islands, the country is burdened with a poor transportation network, a young and rapidly increasing population, and few natural resources. The Comoran labor force is poorly educated, resulting in a low level of economic activity, high unemployment, and a heavy dependence on foreign grants and technical assistance.

In November 1975, the Comoros became the 143d member of the United Nations. The country is a member of the Organization of African Unity, the European Development Fund, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the African Development Bank.

MAJOR CITY

Moroni

Moroni, the capital of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, is on the western side of Grande Comore island. In 2000, Moroni's estimated population was 36,000. The central part of Moroni consists

of the old town, in which construction was started about 500 years ago. The buildings are of volcanic rock, and the old town, still vibrant, reminds one of the "casbahs" of northern Africa.

Moroni was declared the capital of the Comoros in 1975. Despite extensive residential construction in recent years, Moroni remains a small, slow-paced capital beautifully situated between Mt. Kartala and the ocean. The city has several small industries, most of which manufacture soft drinks, processed and distilled oils, metal and wood products, or cement. Moroni also serves as the Comoros' main port from which vanilla, coffee, and cacao are exported. An airport, Iconi International Airport, is located in southern Moroni.

Schools for Foreigners

American children can either attend the Franco-Comorien school in Moroni, go away to boarding school, or follow a home-study course. The Franco-Comorien school operates under the auspices of the French Government. All classes are in French and a French-style curriculum is followed. The school accepts children between the ages of five and 17.

Recreation

Water sports and tennis predominate. The Comoros offer wonderful opportunities for snorkeling and scuba diving. Lessons in scuba diving and international certification are available. Swimming is safe for children at most accessible sandy beaches. Tennis is available at the French tennis club, which has five courts that are well-maintained. Because of the rocky terrain, facilities for badminton and croquet are not readily available. Organized sports opportunities such as soccer and basketball are limited. Deep-sea fishing is available.

Photographers, hikers, fishermen, and those interested in water sports will enjoy the Comoros' topography. The lushness and variety of tropical vegetation, the undeveloped nature of the interior of Grand Comore, and the steep slopes of Mt. Kartala combine to please hikers, campers, and photographers. Since many Comorans are uncomfortable being photographed, be sure to ask permission before proceeding. Photography at government installations, including port and airport facilities, is forbidden.

Travel to the other islands is possible by charter boat or charter aircraft and commercial flights. Each of the islands has a different ambiance, and each has a comfortable

small hotel for pleasant weekend stays. Air travel, however, is expensive, and boats must be chartered well in advance of the planned holiday.

The geographic location of the Comoros makes possible trips to Kenya, South Africa, Madagascar, and Mauritius, all of which are easily reached by air. Although such trips are costly, the variety of activities and shopping facilities available provide a pleasant break from routine.

Entertainment

Entertainment opportunities in Moroni are very limited. The local cinema shows mostly Indian films, with French films shown on occasion. A program of cultural offerings, including films, is available at the Alliance Franco-Comoriane. The Belgian Consulate has a library whose extensive collection of comic books is appreciated by children.

Each of the three small hotels in Moroni has a restaurant serving French food. In addition, some good Comoran restaurants and one Indian restaurant are available. Most entertaining is done in private homes, usually in the form of dinners, bridge, or cocktails. Because the American expatriate community is small, all entertaining involves frequent association with expatriate and Comoran nationals. In order to communicate effectively, knowledge of French is essential. Because of religious customs, it is unwise to serve any pork products to Comorans.

OTHER CITY

MUTSAMUDU is the capital and port of Anjouan island (also called Ndzunai). The island features beautiful forests, rivers and waterfalls, coral reefs and white sandy beaches, and fields of plants such as ylang-ylang, jasmine, cassis, basilic, palmarosa and orange flower, all used for exotic essential oils. The island is also home to the rare king size bat

and the Living Stone's flying fox, as well as occasional whales in the bay.

Mutsamudu is built in 17th century Swahili-Shirazi style. The houses have carved doors, and the twisting, mazelike alleyways and lanes lead around shops, mosques and a citadel. Worthy of note is the Mosquée du Vendredi, the Sultan's palace. Within walking distance of the city is the Dziancoundré Waterfall.

While you're on the island, you will want to visit Domoni as well. This ancient capital contains the Hari ya Moudji, or old town, which includes the old palaces built by the sultans of the 16th to 18th centuries. Some of the palaces are still occupied by descendants of the sultans.

Mutsamudu is about 102 miles from Moroni and can be reached by plane or by boat.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Comoros are a group of four separate islands. They are located in the Indian Ocean, roughly 416 miles southeast of Tanzania and 200 miles northwest of Madagascar. Three of the islands, Njazidja, Nzwani and Mwali, form the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros. The fourth island, Mayotte, is governed separately by the French. Together, the four islands comprise an area of approximately 982 square miles.

All of the Comoro islands are volcanic in origin. Njazidja, the largest island, has an area of 443 square miles and has an active volcano at Mt. Kartala. Approximately 37 miles south of Njazidja lies the smallest island, Mwali. It is only 83 square miles wide and is covered with low hills and fertile valleys. The island of Nzwani is located 40 miles east of Mwali. It has an area of 164 square miles. Mt. Nyingui is

its highest point. The island of Mayotte is situated 124 miles southwest of Njazidja. It is surrounded by a large coral reef which forms a well-protected lagoon around the island. Mayotte has an area of approximately 144 square miles and is covered with deep ravines and volcanic peaks.

The Comoros exhibit a tropical climate. Coastal areas are extremely hot and humid, although interior regions of the islands are somewhat cooler. The rainy season occurs from November to April. Severe cyclones are possible during this period. May through October is generally dry and pleasant. Average annual rainfall in the Comoros is 113 inches.

Population

In 2000 the four Comoro islands had a combined population of 580,000. Roughly 286,000 people reside on Njazidja. Nzwani, the second largest island, had approximately 220,000 people. Mayotte has a population of about 100,000, while Mwali has roughly 28,000 inhabitants. Comorans are a mixture of Malagasy, Arab, Malay and African peoples. They speak Shaafi Islam, which is a dialect of Swahili. French, Arabic and Malagasy are also spoken. Very few residents speak English.

Islam is the predominant religion. Approximately 98 percent of the population are Sunni Muslims. A very small number of Comorans (2%) practice Roman Catholicism. The majority of Catholics live on Mayotte.

Estimated life expectancy at birth in 2001 was 58 years for males, and 63 years for females.

History

Over the centuries, the Comoros have been inhabited by various racial groups. Peoples of Malayo-



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View of Grand Comore, Comoros Islands

Polynesian origin settled in the islands during the 6th century A.D. Between the 10th and 15th centuries, the Comoros became home to the Shirazis. The Shirazis were Arabs who fled religious persecution in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf regions. They divided the islands into twelve regions, each governed by a sultan, and introduced their Islamic faith.

In 1841, Sultan Sakalva Andriantsouly sold the island of Mayotte to the French. Having established a foothold in Mayotte, the French sought to gain control of the other three islands. Between 1886 and 1909, the other three islands were captured and became French protectorates. In 1912, the Comoros were officially declared French colonies.

The French ruled the islands with an iron fist. Opposition political parties and a free press were not

allowed. The Comoran people voiced their displeasure by refusing to pay taxes, staging peasant revolts and occupying French-controlled farmland. All of these actions were crushed by French troops. The French granted the Comorans limited self-government in 1961. An elected chamber of deputies and a council of government was established. In 1968, secondary school students organized a strike. It was brutally crushed by French troops and police. Many students were killed or wounded. The Comoran people were enraged and staged massive demonstrations and revolts calling for an end to French rule. Seeking to quell the unrest, the French decided to allow the formation of political opposition parties. Six opposition parties were created. Prince Said Muhammad Jaffar led the Reassemblement Democratique du Peuple Comorien (RDPC) while a group of intellectuals and peasants formed the Parti Socialiste

Comorien (PASOCO). Other groups included the Union Democratique des Comores (UDC) led by Ahmed Abdallah, the Umma Mranda Party (UMMA) led by Ali Solih and Prince Said Ibrahim and the Parti pour l'Evolution des Comores (PEC). All five of these groups supported independence from France. The sixth party, the Mouvement Populaire Mahorais (MPM), advocated retaining strong ties with France and was led by Marcel Henry. Despite France's decision to allow the existence of opposition parties, the political situation in the Comoros remained volatile.

In 1972, the RDPC, PEC and the UDC formed a pro-independence alliance and pressured the French to grant Comoran independence. Residents on Njazidja, Nzwani and Mwali staunchly supported the alliance. General elections for a new council of government were held in December 1972. Candidates of the

RDPC, PEC and the UDC alliance captured 34 seats, while the pro-French MPM group claimed only five seats. On Mayotte, however, the election results were quite different. 80 percent of the vote was cast in favor of MPM candidates. Ahmed Abdallah, leader of the UDC, was elected President of the new council of government.

Shortly after the election, the council of government and French representatives met to discuss the possibilities for Comoran independence. After lengthy negotiations, an agreement was signed in Paris on July 15, 1973. This document stated that France would provide Comoran independence after a period of five years. Also, a referendum favoring independence would have to be passed on an island-by-island basis. This referendum was held in December 1974. The referendum passed by an overwhelming majority (94.6%) on Njazidja, Nzwani and Mwali. However, nearly 64 percent of the populace on Mayotte voted against the referendum. In June 1975, the French Parliament agreed to grant Comoran independence with the provision that a new constitution be drawn up that would be agreeable to all parties, including the citizens on Mayotte. Also, the French insisted that the constitution must be approved separately by each island before independence would be granted. Before this process could take place, the Comoran chamber of deputies approved a unilateral declaration of independence on July 6, 1975 and elected Ahmed Abdallah as president. Residents of Mayotte, fearful that they would be forcibly incorporated into this new state, petitioned the French for assistance. The French agreed to protect Mayotte and administer it as a French territory.

On August 3, 1976, nearly one month after becoming president of the Comoros, Abdallah was toppled from power by Ali Solih. Abdallah fled to Nzwani, but was arrested and eventually allowed to go into exile. Solih pursued a conciliatory approach toward Mayotte in the

hope that they would agree to become part of the new Comoran state. In November 1975, he sent a delegation to Mayotte to meet with MPM officials. The people of Mayotte greeted the delegation with hostile demonstrations and forced it to return home. On February 8, 1976, a referendum was held on Mayotte. Nearly 82 percent of the populace voted. 99 percent of the votes cast favored French administration of the island. In December 1976, Mayotte was officially declared a "territorial community" of France.

Throughout 1976, Ali Solih consolidated his control of the other three islands. The freely-elected Council of Deputies was abolished and replaced by a Revolutionary Council of State that was filled with loyal Solih supporters. All political opposition parties were banned. Anti-government politicians were terrorized or arrested by the army and youth factions known as the Revolutionary Youth. Solih also sought to radically alter Comoran traditions by encouraging the liberation of women and young people. His decree that women did not need to cover their faces with veils offended the sensibilities of many conservative Muslims. Also, the voting age was lowered to 14 so that young people could take part in the political process. Solih criticized Islam as a "false religion" and severely curtailed religious practice. Many foreign nations were displeased with Solih's regime and cut off economic aid, severely weakening the shaky Comoran economy. By 1978, Solih ruled the Comoros with an iron hand. However, his political repression and controversial social reforms made him extremely unpopular both at home and abroad.

On May 13, 1978, Ali Solih was overthrown in a coup led by a mercenary, Bob Denard. Solih was placed under house arrest and was gunned down after an alleged escape attempt. Ahmed Abdallah returned triumphantly from exile and was named President. The country's official name was changed

to the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros. Also, a new constitution was drawn up and ratified which stated that if one island decided to secede from the Federal Republic, it was free to do so without government interference. Abdallah also reinstated traditional Islamic principles in the islands and sought to end the Comoros international isolation. France resumed diplomatic relations and increased its level of economic aid. Presidential elections, with Ahmed Abdallah as the sole candidate, were held on October 22, 1978. Fifty of the mercenaries who helped topple Ali Solih were formed into an elite Presidential Guard. This Guard, led by Bob Denard, served to protect Abdallah and to intimidate his political rivals.

Abdallah actively pursued the integration of Mayotte with the Comoros. French President Francois Mitterrand and President Abdallah met in October 1981 to discuss this issue. Abdallah was confident that Mitterrand would be sympathetic to the integration of Mayotte, since Mitterrand vigorously opposed the detachment of the island with the rest of the archipelago in 1975. However, the meeting ended without any formal agreement on the issue. Mitterrand only promised that he would review Mayotte's status every five years.

In December 1983, a plot by British mercenaries to overthrow the Comoran government was discovered. The plan called for the removal of President Abdallah in favor of a former Comoran diplomat, Said Ali Kemal. Kemal wanted to establish a government that would be on friendly terms with the West in order to gain more economic assistance for the Comoros. The plan was foiled, however, when the mercenary leaders were arrested in Australia.

A presidential election was held in September 1984 with Abdallah serving as the only candidate. According to the government, 99.4 percent of the voters were in favor of Abdallah and he was granted

another six-year term. In January 1985, he further consolidated his power by amending the constitution and abolishing the office of prime minister. As a result, all important governmental powers were in Abdallah's control.

In March 1985, a group of Presidential Guardsmen tried to overthrow Abdallah while he was on a state visit to France. The coup attempt failed. Abdallah unleashed a wave of political repression and arrests. Eventually, 17 people were sentenced to life in prison at hard labor while 50 others received shorter prison sentences for their part in the coup attempt. However, by late 1985, some of the prisoners were granted presidential pardons and released.

Another coup attempt by disgruntled members of the Presidential Guard was made in November 1987 while Abdallah was out of the country. This coup was smashed by Bob Denard and other mercenaries. On November 27, 1989, President Abdallah was assassinated by his Presidential Guard on the orders of Bob Denard. Although Denard denied any involvement in Abdallah's assassination, he voluntarily left the islands for exile in South Africa. Said Mohamed Djohar, the president of the Comoran supreme court, took the post of interim president until the holding of free elections.

Free elections were held on March 11, 1990 between Djohar and Mohamed Taki Abdulkarim. Djohar won a majority of the votes and began serving a six-year term as the Comoros' first democratically elected president. In June 1990, the Comoros and the United States established formal diplomatic relations.

Djohar was ousted by French mercenaries in a brief coup in 1995, and an interim government ruled until the March 1996 elections, in which Mohamed Taki Abdoukarim was chosen as president. An interim government of President Tajiddine Ben Said Massoude which had

assumed power in November 1998 upon the death of President Mohamed Taki Abdulkarim, was overthrown in a bloodless coup on April 30, 1999 headed by military chief Colonel Azali Assoumani.

Colonel Azali claimed a one-year presidential term at the time of the coup. In May 1999, Azali decreed a constitution that gave him both executive and legislative powers. In December 2000, Azali named a new civilian prime minister, and formed a new civilian cabinet. When Azali first took power he also pledged to step down in April 2000 and relinquish control to a democratically elected president, a pledge which he has yet to fulfill.

In 1997, the islands of Nzwani and Mwali declared their independence from Comoros. Colonel Azali pledged to resolve the secessionist crisis. In August 2000, an accord was signed that would reunite the islands. A subsequent agreement, signed in February 2001, provided for a commission composed of representatives from all three islands to develop a new constitution.

Government

On October 1, 1978, a new constitution was approved that united the islands of Njazidja, Nzwani and Mwali into one Federal Islamic Republic. Mayotte is currently governed by France, although it has the option of joining the Federal Islamic Republic at a later date.

The Comoran government is headed by the President of the Republic. The president is elected by the citizens to a six-year term and cannot serve more than three consecutive terms. In 1984, the constitution was amended so that President Abdallah could serve an unlimited number of terms. However, since his assassination, this amendment was repealed.

Since Colonel Azali seized power and declared a constitution that granted him executive and legislative powers, democratic institutions have been suspended in the Comoros.

Prior to the coup, however, legislative authority was held by the 43-member Federal Assembly. The Federal Assembly was dissolved following the coup of April 30, 1999. Representatives to the Federal Assembly were elected for five-year terms. The Assembly met for no more than 45 days at a time, but was allowed to convene more often during national emergencies.

A new constitution was adopted in June 1992, providing for a 15-member Senate to be selected by an electoral college for terms of six years.

The flag of the Comoros consists of a white crescent moon encircling inwardly four white stars on a green field. The four stars represent the islands of Njazidja, Nzwani, Mwali and Mayotte. Green is the traditional color of Islam.

On Mayotte, the flag of France is used.

Arts, Science, Education

Education is officially compulsory for Comoran children ages seven-15 years of age. Primary education begins at age six and lasts for six years. At 12 years of age, a student begins secondary school for an additional seven years. Comorans must travel abroad to receive a college education.

Most teachers in the Comoros are from foreign countries, particularly Tunisia, Senegal and Belgium. Despite improvements, the literacy rate of the Comoros in 1995 was only about 57 percent. Fewer than half of all school-age children are enrolled in primary school.

The educational system on Mayotte receives teachers and financial assistance from France.

Commerce and Industry

The Comoros is one of the world's poorest and least-developed coun-

tries. Agriculture is the main occupation of 80 percent of the population. Sweet potatoes, cassava, coconuts and bananas are the main food crops.

Much of the choice farmland is in the hands of foreign-owned companies, with only about 40 percent of the land cultivated by Comoran farmers. Most of the soil is of poor quality, and many Comorans must resort to subsistence farming. The majority of the country's food requirements must be imported. Rice, one of the main staples, accounts for 90 percent of Comoran imports. In addition to rice, the Comoros import large amounts of petroleum products, cement and vehicles.

The Comoros are the world's largest producer of *ylang-ylang*, which is used to make perfumes. Also, the Comoros is the second largest producer of vanilla in the world. *Ylang-ylang* and vanilla are the Comoros primary cash exports. Small amounts of cloves, coffee and copra are also important exports.

The islands have a wealth of fishing resources, particularly tuna. However, most of these resources remain unexploited because the Comoros lack a viable fishing fleet.

The Comoran industrial sector is extremely small. Much of the industrial activity is limited to vanilla processing and the production of woodworks, plastics and soft drinks.

The unit of currency is the Comoran franc (KMF).

Like its Comoran counterparts, Mayotte must import large quantities of food. The territory's survival is heavily dependent on financial assistance from France. *Ylang-ylang* and vanilla are Mayotte's primary exports. The great majority of Mayotte's exports go to France. Building materials, rice, clothing, flour and transportation equipment are imported, with France serving as the major supplier.

The *French franc* is Mayotte's unit of currency.

Transportation

The roadway system in the Comoros is extremely underdeveloped. Although the islands of Njazidja and Nzwani have some paved roads, most of the roads are extremely rugged. During the rainy season, many of the islands' roads are virtually impassable. Also, many villages in the Comoros are not linked to the main cities by suitable roads. Travel between villages and cities can be extremely hazardous. A four-wheel-drive vehicle is highly recommended, especially on Mwali. Most of the roads on this island are unpaved and treacherous.

The national airline of the Comoros is Air Comores. Air Comores offers international service twice-weekly to Madagascar, Tanzania and Kenya. Domestic flights between Moroni and the island of Nzwani are offered on a daily basis. Flights between Moroni and Mwali offered 5 times per week. The international airport for the Comoros is located near Moroni. Each of the other islands has a small airfield.

Most ports in the Comoros are unable to accommodate large ocean-going vessels. Therefore, most large vessels are forced to anchor off the coast of Moroni, Mutsamudu, and Fomboni and be unloaded by smaller cargo ships. During the rainy season, heavy seas make this unloading process extremely hazardous. Consequently, most ships do not dock near the Comoros from November to April.

Mayotte has very few paved roads. Most are composed of rugged tracks that become washed out during the rainy season. There is a small airport near the city of Dzaoudzi. Commercial flights to the Comoros are offered twice-weekly while service to the island of Reunion is offered four-times weekly.

Communications

The islands' main radio station is the government-owned Radio-Comoros. Domestic broadcasts are available in Comoran and French. Foreign broadcasts are available on shortwave frequencies in French, Swahili and Arabic. The country's first independent radio station, Radio Tropiques FM, was closed down in April 1991 after one week of broadcasting. There is no television station in the Comoros.

Two weekly newspapers are available. The first is a government owned publication, *Al Watwany*. The other, *L'Archipel*, is an independent newspaper. The government news agency, Agence Comoros Presse (ACP) is located in Moroni.

Long-distance telephone and telegraph services are available in Moroni, although the quality of transmissions are often poor.

The main radio station on Mayotte is the Societe Nationale de Radio-Television Francaise d'Outre-mer (RFO)-Mayotte. It is located in Dzaoudzi and offers daily broadcasts in Mahorian and French. A television service was begun in 1986.

Le Journal de Mayotte is the island's main newspaper. It is a weekly publication and has a circulation of 12,000.

Clothing and Services

Clothing styles in Moroni are very casual. For men, office and casual wear consists of sports shirts and slacks. Casual cotton dresses and skirts with sandals are worn during the day by women. Sundresses and pants are acceptable for women, although short skirts are not appropriate. Slacks and shorts are acceptable for wear around the house, to the beach, and for other outdoor activities. Stockings are rarely worn. Shoes wear out quickly, and high heels are dangerous because of rocky terrain. Children's clothing should be casual and made of cot-

ton. Short pants and colored short-sleeved shirts for boys and sleeveless shifts, shorts, and slacks for girls are the most common apparel. Children wear leather or composition sandals or tennis shoes to school.

Swimsuits and beachwear are essential for all members of the family, since recreation focuses on water sports. Bikinis are acceptable. Sunbathers should bring beach hats and clothing for protection from the sun. Umbrellas are essential during the rainy season. For trips into mountainous regions, slacks and dungarees, heavy sweaters, sturdy shoes, and a rain hat are necessary.

Dressmakers and tailors are available in Moroni. However, clothes are often poorly made and very expensive. Locally available fabrics are limited and most clothing is made from synthetic fibers, which are too hot for the Comoran climate. Cobblers make only simple repairs using recycled materials. The results are often unsatisfactory. A beauty shop is available, but patrons should supply their own beauty and hair care needs.

Availability of fresh foods depends upon the season and the amounts brought in from South Africa by local merchants. Few vegetables are available, although tropical fruits are plentiful in season. Most foods, except fish, are imported and shortages of essential commodities (rice, flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil) are common. No fresh meat is available. Meats available are frozen, or have been frozen and then thawed. No pork is available for purchase, but sheep, lamb, chicken, and beef are found. All meat is expensive. Fresh fish and lobster are available and are less expensive.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

A passport and onward/return ticket are required. A three-week entry visa, which may be extended, may be obtained upon arrival at the airport. Travelers should obtain the latest details from the Mission of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, 420 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022; telephone (212) 972-8010, fax (212) 983-4712.

The United States has no embassy in Comoros, but has a liaison representative in Moroni, who can be contacted at Quartier Oasis, POB 720, Moroni, telephone (269) 73-00-11, fax (269) 73-00-12. U.S. citizens in Comoros are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Port Louis, Mauritius. Registration information and forms are collected at the liaison office in Moroni and forwarded to the U.S. Embassy, Consular Section, Rogers house, fourth floor, John F. Kennedy Street, Port Louis, Mauritius; telephone numbers (230) 202-4400 and 208-2347; fax (230) 202-4401 and 208-9534. The U.S. Embassy home page is located at <http://www.usembassy-mauritius.mu>; e-mail: usembass@intnet.mu.

There are limited first-class hotel accommodations on Njazidja, Nzwani and Mayotte. It is recommended that reservations be made in advance.

Roman Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, and Moslem denominations maintain places of worship. All services are in French. Catholic religion classes in French are available for children.

Diligent water purification and food preparation methods must be exercised when visiting the Comoros. Immunizations for polio and

typhoid are recommended. Visitors are advised to take anti-malaria pills because the risk of infection exists throughout the country.

The tourism industry in the Comoros is vastly underdeveloped. Fewer than 2,000 tourists visit the islands every year. The primary tourist attractions include mountain climbing, scuba diving and fishing. It is recommended that tourists seek advice and exercise caution when using beaches.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan 1 New Year's Day
- Mar. 8. 27th Djoumadi II
- Mar. 18. Anniversary of Death of Said (Mohammed Cheikh)
- May 1. Labor Day
- May 13. Comoran Liberation Day
- July 6. National Day
- Ramadan*
- Id al-Fitr*
- Mawlid an Nabi*

*Variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

- Gould, Dennis. *Comores (Comoro Islands)*. Let's Visit Places and Peoples of the World Series. New York: Chelsea House, 1988.
- Willox, Robert. *Madagascar & the Comoros: A Travel Survival Kit*. Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet, 1989.



Kinshasa, Congo

CONGO

Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire)

Major Cities:

Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Bukavu,

Other Cities:

Boma, Kananga, Kisangani, Kolwezi, Mbandaka, Mbuji-Mayi

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated June 1996. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was known as Zaire from 1971 until 1997, when its name was changed back to the one it had during 1960–70. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC), which occupies the greater part of the Congo River basin, is a giant nation, one-third the size of the United States. It is a land of great contrasts—an Africa in miniature. It is, at once, a country of wild animals, active volcanoes, and thick rain forests, and one also of villages, small towns, and a capital city that is home to some 4–5 million people. Western culture coexists here with African tradition. Despite its tremendous assets and potential, DRC remains a country where economic hardship,

political turmoil, civil unrest, and rampant inflation abound.

DRC has been known as Zaire (until 1997), and before that the Belgian Congo, but its earlier history goes back many centuries to the powerful Kongo Kingdom of the south-central part of the African continent. It was dominated by the Portuguese for about 400 years and, late in the 19th century, came under the rule of King Leopold II of Belgium. The nation that is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo became a Belgian colony in 1908, and achieved its independence in June 1960.

MAJOR CITY

Kinshasa

Kinshasa (formerly Léopoldville) is a city of contrasts and resembles two cities coexisting under one name. The “ville” is comprised of modern (though sadly neglected) office buildings, apartment high-rises, and an area of run-down but attractive formerly residential sections. The other is the African “cites” where most of the city's inhabitants live. In some parts of the cites, you find some modern buildings and shops; most cites, however, are like large contiguous

villages, crowded, often unlighted, with dirt roads and concrete huts, bustling with life and activity.

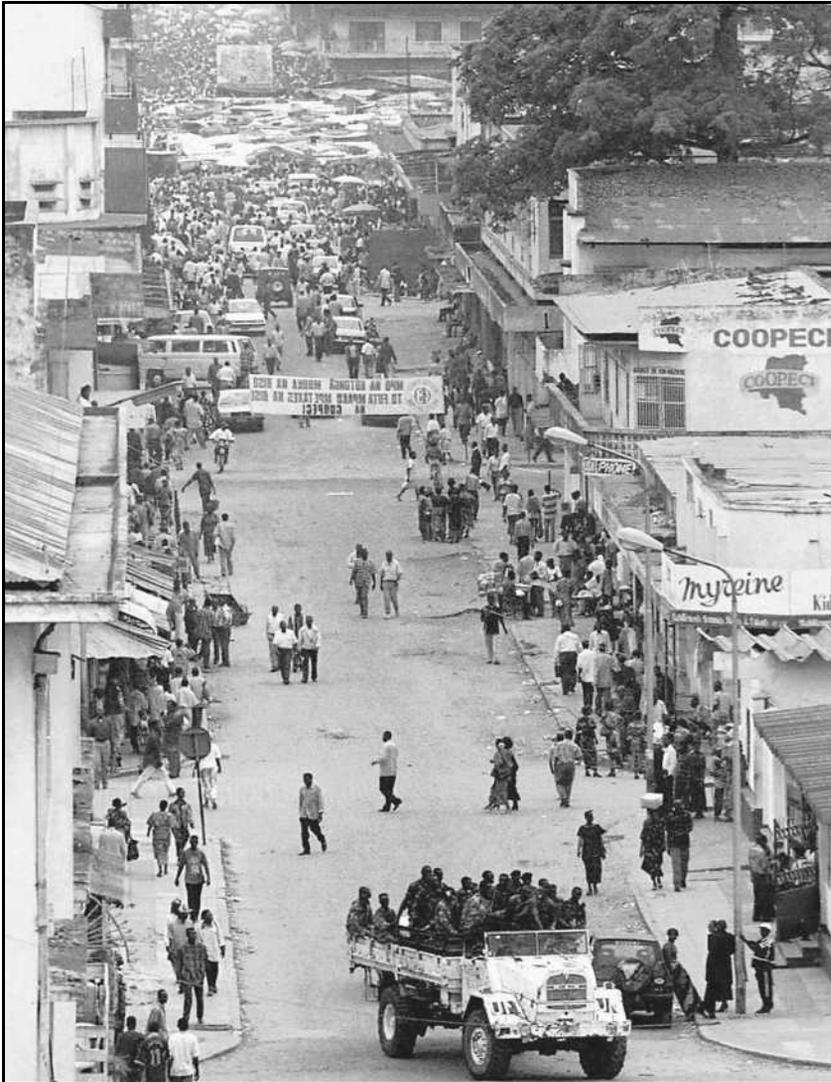
Food

Local grocery stores carry a variety of items. Lunch meats, cheeses, meats, produce, and dairy items are generally available. Purchasing six items may require a trip to more than one store. A selection of canned goods, packaged goods, and some household items is available. Also prices can fluctuate almost daily due to the unstable exchange rate and inflation. Local bread from bakeries is of excellent quality. Some grocery stores carry a varied seasonal supply of vegetables and fresh fruits, such as avocados, eggplant, bananas, pineapples, papayas, and mangoes.

Items such as cereals, chocolate chips, canned milk, coffee, powdered milk, peanut butter, jams, jellies, canned vegetables, and paper cups are not only expensive on the local market, but are often unavailable.

Local Dining

Kinshasa has several restaurants. Though they are all expensive, they offer a variety of cuisines including Chinese, Italian, French, and continental. There are also several nice restaurants that serve a good lunch. Several bakeries offer excellent



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Street in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

fresh bread, baguettes, French pastries, etc.

Clothing

Kinshasa's climate is warm and typically tropical, with a dry and rainy season. During the dry season, when the weather is cooler, long-sleeved clothing is sometimes needed. Also a sweater or wrap is convenient in air-conditioned homes, offices, and public buildings.

Dress in Kinshasa is generally casual. Most of the time social functions are either jacket and tie or more casual.

There is very little local clothing available, although fabric is plenti-

ful; but there are local tailors and seamstresses who are good at copying a garment directly or from a photograph and are reasonable in cost. The brightly patterned African fabric can be used to create attractive clothing for men, women and children.

During the rainy season, an umbrella and light raincoat are very useful. Bring appropriate gear for your favorite sports such as tennis or golf. There is one good 18-hole golf course centrally located in Gombe with membership easy to obtain but somewhat expensive.

Men generally wear lightweight suits to the office and dark business

suits for evening occasions. Because of security/safety reasons, night life consists generally of domestic entertaining (dinners, cocktails, video showings, etc., in private homes). Many men wear casual American sport shirts or African-style shirts made from cotton cloth manufactured in DRC.

Women wear summer dresses and slacks during the day. Long and short dresses, often made from African cotton prints, long skirts and blouses, cocktail dresses or dressy slacks outfits are worn to evening functions. Sandals, comfortable walking shoes, and canvas sport shoes are all useful. Also bring sweaters, umbrellas, and windbreakers. A sunhat is useful.

Fabric and sewing supplies are available, but the selection is scanty and prices are not in line.

Children's clothing should be summer weight and washable. Cottons and cotton blends are recommended. Girls usually wear jeans, shorts, and long- and short-sleeved shirts. Boys wear shorts, jeans, cutoffs and T-shirts. Don't forget raincoats.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: Non-American brand cosmetics and toiletries are generally available in Kinshasa, but are expensive.

Local cigarette brands are milder than most European brands.

Basic Services: Tailoring, dressmaking, and beauty services are available. Prices range from reasonable to expensive. Dry cleaning service is available as well as other services such as catering, eyeglass repair, printing, and watch repair. Veterinarians are available. Most of the service provided is good, but rates are much higher than in the U.S.

Religious Activities

Protestant, Anglican, Catholic, Jewish, Kimbanguist, Greek Orthodox,

and Muslim services are held in Kinshasa.

There is an International Catholic Church where the Parish Priest speaks English, and Mass is said in English frequently by a native English speaker. Instruction and preparation for the sacraments can be arranged.

The International Interdenominational church is in Gombe. Ministers from the local missionary community, some of them Americans, take turns holding the Sunday English services.

There is a synagogue in town and an active Jewish community.

Episcopal Holy Communion services are held the last Sunday of each month at the International Church. Lay Bible groups from the Anglican church meet in homes around the city on weekdays in the evenings.

St. Luke's Catholic Church has weekly Sunday Mass in English at 9:45 AM. When the congregation was larger, Catechism classes for children were held after mass. These were administered by the parents and, depending on the ages of the children attending St. Luke's, the activities included First Communion and Confession classes, Bible study classes, confirmation classes, and teenage religion classes. At present, a "Coffee Sunday" is held after mass the last Sunday of every month. St. Luke's also has a Lingala mass at 8:00 AM Sunday and French Mass Saturday and Sunday. Various other Catholic churches throughout the city also offer mass in French and Lingala.

The Jewish community of Kinshasa now numbers about 85 families and is becoming more active in the community due to normalized relations between Israel and DRC. Friday services are held at the Rabbi's residence on the Boulevard 30 Juin. The High Holidays are celebrated at the Hotel Intercontinental. A Jewish Center is used on Sunday for recreation and education. It has a sports

field and swimming pool and is the center of many activities. An active ladies group meets once a month, and Hebrew lessons and outings are frequent.

Education

Dependent Education: The American School of Kinshasa (TASOK) was established in 1961 to provide an American curriculum for grades 1-12. Student enrollment is approximately 125. Besides children from the official American community, there are children from American business representatives and American missionaries, and there are many from the general international community.

TASOK is located on Matadi Road and is comprised of a large, tropical, 42-acre fenced campus. Classes are small, thereby enabling students to receive individual attention. In the past, TASOK students who took college board exams have generally been accepted in the college of their choice.

Facilities include a complex of classrooms, an administration building and a well-stocked, up-to-date library. Recreation facilities include a full-length football and soccer field, two volleyball courts, and a student store/snack bar area. In addition, the physical education department has two locker rooms. Other facilities include staff housing, maintenance shop, American Community Library, elementary student store, and the Scout Hut.

The school does not have facilities or personnel to deal with students who have severe disabilities/handicaps. A Learning Resource Center contains library books, resource books and periodicals, plus audio-visual software.

The high school Learning Resource Center is an air-conditioned, fully carpeted facility that has books, reference materials, weekly and monthly periodicals and newspapers, a paperback collection for pleasure reading, and an audio-visual section.

The high school sports program includes varsity basketball, swimming, track and field, volleyball, soccer and softball. Intramural sports include basketball, volleyball, swimming and tennis. Drama club, band, newspaper, yearbook (the annual "TASOL", the title left over from the days when Kinshasa was Léopoldville, is a yearly project giving students the opportunity to write, copy, edit, and photograph), student council, national honor society, as well as activity programs which can range from chess to drama are offered. In the arts, ceramics, calligraphy and photography are offered. TASOK has acquired computers to introduce students to computer sciences. Activities after school and on weekends are numerous and varied, satisfying the interests of most students. TASOK occasionally holds evening adult workshops in subjects such as calligraphy, ceramics, and computer use.

The school's calendar is essentially the same as for U.S. schools except for a slightly earlier starting date.

Most of the TASOK faculty are Americans, recruited directly from the U.S. Some are local-hire spouses and dependents. New teaching staff is usually recruited in the U.S. during February and March. Dependents who are interested in either a teaching position or a teacher's aid position should contact the school as soon as possible. In the past, opportunities have arisen to substitute or tutor students on a private basis.

The school operates on the usual Monday through Friday school week.

The local public and religious schools are in French and based on Belgian school curriculum. The curriculum of the French schools (Cous Decartes) is comparable to the programs of the French "lycees" and runs 6 mornings a week. The Belgian system (Ecole Prince de Liege) teaches in French and Flemish, starting at age 6, and has elementary and secondary schools.

There are several excellent, privately owned, English-speaking nursery schools in Kinshasa:

- TASOK has a pre-K as well as Kindergarten. It takes children from age 4.
- Les Oisillons adheres to the Belgian system of education. It is for children 15 months to 6 years, taught in French, 6 mornings a week from 7 AM until noon;
- Le Club, another French-speaking kindergarten, accepts children 2-6 years old and runs from September to June, 7:15 AM to noon, 6 days a week;
- Tom Pouce is a nursery school for children ages 2-6, which teaches in French from September to June with 2 weeks for Christmas and spring break. It runs 7 AM to noon, 6 days a week;
- La Source, another French-speaking school, operates year round for children ages 2-5. Its curriculum is pseudo-Montessori style;
- Further Portuguese, Greek, and Italian schools plus several small correspondence-tutorial schools are operated for the diplomatic dependents of other countries.

Special Educational Opportunities

L'Ecole des Beaux Arts sometimes offers courses in various art forms including batik, drawing and painting. "La Source" offers arts and crafts afternoon sessions; activities include ceramics, basketry, puppet-making, cooking, etc.

Classes in yoga, martial arts, and general exercise classes are offered as well.

Sports

Various sports activities are available: tennis, golf, swimming, horseback riding, volleyball, basketball, jogging, softball, darts, etc. Some sporting equipment is available locally but cost is prohibitive.

The Intercontinental Hotel, located near the center of town, has a swimming pool/health club which you can join on a yearly membership basis, although it is expensive.

The Cercle Sportif du Kinshasa has a private 18-hole golf course with a mixture of "browns" (sand) and greens and reasonable fairways. Initial membership and annual dues are expensive.

A riding club is located in the suburbs. Neat, casual dress is worn, but English-style boots and hat are required. Instruction is available by a riding master.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Unfortunately, due to the decline of the infrastructure of DRC, it is generally not feasible to travel outside the city of Kinshasa. Roads are impossible to traverse without 4-wheel-drive vehicles and even then are treacherous. However, there are a couple of scenic spots that are accessible with great difficulty.

The Black River, upstream from Kinshasa, affords swimming, camping, and picnicking for a pleasant day trip. Zongo Falls, 65 miles south of Kinshasa, has a high waterfall and is the sight of a major hydroelectric dam. It is a pretty sight to visit and a pleasant place to picnic, but access is extremely difficult and generally takes 3-4 hours difficult driving each way.

Brazzaville, just across the river by ferry, may be visited after you obtain a visa and "laissez-passer" for the Republic of Congo. There you can enjoy the atmosphere and the French cuisine of the Congolese capital city.

Entertainment

Kinshasa is considered to be a center for African-style music and a number of nightclubs range from imitations of American bars to lively and colorful African outdoor bars. Several discotheques and a number of good restaurants exist. However, costs are often prohibitive; and the danger of street crime

is an effective deterrent to most night life outside of domestic entertaining.

Kinshasa does have several casinos with black jack, roulette, and slot machines as the most popular games.

Social Activities

Social life is limited but active and informal, consisting mostly of dinners, small parties, cocktail events. The American Employees Recreation and Welfare Association (AERWA) has become the hub of social activity not only among Americans but among much of the expatriate community. AERWA is a pleasant, interesting, fun "hot spot" in the social life of ex-pats in DRC.

Common forms of home entertainment are buffet dinners, bridge parties, and video screenings. The International Women's Club of Kinshasa invites all women of Kinshasa to join. It is an English-speaking club which meets monthly. The club sponsors tours and special interest groups for cooking, bridge, French conversation groups, etc. Monthly get-acquainted coffees are held, and the club sponsors an annual Christmas Bazaar in which goods made by the women are sold, the proceeds of which go to local charities.

Lubumbashi

Lubumbashi (formerly Elisabethville) is a small, pleasant city in the high plateau country near DRC's southeastern tip. In its time it was the capital of the Belgian Congo's richest province, the seat of an unrecognized independent country and now, once again, a provincial capital. Lubumbashi was originally created as the headquarters of Katanga (formerly Shaba) Province's highly developed mining industry. Despite some diversification, it remains today a city closely identified with mining, particularly with the large copper and cobalt company GECAMINES (La Générale des Carrières et des Mines, formerly Union Minière du Haut-Katanga). Other industries in

Lubumbashi include printing, brewing, flour milling, and the production of confectionery, cigarettes, brick, and soap.

The climate in Lubumbashi is temperate, similar to that of southern California. September through November is warm; May through August is cool. The weather is rainy from November to April, and dry the rest of the year. Lubumbashi's high temperatures rarely approach those of Washington, DC, and the humidity is generally low. Daily temperatures vary considerably, especially during the cool season when nighttime readings drop to near freezing and daytime temperatures of 75°F are not uncommon. Dust is a nuisance on roads outside the city during the dry season.

Lubumbashi has a population of approximately 967,000.

Schools for Foreigners

Two schools in Lubumbashi are considered suitable for the education of Western children at the primary and secondary levels. They are supported, respectively, by the French and Belgian Governments, and classes are conducted in French at both schools. The education at each institution is based on the respective national systems. The French school is open to all nationalities, and tuition is paid in DRC currency. The Belgian school is open only to expatriates, with tuition paid in hard currency.

Some children attend the American School of Kinshasa, which is two hours away by plane. Boarding facilities are available at three missionary-run hostels for students in sixth grade and above. Enrollment is from the American official, business, and missionary communities, plus a large international community. Bus transportation within the city is provided.

Both Zambia and Kenya have boarding schools; however, Zambian schools are accessible only by a three-to-four hour car trip over rather rough roads. Kenya has many English-language schools,

two of which follow the American syllabus. Rosslyn Academy, a non-denominational Mennonite- and Baptist-operated school, offers grades one through nine, with boarding facilities.

Ample opportunities exist in Lubumbashi for learning French and Swahili.

Recreation

Golf, tennis, basketball, horseback riding, and boating are available in Lubumbashi. Golf is particularly enjoyable, as the 18-hole course here is excellent and uncrowded. There are tennis clubs (private and municipal), swimming pools, and several riding clubs.

Each social and national club has its own soccer and/or volleyball team. The Club Nautique on the artificial lake near the new luxury hotel, Karavia, is a small, informal boating club where one may swim or picnic.

The most popular sport in DRC is soccer. Lubumbashi has a number of teams whose matches draw thousands of spectators.

Despite poor roads in the vicinity of the city, there are numerous lakes and rivers where camping is a unique experience. With a four-wheel-drive vehicle and extra jerry cans of gas, the tourist can reach the Luapula River to the east (much traveled in years past by the famed Dr. David Livingstone), and Lake Moero for a few days by the shore.

Nearer to Lubumbashi, a number of abandoned open-pit mines have become deep lakes. Copper salts have killed off disease-carrying snails, making it safe to swim in these waters. Swimming in most other lakes and rivers is not recommended because of the prevalence of bilharzia.

A three-day trip is possible during the dry season to Lofoi Falls, the highest in Africa, where a variety of wild game can be seen. Additionally, Victoria Falls (Zambia) is a five-day

round-trip journey from Lubumbashi.

Lubumbashi has a zoo, where lions and other native animals are on view, as well as specimens from other continents. For wild-game viewing, visitors may charter a light airplane and fly over a game reserve about 150 miles north of Lubumbashi. Boating and (for those heedless of bilharzia) waterskiing are possible. Fishing is popular all year.

Entertainment

The city has five or six quite good restaurants, and a few movie houses which show rather old films. There are some good (by Central African standards) nightclubs. Concerts, recitals, art exhibitions, and ballets are infrequent.

Lubumbashi's social life is usually informal; various occupational and ethnic groups ordinarily do not include others in their activities. One influential group is composed of the managerial personnel of the predominately Belgian industrial, commercial, and banking organizations. Personal, social, and informal contacts with local citizens are not difficult in Lubumbashi, and the established missions and handful of Belgian social projects also provide an organized framework within which expatriates can mingle. Teaching English is a popular activity for Americans, and a good way to meet others in the community. Several social clubs exist for foreign residents, among them Greek and Italian organizations. Social life is determined largely by one's facility with conversational French. Lubumbashi has no unusual social customs or dress standards.

Bukavu

Bukavu is the capital of Kivu, DRC's most scenic province. Although the region varies greatly in topography and vegetation, it is often referred to as the "Switzerland of Africa" because of the volcanically active Ruwenzori Mountains. The Ruwenzoris are the fabled "Mountains of the Moon," reaching alti-

tudes as high as 16,000 feet and forming one of the important divides of Central Africa. This chain of mountains is broken by three of the continent's most scenic lakes: Lakes Edward (Idi Amin), Kivu, and Tanganyika.

Bukavu, at almost 5,000 feet, is located at the southern end of Lake Kivu, on five peninsulas. It is near the middle of DRC's eastern frontier, about 1,000 air miles from Kinshasa, and is opposite Cyanguu, Rwanda, which lies across the border formed by the Ruzizi River.

The nearest volcanos are about 60 miles away, near Goma at the northern end of Lake Kivu. The last recorded volcanic eruption occurred in 1984, north of Goma. Mild earth tremors occur periodically, and the last earthquake causing damage in Bukavu was in April 1965.

Rains fall at least nine months of the year. Daily downpours last from one to two hours and are at their worst during November. Bukavu's dry season begins in June and runs through August.

Bukavu, called Costermansville until the mid-1950s, is largely a product of the Belgian colonial era. Founded about 1925, it became and still is the administrative center for the province of Kivu. The region is divided into three large subregions: North and South Kivu, and the Maniema, each of which is further subdivided into zones.

The city proper is made up of three zones or communes: Ibanda, the commercial, banking, and industrial center, where most of the European population lives; and Kadutu and Bagiri, built to house the African population. Prior to independence, Bukavu's population was about 35,000, including 6,000 Europeans. The current population numbers close to 210,000, including some 700 Europeans. The major ethnic group of the Bukavu hinterland is the Bashi, comprised of three related groups—the Ngweshe, Kabare, and Katana—each with its own *mwami* (chief). While predomi-

nantly Bashi, Bukavu also has a large number of Warega, Bahavu, and Tutsi.

Bukavu is a commercial and industrial center. The city has a school of social studies, a teacher-training college, and a scientific research institute. It also has a brewery, printing plant, and the Mururu hydroelectric plant.

The Roman Catholic Church is an important feature of life in Bukavu, and there are a cathedral and an archbishop here. Most Europeans attend mass at the college because the service is in French rather than in Swahili.

Many sports and recreational activities are available in the Bukavu area, but entertainment facilities are limited. There are two movie theaters, showing three-to-four-year old films. Soccer matches and bicycle races are held frequently. Tennis, basketball, swimming, and water skiing are popular, except that there is some suspicion about the safety of swimming in parts of Lake Kivu because of the presence of bilharzia. Hiking, picnics, and car trips also are popular in the magnificent mountain areas around Bukavu.

OTHER CITIES

One of DRC's oldest cities, **BOMA** was founded in the 16th century as a slave market. Situated 200 miles southwest of Accra on the Congo River, it is the terminus of a rail line to Tshela. The city serves as the outlet for timber, bananas, and palm oil from the rich forest area of Mayumbe to the north. The 1994 population was about 135,000.

KANANGA (formerly called Lulua-bourg), located 475 miles southeast of Kinshasa in south-central DRC, is one of the largest cities in the country and capital of the West Kasai region. It is a prominent commercial area with a hinterland that produces cotton, coffee, palm oil, rice, livestock, and timber. Local

industries include brewing and printing. Kananga is the site of a national museum and a teacher-training college. The population of metropolitan Kananga is approximately 601,000.

KISANGANI (formerly Stanleyville) is a river port on the Congo River, 750 miles northeast of Kinshasa. It has an active central market. Villagers fish with nets at the Wagenia Falls. A hydroelectric dam at the falls provide electricity to the city. Kisangani has a teacher-training school, an agricultural school, and research institute. An international airport was opened here in 1974. Kisangani has a university, founded in 1963, and a population nearing 418,000.

KOLWEZI is near the Zilo Gorges of the Lualaba River in southeastern Zaire. Residents here have used area mineral deposits since before the arrival of the Belgians in the 1800s. Industrialization began about 1901. The city became a copper-mining center after the development of the mining company, Union Minière du Haut Katanga (now GECAMINES), in 1906. Shaba rebels based in Angola attacked Kolwezi and its airfield in 1978, flooding the mines. The population here was estimated at close to 418,000 in 2000.

MBANDAKA is a river port of about 175,000 people, 435 miles northeast of Kinshasa in northwestern DRC. The city is a busy river port situated at the junction of the Congo and Ruki Rivers midway on Kinshasa-Kisangani shipping route. Besides shipping, the economy depends on agriculture and forestry. Industries in Mbandaka] include a printing plant and brewery. The city is a cultural center with a national museum, teacher-training college, and botanical garden.

MBUJI-MAYI is on the Mbuji-Mayi River in south-central DRC. The area is one of the world's major diamond production centers, providing about 75 percent, in weight, of all industrial diamonds. Tremendous

dous immigration from nearby areas has increased the city's 1960 population of 30,000 to over 806,000 (1994 est.). Mbuji-Mayi has a teacher-training college. Links to other cities are by road and air.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Democratic Republic of the Congo straddles the Equator in the heart of Central Africa and shares a common border with the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, and Angola. DRC has access to the Atlantic Ocean on the west through a strip of territory which narrows to 13 miles in width at the coast. Its area includes the greater part of the Congo River Basin. DRC covers almost 1,465,553 square miles—about the area of the U.S. east of the Mississippi River. It is the third largest nation in Africa.

DRC is most remarkable for its river, formerly called the Zaire, and for its abundance and diversity of natural resources. The Congo River is 2,900 miles long and is the second largest in the world in terms of area drained, flow, and navigable length. With its tributaries, it provides DRC with about 9,000 miles of navigable waterways, and its force affords DRC 13 percent of the world's hydroelectric power potential.

With its abundance of natural resources, including copper, cobalt, zinc, industrial and gem-quality diamonds, manganese, tin, crude oil and gold, it is potentially one of the richest countries in the world. DRC is one of the world's largest producers of industrial diamonds, and when the mines were functioning properly, copper and cobalt provided 57 percent of its export earnings.

The geographical features of this giant African nation are handsome and varied. The huge Congo Basin, a low-lying, bowl-shaped plateau sloping toward the west, is covered by lush, tropical rain forests. Surrounding the basin are mountainous terraces on the west, plateaus merging into savannas to the south and southeast, and dense grasslands toward the northwest. The high, picturesque Ruwenzori Mountains bound the basin to the east. Although Kinshasa is only 4 degrees south of the Equator, temperatures are generally moderate. In January, the average daily high is 86 degrees F and the low is 70 degrees F. In July, this range is from 80 degrees F to 59 degrees F. The rainy season for Kinshasa and for the two-thirds of the country which lie below the equator, lasts from October to May. Despite its dreary sound, the rainy season is not unpleasant. Except for perhaps one rainstorm every few days, lasting anywhere from 1 to 2 hours, the skies are usually blue and sunny. In contrast, the dry season, though not yielding any rain, is characterized by overcast, but cooler, days.

Population

The earliest inhabitants of DRC may have been the Pygmies, followed by Bantus coming from the north and west and Nilotic tribes from the north and east. The large Bantu Bakongo Kingdom ruled much of present-day DRC and Angola when Portuguese explorers first visited in the 15th century.

The great majority of the population are descendants of the Bantu, who are thought to have begun migrating around 100 B.C. from the region that is now Cameroon and eastern Nigeria. The balance of the African population consists of Sudanic peoples, living along DRC's northern border with the Central African Republic and Sudan; Nilotic peoples, concentrated in the rugged and scenic eastern highlands neighboring Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi; and a small number of Pygmies, numbering about 80,000. The Pygmies, a celebrated people preserving

all their mysteries, are sheltered by the Ituri Forest in Northeastern DRC. Like many African countries, DRC is an ethnic mosaic.

Most of this large country is sparsely populated—about 21 inhabitants per square mile. Concentrations are near the rich mineral deposits, along the main communication routes (railroads and rivers), and in the highlands. Forty percent of DRC's people live in the urban areas. The literacy rate is about 77 percent. Life expectancy is 49 years, and GDP per capita is \$600.

DRC's total population is an estimated 52 million, including some 15,200 Europeans. Kinshasa has grown considerably since independence and now has approximately 5 million residents. The American community numbers about 350 in Kinshasa and 1,000 countrywide.

French, the official and only common language, was introduced by the Belgians and is spoken countrywide by the educated. About 250 languages and dialects are also spoken. The four major languages are Lingala, the commercial language commonly used in Kinshasa and along the rivers as well as the language of the army and of popular music; Kingwana or Kiswahili, spoken in the northeast, east and north; Kikongo, spoken west of Kinshasa; and Tshiluba, spoken in south-central DRC.

About 70 percent of the population is Christian, two-thirds of which is Roman Catholic, and a third Protestant, with the rest members of independent churches, the largest of which is the Kimbanguist Church. Somewhere around 10 percent of the population, mostly in the northeast, is Muslim. Much of the population practices aspects of traditional religions, especially animism, a belief in ancestral spirits and the power of sorcery and witchcraft.

Public Institutions

DRC's "Second Republic" (when the country was Zaire), which lasted

from President Mobutu Sese Seko's seizure of power in 1965 until 1990, permitted only one political party, the Popular Movement of the Revolution (MPR). As MPR President, Mobutu was automatically President of Zaire, and all citizens were automatically party members. On April 24, 1990, Mobutu announced the end of the Second Republic and the beginning of the country's transition to democracy. Political pluralism was allowed, and soon over 200 new parties had registered. Many independent civic associations also emerged during this time. A Sovereign National Conference (CNS), consisting of representatives of political parties and civic associations, drew up a transition constitution, and elected opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi as transition Prime Minister. CNS membership was incorporated into a new, single Chamber parliament, the High Council of the Republic (HCR).

By 1995, however, Zaire still had not yet held multi-party elections, and its transition to democracy remained incomplete. Mobutu interfered in the transition process. The civil war in neighboring Rwanda in 1994 and 1995 disrupted Zaire's stability, as thousands of refugees fled into North and South Kivu. In 1996, a series of repressive measures against Zairian citizens in the east sparked a rebellion against Mobutu's government. By November the major eastern cities were under rebel control, led by local warlord Laurent Désiré Kabila. By May 1997, Kabila's rebels had overthrown Mobutu's forces. Kabila became the country's leader and reverted its name back to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as it had been known from 1960 until 1970. Kabila promised to restore democracy, but began structuring his administration under his personal authority. In January 2001, Kabila was assassinated. The government placed his son, Major-General Joseph Kabila, in charge.

DRC is divided for administrative purposes into eleven regions: Kinshasa, Bas Congo, Bandundu, Equateur, Haut Congo, North Kivu,

South Kivu, Maniema, Katanga (formerly Shaba), Kasai Oriental and Kasai Occidental.

In foreign policy, DRC has tended to seek closer ties with other Third World nations and regional leadership role in Africa. DRC has also sought strong economic and political links with Western Europe and the United States. Since independence in 1960, the U. S. has maintained generally friendly relations with DRC (then Zaire). However, following the military mutinies and pillaging in September 1991, the U.S. reduced diplomatic representation drastically, going from one of the largest embassies in the Foreign Service to one with fewer than 40 direct-hire positions. Staffing has been maintained at approximately this level since.

Arts, Science, and Education

Kinshasa is the intellectual center of DRC by virtue of a centralized political system, its news and information media, its educational institutions, its cultural and entertainment facilities, and its location at one of the crossroads of Africa. Education is neither free nor compulsory and in principle is largely subsidized by the government. In reality, government-paid salaries are in arrears and school costs, including maintenance, are funded primarily by parents. About 80 percent of the students in the 1960s were in government-subsidized mission schools. In 1974, the former mission schools were nationalized to form a state educational system. This has proved to be an unworkable arrangement and a number of schools have reverted to the direction of the churches. In 1971, the government created one national university from the former Catholic, Protestant and lay universities with campuses in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and Kisangani. In 1982, as a further reform measure, the Central Committee recommended a return to the previous arrangement with three independent universities and an Institute of

Agronomy (IFA) located at Yangambi, near Kisangani. In 1989, the Government announced the end of its monopoly on higher education and approved a number of such institutions. Among them, the following five, all Kinshasa-based, seem to be the best organized and have enrollments of under 1,000; ISIPA (Institute of Computer Sciences), ISPL (Higher Institute of Philosophy and Literature), ETS (Higher School of Technology) and the College Universitaire du Zaire.

Current enrollment figures on all levels formerly supplied by the education ministry are not available. University of Kinshasa published 1992-93 enrollment at 11,372 for its ten facilities.

Several private universities continue to grow throughout the country: University Libre de Kinshasa (ULK), founded in 1985, estimates enrollment at 2000; the University of Bas Zaire (UNIBAZ) also estimates 2000 students; and two universities recently created by the late Cardinal Malula: University of Mbuji-Mayi and University of Equateur. In 1992, the International Christian University of Zaire opened in Kinshasa, run by American Protestants offering bilingual instruction.

Following the 1991 reports of a student massacre at the University of Lubumbashi, all public universities and most institutions of higher education were closed. Students throughout the country stopped attending classes in a show of solidarity. Financial difficulties caused by the military uprising in September 1991 continued the closure of most of these institutions for two years. Many universities re-opened in the fall of 1992, but sessions have been sporadic since then.

The continual deterioration in the economy coupled with school closures have taken a heavy toll on the quality, availability, and accessibility of education in Zaire. Teachers' salaries even at the university level rarely exceed the equivalent of US \$5 a month, and often are unpaid

for four or five months. Strikes at UNIKIN in 1994 centered on professors' demands for direct foreign currency tuition payments. Most schools lack basic supplies; libraries have empty shelves; and students must pay tuition at both public and private institutions.

The Academie des Beaux Arts displays fine examples of Zairian paintings and sculpture. Many Americans go there seeking new pieces of art. The Ivory Market in the city's center also offers a complete array of African sculpture in wood, tin, bronze, copper, and ivory. It offers ivory and malachite jewelry, as well as antique African fetishes (figures which have a mystic or religious significance), funerary sculpture, ceremonial masks, etc. St. Ann's gift shop, near the American Embassy, also offers similar African pieces. The outdoor stands on Matadi Road are another source of African wares. The availability of exciting and varied forms of African art work is truly a challenge to any collector.

Commerce and Industry

Following independence in 1960, the DRC experienced a period of economic and political turmoil. The return of internal stability and the increase in the world price for copper led to a period of rapid economic growth in the late 1960s and early 1970s, although the country's social and physical infrastructure gradually deteriorated. The pace of economic degradation slowed as the government made serious attempts to implement economic reform programs. However, by the end of the decade, these efforts had either failed or were abandoned well short of success.

After President Mobutu's April 1990 announcement ending one-party rule and promising movement toward democratization, political uncertainty and instability provoked social upheaval and greatly exacerbated the country's chronic economic degradation. The econ-

omy, as measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), lost more than a third of its value in real terms by the mid-1990s. Most of the decline occurred in commerce and industry, traditionally the mainstays of the "formal sector" of the economy. The paralysis of the formal economy and the absence of strong central authority left a void filled by an expansion of a parallel economy, which increasingly provides the means of survival for the country's large number of unemployed. However, the advent of a new government of national unity in July 1994, committed to economic reform, implemented some reforms in an effort to promote economic growth before the collapse of the Mobutu government came in late 1996.

The acute state of decline of the economy is due to several factors, including misguided government policies and uncontrolled deficit spending, which have fueled runaway inflation, incapacitated the industrial sector, permitted a severe deterioration of the country's infrastructure and crippled the public sector. An already low per capita income declined sharply, to below one hundred dollars by 1994, according to some estimates. Generalized uncertainty and insecurity are a fact of life and were further exacerbated by successive military mutinies in 1991, 1992 and 1993. These mutinies resulted in widespread destruction to the country's industrial and commercial sectors, and led to the cessation of major foreign assistance projects and a pull-out of foreign investment.

The government under Laurent Kabila instituted a tight fiscal policy that initially curbed inflation and currency depreciation, but these small gains were quickly reversed when the foreign-backed rebellion in the eastern part of the country began in August 1998. The war has dramatically reduced national output and government revenue and has increased external debt. Foreign businesses have curtailed operations due to uncertainty about the outcome of the conflict

and because of increased government harassment and restrictions. The war has intensified the impact of such basic problems as an uncertain legal framework, corruption, raging inflation, and lack of openness in government economic policy and financial operations. A number of IMF and World Bank missions have met with the government to help it develop a coherent economic plan but associated reforms are on hold.

Depreciation of the currency and massive unemployment have crushed purchasing power, pricing basic goods beyond the reach of most people. The vast majority have experienced an accelerated and sharp decline in living standards, and the collapse of the public sector has severely limited the average citizen's access to even minimal health, education and social services. Most people now live from day to day, supplementing their meager incomes with small-scale commerce, part-time farming and petty corruption when the opportunity presents itself.

Chronically high inflation, which in 2000 reached 540 percent, and periodic liquidity shortages, have led the country's commercial sector increasingly to rely either directly or indirectly on hard currencies, particularly the US dollar or Belgian franc, as the preferred medium of exchange. Further, fiscal mismanagement and the chronic shortage of local currency within traditional banking channels have distorted the country's banking system, severely limiting its role in financial intermediation.

Private foreign investment is welcomed by the government, but continuing economic difficulties have tended to discourage prospective investors.

In many respects, DRC is similar to other developing African countries. The interior is neglected; a large part of the formal economy is operated or controlled by foreigners or foreign advisors, skilled manpower is scarce, savings and investment

are low, and credit is often hard to obtain. High transportation costs, a high inflation rate and the high import content of most goods and services, place DRC among the more expensive countries in Africa.

Transportation

Local

Driving is on the right, and international road symbols are used. Defensive driving—always a good idea—is a necessity in Kinshasa, due to the adverse road conditions, careless pedestrians, erratic drivers and overcrowded arteries.

Kinshasa's main intersections are manned by gendarmes during rush hours. The policeman's baton or arm directly raised signals caution and corresponds to a yellow light. If the gendarme is facing you, or his back is toward you, it means stop; when the policeman's arms are spread parallel with the flow of traffic, this means go, corresponding to a green light.

Regional

Outside Kinshasa, roads are either in terrible condition or they are gravel or dirt-surfaced.

Public transportation facilities are overcrowded, unreliable, unsafe, and therefore not used by American personnel or their dependents.

Travel within DRC is usually by air. Most principal towns are served by a variety of local air companies of varying reliability. Jet flights between Kinshasa, Kisangani and Goma operate several days a week as do flights between Kinshasa and Lubumbashi. Flights between Kinshasa and a number of other points, however, are quite irregular. Internal flights frequently depart late and are sometimes canceled without notice.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Communication from DRC is extremely difficult. The international telegraph service is unreli-

able and is frequently disrupted. Phone calls to the U.S. can be made but are often delayed. Cellular phone service has been generally reliable but occasionally erratic due to microwave interference.

Radio and TV

Radio reception in Kinshasa is fair to good. OZRT (Zairian Office of Radio and Television) is the government-controlled broadcast network in Zaire and its primary FM station is Voice of Zaire (VOZ). These broadcasts are in French and local languages. Also available on FM as of 1994 is RFI from Brazzaville and Africa Number One from Libreville. Listeners can also benefit from international shortwave radio broadcasts (specifically VOA, BBC, and Canal Afrique from South Africa); however, the signal is often weak and the audibility poor. Shortwave no longer functions, and Kinshasa radio is no longer picked up directly in the provinces.

Local TV reception is consistently poor and at times inaudible because of lack of upkeep of equipment. TV stations in the DRC's network are government-owned and operated, but remain an important source of information on official happenings in DRC. Broadcasts are also in French and local languages, mostly news, features and film documentaries. In Kinshasa, viewers can also watch Tele Congo, (Brazzaville government TV), and sporadically a German sports station (DSF), private French stations and locally owned Canal Z, which shows first-run American films in French. In some areas, Antenne A, a privately owned station in DRC, can be seen which carries English teaching lessons and other information "canned shows." Antenne A also sells a decoder which provides subscribers with other channels as well (French TV-5, a European movie channel, Arabsat and CNN).

Newspapers and Magazines

Time, *Newsweek*, and *Jeune Afrique* and other western magazines are sold on the streets and sometimes by vendors in restaurants. These magazines and the International

Herald Tribune can be purchased at the Intercontinental Hotel as well.

The Agence Zairoise de Press (AZAP) is the official government press service, which formerly published a daily bulletin in French. It too has fallen on hard times, and after almost a year hiatus, began republishing in 1994 every other day but periodically drops out of circulation.

The independent press which blossomed following the April 1990 announcement of the country's transition to a multi-party system has seen dozens of papers come and go in Kinshasa. The local press is free but many characterize the writing as irresponsible, often biased, and rarely accurate. Many publish strongly worded criticism of the President, government officials and other politicians. Many "dailies" publish twice a week and others publish only when newsprint and ink are available. ELIMA, UMOJA, Le SOFT, L'Analyst, SALONGO, LA REFERENCE PLUS, and LA NATION EN CHANTIER are published almost daily. Currently the newspaper availability in the interior is almost nil.

There are very few books available in Kinshasa and those for sale in English are outrageously expensive. For a fee, you may also join the Library Club of Kinshasa, located on the TASOK campus, which stocks a varied selection of fiction, nonfiction and children's books in English. The USIS library collection of 5000 volumes (English and French) are primarily for the Zairian patrons, but others frequently use the periodicals, English teaching materials, and novels.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Local hospitals do not meet American standards. Although some have modern equipment and well-trained local physicians, they lack well-trained nursing and support staffs and frequently lack necessary medi-

cal supplies and medications. There are two private clinics which can provide emergency care.

There are several competent local expatriate physicians available for consultations and emergency care.

Prescription eyeglasses are made by several local optometrists, but selection of frames is usually limited and delivery can be slow. Some lenses can or must be ordered from Europe, but costs are high.

There are some capable expatriate and local dentists, but dental care can be expensive. All dental care should be completed prior to coming to the DRC.

Community Health

Sanitation at most American residences in Kinshasa is good, but it is still prudent to take precautions. The water is not potable and must be filtered and boiled or otherwise rendered potable before consumption or use. Residences are provided with filters and boilers. Garbage collection is not always adequate and sanitation throughout the city is poor.

Preventive Measures

With prudent care, individuals can generally maintain good health. Cases of intestinal disorders do occur as do cases of malaria and hepatitis. The general advice contained in *Health Hints for the Tropics* published by the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (available through the Department of State Medical Division) should be followed. Take malaria suppressants regularly starting 1–2 weeks before arrival.

Locally purchased raw fruits and vegetables should be peeled or treated before eating. A clorox purification is recommended for raw fruits and vegetables. If the above measures are taken, you should enjoy a healthful stay in the DRC.

Immunization against yellow fever, tetanus, poliomyelitis, hepatitis, and the usual children’s diseases are recommended before arrival.

Bring long-term personal medication. You should bring a good supply of aspirins, vitamins, and band-aids. The most prevalent medical problems are malaria, intestinal parasites, and upper respiratory diseases. External skin worms are also a problem, but can be identified in the beginning stages of growth and are easily removed. Sand fleas (also called chiggers) which embed themselves in the skin are also common and can be treated by medical personnel. The AIDS situation is more serious here than in the U.S. since heterosexual transmission is common. The outbreak of the Ebola virus in Bandundu province in May 1995 has not impacted on the health of expatriates in Kinshasa.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year’s Day
- Jan. 4 Day of the Martyrs for Independence
- May 1 Labor Day
- June 24 Constitution Day
- June 30 Independence Day
- Aug. 1 Parents’ Day
- Oct. 14 Founder’s Day
- Oct. 14 Youth Day
- Oct. 27 Three Z Day
- Nov 17 Armed Forces Day
- Dec. 25 Christmas

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Since no American carriers operate directly between the U.S. and the DRC, one must travel by a combination of American and foreign carriers. Paris, Brussels, Lisbon, and Zurich or Geneva are interchange points which provide connections to Kinshasa via Air France, Sabena, TAP, and SwissAir.

Foreign currencies in any amount may be brought into the DRC, but the passenger must declare the

amounts at the time of arrival. A currency declaration form is issued at the airport and must be carefully retained by the passenger since it must be surrendered at the airport when leaving the DRC.

Visas should be obtained from an Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo prior to arrival. Individuals who experience difficulty entering DRC with a visa issued overseas are asked to contact the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa. Travelers entering the DRC with visas and/or entry/exit stamps from Rwanda, Uganda or Burundi may experience difficulties at the airport or other ports of entry. Some travelers with those visas or exit/entry stamps have been detained for questioning. Additional information about visas may be obtained from the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1800 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009 at (202) 234-7690 or 234-7691, or the DRC’s permanent mission to the U.N. at 2 Henry Avenue, North Caldwell, New Jersey 07006, telephone (201) 812-1636. Overseas, inquiries should be made at the nearest DRC Embassy or Consulate.

U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa upon their arrival and to obtain updated information on travel and security within the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The U.S. Embassy is located at 310 Avenue des Aviateurs, tel. 243-88-43608. The Consular section of the Embassy may also be reached at 243-88-43608, extension 2164/2376 or 243-88-46859 or 44609, fax 243-88-00228, 43467 or 03276. Cellular phones are the norm, as other telephone service is often unreliable.

All travellers must have an international certificate showing that they have been vaccinated against yellow fever.

No difficulty exists in importing a dog or cat as long as the pet is accompanied by proof of rabies inoculation and a certificate of good health. Veterinary facilities are

available and are usually adequate. Bring a good general medical handbook for the species of pet you are importing. Since it can be expensive to ship a dog (especially large dogs) on airlines, call different carriers and compare prices.

The official currency is the Congolese franc (CDF).

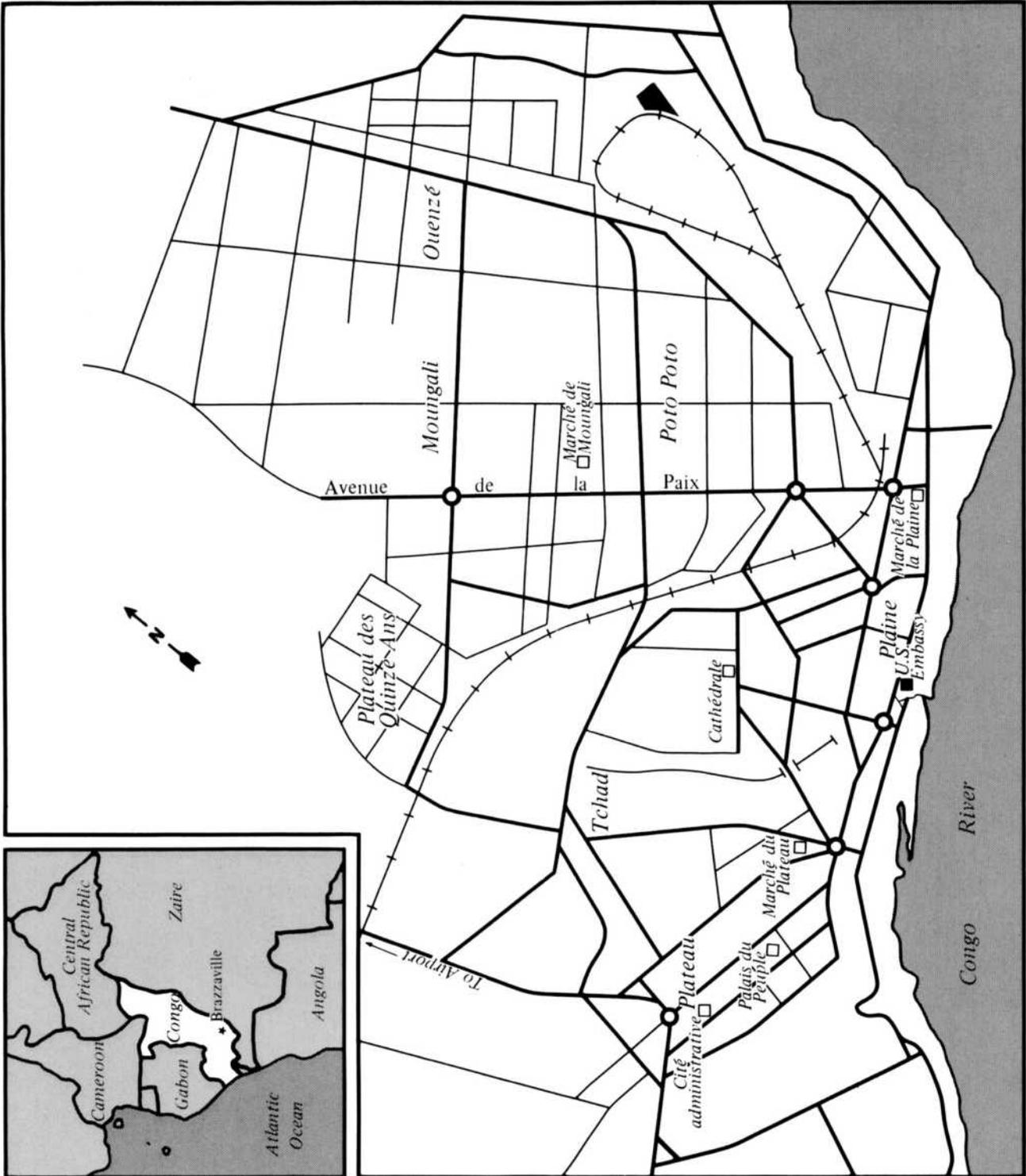
DRC follows the metric system for all weights and measures.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

- Anstey, Ruth. *King Leopold's Legacy*. Oxford University Press; London, 1966. This work analyzes Belgian rule in the Congo and the administrative, economic, and social and political structure developed from 1908-1960.
- Bechky, Allen. *Adventuring in East Africa: The Sierra Club Travel Guide to the Great Safaris*. New York: Random House, 1990.
- Biebuyck, Daniel. *Hero and Chief: Epic Literature from the Banyanga (Zaire Republic)*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
- Bobb, F. Scott. *Historical Dictionary of Zaire*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1988.
- Bone, J.J. *Going Native*. New Hope, PA: Pygmy Press, 1989.
- Callaghy, Thomas. *The State Society Struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984. A detailed political science study, not for the lay reader.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*.
- Cornevin, Robert. *Le Zaire (Que sais-je series)*. Presse Universitaire de France: 1972. Useful survey of pre-colonial and colonial history.
- Dayal, Rajeshwar. *Mission for Hammarskjold: The Congo Crisis*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1976. Account by Dag Hammarskjold's deputy of the Congo crisis.
- Ekwe-Ekwe, Herbert. *Conflict & Intervention in Africa: Nigeria, Angola, Zaire*. New York: St. Martin Press, 1990.
- Elliott, Jeffrey M., and Mervyn M. Dymally. *Voices of Zaire: Rhetoric or Reality*. Washington, DC: Washington Institute Press, 1989.
- Epstein, Edward J. *The Rise and Fall of Diamonds: The Shattering of a Brilliant Illusion*. Simon & Shuster: New York, 1982. The main topic of this book is the diamond industry, but it also deals with Zairian diamonds.
- Forbath, Peter. *The River Congo: the Discovery, Exploration, and Exploitation of the World's Most Dramatic River*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991.
- Gerald-Libois, Jules. *Katanga Secession*. University of Wisconsin: Madison, 1966. An excellent dispassionate history of the secession based on documents and eyewitness accounts. A useful handbook.
- Gibbs, David N. *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money, and U.S. Policy in the Congo Crisis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Henry-Biabaud, Chantal. *Living in the Heart of Africa*. Translated by Vicki Bogard. Ossining, NY: Young Discovery Library, 1991.
- Hoare, Mike. *The Road to Kalamata: a Congo Mercenary's Personal Memoir*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989.
- Hudson, Peter. *A Leaf in the Wind: Travels in Africa*. New York: Walker & Co., 1989.
- Hyland, Paul. *The Black Heart: a Voyage Into Central Africa*. New York: Holt, 1989.
- Kalb, Madeline. *The Congo Cables*. 1982. A recently concluded scholarly study which covers the period around Zaire's independence.
- Kelly, Sean. *America's Tyrant: The CIA and Mobutu of Zaire*. The American University Press, 1993.
- Kitchen, Helen, ed. *Footnotes to the Congo Story*. Walter & Co., New York, 1967. Collection of "African Report" articles including some by Crawford Young.
- Legum, Colin and Drysdale, John, eds. *Africa Contemporary Record*, Holmes and Meier: New York, published annually.
- Lemarchand, Rene. *Political Awakening in the Congo*. University of California Press: Berkeley, 1964. An important political science study of great general interest. Some of the findings have become controversial.
- Leslie, Winsome J. *Azire: Continuity and Political Change in an Oppressive State*. Westview Press. 1994.
- MacGaffey, Wyatt. *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970. An ethnographic study of a BaKongo village.
- Mahoney, Richard D. *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983. Similar to the Kalb book, but the Congo is only one of three case studies covered by Mahoney, and thus is treated in less detail than by Kalb.
- Martens, Ludo. *Piere Mulele & the Kwilu Peasant Uprising in Zaire*. Translated by Michael Wolfers. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1992.
- Masson, Paul. *La Bataille pour Bukavu*. A French journalist's account of events in the East. Precise perceptive reporting thought by some "old Congo hands" to be the best journalistic writing done here.
- McKown, Robin. *The Congo River of Mystery*. McGraw-Hill: New York, 1960. A good high-school type his-

- torical introduction to Zaire and its early explorers.
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- O'Brien, Conor Cruise. *To Katanga and Back*. Simon & Shuster: New York, 1962. Biased, extremely readable account of UN operations.
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- Schatzberg, Michael G. *The Dialectics of Oppression in Zaire*. Bloomington, IN; Indiana University Press, 1988.
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- Turner, Thomas. *Congo-Kinshasa: The Politics of Cultural Sub-Nationalism in Africa*. Anchor Books: New York, 1972. An overview of the political evolution of the Congo from the colonial era through the first decade of independence. Turner emphasizes the multi-polar pattern of colonial development which produced four principal centers of administrative and economic activity.
- Vansina, Jan. *L'Introduction a L'Ethonographie du Congo*. Editions Universitaires du Congo: Kinshasa 1965.
- Welcome to Kinshasa*. U.S. Department of State: 1981. Good handbook of sources and information regarding day-to-day life in Kinshasa.
- Wiliame, Jean-Claude. *Patrimonialism and Political Change in the Congo*. Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1972. An analysis of the first decade of Congolese independence. Wiliame contrasts the "politics of centrifugal relations" of the early years with the "Caesarist bureaucracy" imposed by Mobutu. He concisely dissects the salient characteristics of Mobutu's regime and speculates about prospects for political evolution.
- Young, Crawford. *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1965. As the subtitle indicates, Young traces the disintegration of Belgian colonial rule as well as the subsequent political disintegration of 1960-63. A thorough analysis, it has become the "Bible" for students seeking a useful introduction to Zaire's contemporary history.
- Young, Crawford and Turner, Thomas. *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985. Undoubtedly destined to be a classic as well, although based on somewhat dated and second-hand research.
- Zaire: Repression as Policy*. New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1990.



Brazzaville, Congo

CONGO (Brazzaville)

Republic of the Congo

Major Cities:

Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire

Other Cities:

Loubomo, Nkayi

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated November 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of the CONGO is a country in the midst of a political transition. Traditionally a one-party Marxist state, Congolese President Gen. Denis Sassou-Nguesso agreed to implement a multi-party system after a general strike paralyzed the country in 1990; however, after elections held in 1992 brought Pascal Lissouba to power, Sassou-Nguesso took power by force in 1997 and replaced the 1992 constitution with a new Fundamental Act, establishing a strong presidential system of government unhampered by legislative controls.

This west-central African nation, which played an important part in Free French activities during World

War II, has an interesting history of tribal domains dating back to the fourth century. Three powerful kingdoms—the Kongo, the Loango, and the Teke—ruled for hundreds of years, until a treaty was signed with France and the area became known as Middle Congo. It was absorbed into French Equatorial Africa and, in the late 1950s, assumed a measure of self-government with the constitutional referendum which created the French Community in Africa. The Congo attained full independence on August 15, 1960.

MAJOR CITY

Brazzaville

Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of the Congo, is located on the north bank of the Congo River, directly across from Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire. In 2000, Brazzaville had an estimated metropolitan population of 1,234,000.

Its colonial history begins in September 1881 when Makoko Ilo, a Teke Chief, ceded parcels of his land to Savorgnan de Brazza, an Italian-born explorer in the service of his adopted France. On October 30,

1880, Brazza signed a second accord which gave France claim to much of the land now part of Brazzaville. By 1902, Brazzaville had taken the place of Libreville as the capital of French Equatorial Africa. Its regional importance continued to grow with completion of the Congo-Ocean railroad in 1934. During World War II, General de Gaulle made Brazzaville the center of the French resistance movement in Africa.

Brazzaville has become overcrowded in recent years as more and more people leave the rural areas to seek employment in the city. Paved roads are dotted with potholes and many roads are unpaved. The vegetation is lush and streets are bordered by mango, palm, and flame trees which blossom in November (Brazzaville's spring time).

Most of the city's Congolese population live in two large sections: Poto-Poto and the Bacongo area, where most of the Congolese from the Pool region (the southern part of the country) live.

Countries with diplomatic missions here include: Algeria, Germany, Belgium, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Egypt, France, Gabon, Italy, Nigeria, Russia, Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), Angola and

Vatican. The following countries have Honorary Consuls: Cuba, Great Britain Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Greece. and Mauritania. World Bank, FAO, UNESCO, UNIC, and African Union of Post and Telecommunications. A number of other countries are represented by their embassies in Kinshasa.

Although a few Europeans and some Congolese speak English, French is essential for social and daily activities. In 1997, fewer than 200 Americans resided in the Congo. The flow of business representatives traveling to Brazzaville has risen steadily in recent years, especially with the arrival in Pointe Noire of several American oil companies.

Food

Canned goods, imported mostly from Europe, are available in Brazzaville at much higher prices than in the U.S. Supplies are unreliable, and shopping requires several stops.

Local fresh vegetables and fruits are seasonal, expensive, and limited in both variety and quality. Vegetables include lettuce, potatoes, green beans, carrots, cabbage, beets, cucumbers, onions, spring onions, spinach, squash, radishes, tomatoes, and eggplant. Local fruit includes oranges, grapefruit, papaya, pineapple, mangoes, avocados, guavas, bananas, and lemons. Wash unpeeled vegetables and fruit in a solution of potassium permanganate or detergent before eating raw. Imported oranges, grapes, apples, kiwi, and pears, and vegetables such as carrots, endive, cauliflower, and mushrooms are often available in local supermarkets at high prices.

Sterilized long-life milk, whole and low fat, from France is available. Powdered milk from the Netherlands and Denmark is plentiful. Evaporated milk, sweetened condensed milk, and long-life cream and ice cream are available. Sweet butter and margarine are imported from Europe, as are a variety of

excellent cheeses. Fresh eggs are available locally. All are expensive.

A few butchers sell high quality meat. Fresh beef, veal, lamb, and sausages are imported. Some fresh pork is imported or comes from local sources, as does poultry which varies in quality and is expensive. Fresh or smoked hams are unknown except the imported/pressed varieties. All fresh meats are inspected and safe to eat so long as they are purchased from reputable butchers. Fish from Pointe Noire arrives regularly and is good, but expensive. Local seafood shops carry sole, bar, capitaine (Nile perch), oysters, shrimp, lobster and, on occasion, frog's legs.

Supermarkets carry spaghetti, macaroni, noodles, dried beans, packaged and canned soups, coffee (local and imported), and many standard food items available in the U.S. Fresh baked French bread and American-style loafs are available daily.

American favorites that are rare or nonexistent include canned sweet potatoes, canned corn, U.S. ground coffee, fruit juice, canned tomatoes, meats and prepared hams, popcorn, cocktail snacks, nuts for baking (although local peanuts are readily available), as well as holiday needs such as canned pumpkin, cranberry sauce or jelly, fruit pie fillings, and candied fruits. Other specialty items difficult to find are pie crust mixes, cake mixes, brown and confectioners sugars, shortening, corn syrup, molasses, baking powder, American-Style mustard, horseradish, soft drink and ice cream mixes, and American chili sauce and powder. Bring your favorite snacks, ethnic foods, baking needs, condiments, and holiday requirements, as they are rare or nonexistent. Also bring your favorite spices, vanilla extract, flavored and unflavored gelatin, peanut butter, maraschino cherries, cake decorations, cornmeal and cornstarch.

Locally produced beer, tonic, soda, and soft drinks are available at reasonable cost. One tax-free liquor

store offers good French, Italian, and German wines, beer and hard liquor at prices comparable with major U.S. cities, although the supply is erratic.

Clothing

Bring clothing similar to that worn in the mid-Atlantic area in summer. Although dry-cleaning services are available, bring washable clothing. A limited selection of ready-made European clothes are available at astronomical prices.

Because of possibilities for travel to colder climates, bring enough warm clothing for visits to these areas. Other winter and wool clothing should be stored.

The tumbu fly is a minor menace that lays its eggs on laundry hung on a line to dry or clothing damp from perspiration. If eggs deposited on clothing are not destroyed with a hot iron, the larvae in garments worn next to the body will penetrate the skin, producing a boil-like lesion. All clothing should be well dried and ironed before wearing.

Clothes deteriorate rapidly with frequent washings and ironing. In selecting a wardrobe, emphasize variety and comfort, as well as elegance and current styles.

Short and long sleeved cotton dresses, blouses, and skirts, or slacks and a sweater or stole are useful during evenings in the cooler season.

Coats are not normally needed, but a lightweight raincoat or jacket and umbrella are recommended for the rainy season.

Bring loose-fitting cottons for the warmer, more humid seasons. Short sleeved or sleeveless light weight cotton dresses or blouses and skirts are a must. Because of the heat stockings are rarely worn.

Bring plenty of shoes. Select a loose fitting pair, feet tend to swell in hot, humid climates. European footwear dark blue, black, or gray suits for evening rarely fits Americans and is



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Natives of Brazzaville, Republic of Congo

very expensive. Due to dampness and occasionally wet walking surfaces, shoes tend to wear out quickly. Expensive leather or suede footwear is not recommended.

Light, casual summer clothing is worn year round.

Bring plenty of light-colored and lightweight shirts, undergarments, socks, and shoes. Sport shirts are worn during off-duty hours. Cottons are, by far, the most comfortable. A combination of cotton/dacron is comfortable. Light weight raincoats and umbrellas are extremely useful during the rainy season. Shoes should be lightweight and comfortable. Expensive leathers and suede are discouraged because of dampness and wet surface conditions outside the office.

Women: Casual cotton, washable dresses, skirts, and blouses are worn year round. Although French and African women often wear formal dresses of lame, taffeta, and lace, American women find washable cottons, rayon, dark silks, and linens far more useful.

Children: A large supply of clothing for children is necessary. Many play areas are unpaved and often muddy, requiring frequent laundering. Girls will require cotton

dresses, skirts, blouses, shorts, play suits, and T-shirts. Boys wear ordinary shorts, shirts, and T-shirts. Bring a good supply of casual cotton clothing for younger children.

Most necessities are available, but prices are high for often inferior products. Bring shoes, particularly sneakers and sandals; local choices are extremely limited.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: Toiletries and cosmetics are available in limited quantities and at high prices. Local pharmacies are well supplied and drug prices are reasonable, but it is often difficult to obtain exact equivalents of U.S. products.

Duty-free American cigarettes can be purchased locally for about \$20 per carton. European and local brand cigarettes are also available; pipe tobacco is difficult to obtain.

Dry cleaning services are available in Brazzaville but are expensive.

Automobile repair service for Japanese and European-made cars are adequate; however, repair work can take weeks to complete due to shortage of skilled labor and parts. Automobile repair service for American made vehicles is inadequate.

Because of the humidity and intensity of the sun in the tropics, bring a good supply of sun products. Sun-tan/sunblock lotions, sunburn relief medications or sprays, hats and/or sun visors, and sunglasses are all recommended.

Basic Services: Dressmakers are available and are reasonably priced. Often, if requested to do so, they will come directly to your home for necessary fitting and tailoring. A variety of fabrics, both local and European, is available.

Shoe repair services are available and work is reasonable; prices vary according to quality of repair.

French and Congolese beauty salons and barbershops are available at prices comparable to major U.S. or European cities. A styled haircut costs between \$30 and \$50. Men's haircuts cost approximately \$14.

Religious Activities

Roman Catholicism is predominant. Several Roman Catholic churches are located throughout Brazzaville. Services are generally in French. A Protestant service in English is held once a month at the Evangelical Mission. An interdenominational service is held on the other Sundays at 9:30 am at the World Health Organization Chapel. Brazzaville also has an active Salvation Army, and the Swedish Mission occasionally sponsors religious services in English. American missionaries are active in Impfondo (on the northern border of the Congo). Baha'i meetings are bilingual.

Education

International School: There is an international school that offers an academic program for grades Kindergarten through 8th grade. The school's curriculum meets the requirements of the American and British educational systems. However, the school is not U.S. accredited. Grades 9-12 are taught through the University of Nebraska's correspondence program for high school. There are

approximately three full time teachers and 30 students, around 10 of whom are Americans. All classes are conducted in English. Children receive some language instruction in French. The school year runs from the beginning of September to the end of May and the hours are from 0730 to 1330. There are no extracurricular activities such as sports.

French School: The French school also offers an academic program for grades Kindergarten through 12th grade. There are approximately 50 teachers and 700 students. All class are taught in French; English is introduced to the students starting in the 6th grade. In addition, German and Spanish are also taught starting in the 8th grade. The school has many extracurricular activities such as sports, theater, bridge or music. There is a nominal fee for most after school activities.

The school year runs from early September to the end of June, with a two week break for Christmas, a two week break for Easter, a one week break in November and a one week break in February. The school day is from 8 am to 12:30 pm and 3 to 5 pm for grades K-5 and 7:30 am to 12:30 pm and 3 to 5:30 pm for grades 6-12.

Sports

Local facilities include a tennis club with lighted courts, a rugby team, a 9-hole golf course (with sand greens), Aero Club, and the Club Nautique (for boating and water sports). If you enjoy outdoor sports, bring equipment that you may need, such as picnic supplies, golf equipment, and sports attire. All equipment available locally is expensive. Photographic equipment and facilities are also available at double U.S. prices. The following clubs are open to paying memberships (approximately \$1,000 each):

Tennis Club. Facilities include 10 clay courts with lights, a squash court, swimming pool, and a large bar. Balls are supplied free.

Brazzaville Golf Club. The club has a well kept, 9-hole course (that by clever use of tees converts into an 18-hole course) with sand greens. It is on the grounds of the regional headquarters of the World Health Organization (WHO), 20 minutes from Brazzaville, and has a spectacular view of the Congo River and the rapids. Many tournaments are organized during the course of the year.

Villa Washington. This small, U.S. Government-owned club, open to all Americans, features a swimming pool, volleyball net, kids playground, basketball court and snack bar.

Aero Club. Located at Maya Maya Airport, this club has one remodeled Cessna 152 aircraft. Flying lessons are available at approximately triple U.S. instruction fees. A bar, swimming pool, three tennis courts, and petanque are available for use by members.

The Meridien Sofitel and Cosmos Hotels offer monthly subscriptions for their tennis courts and pools. Subscription fees are high by U.S. standards.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Touring is difficult due to poor quality of roads, and lack of accommodations. Trips can be made to Foulakari Falls, Lac Bleu, and the Pine Forest—all within a 2-4 hour drive of Brazzaville—with a four-wheel-drive vehicle. These areas are well worth the trip, but not recommended for small children. Travel by road to two or three other scenic spots is possible, provided you have a four-wheel-drive vehicle and the necessary camping equipment. All camping and picnicking equipment should be brought; local supplies are scarce and very expensive.

Excellent deep-sea fishing is available off the coast at Pointe Noire.

Firearms may not be imported into the Congo.

The Congo River with its islands and beaches provides opportunities

for motorboating, water-skiing, fishing, picnicking, and swimming. The current is swift and dangerous; therefore, it is imperative to wear a life jacket when participating in water sports.

Brazzaville is isolated, no resort areas are close-by, and travel is time consuming and expensive. Pointe Noire, Congo's seaport, may be reached from Brazzaville in about an one hour by plane. Pointe Noire offers limited night life and cultural opportunities, but it has good beaches for swimming and sunbathing, good fishing, several excellent seafood restaurants, and comfortable hotels. Round-trip air travel costs about \$200. Big game parks and resorts in Central African Republic, DRC, South Africa, and Kenya offer variety in vacations spots, but high costs of air travel on the African continent limit their appeal.

Just outside Brazzaville are the buildings and staff residences of the World Health Organization's African Regional headquarters—a pleasant place to walk. Other spots of interest are the famous Stanley Pool, nearby rapids of the Congo River, and the colorful bluffs on the Congo River known as the "Cliffs of Dover" or "White Cliffs".

Entertainment

Restaurants. There are a few good restaurants in Brazzaville. The more expensive (but still reasonable) restaurants offer indoor/air conditioned seating. However, the more popular restaurants are the ones that are located outside. Both lunch and dinner are served at all the restaurants. Breakfast is available at a select few. The Meridian Hotel offers a breakfast buffet on the weekends.

Night Life. There are very few night clubs available. Be prepared to spend lots of money as drinks are very expensive. In addition to night-clubs there are also a couple casinos available.

Pointe-Noire

Located 315 miles southwest of Brazzaville on the Atlantic Coast, is a commercial center and the country's major port and railhead for the Congo-Ocean Railway. The city was founded in 1883 and, from 1950 to 1958, was the capital of Middle Congo. It had gained importance after the construction in the 1930s of its artificial harbor.

Pointe-Noire is the best port on the African west coast between Luanda, Angola and Lagos, Nigeria, and continues to serve as the major seaport for the former French Equatorial states. Almost all goods moving in and out of the country pass through Pointe-Noire. The city handles product embarkation of the important manganese mining activity carried on in Gabon by the U.S.-French company, COMILOG (Compagnie Minière de l'Ogooué). The bulk of Gabonese timber is also shipped from here.

An international airport is located south of the city. In the 1970s, petroleum drilled offshore near Pointe-Noire and processed at a refinery in town became a major national export.

The population of Pointe-Noire in 2000 was estimated at 476,000. While neither exciting nightlife nor cultural activities are offered, the city is known for its excellent sport fishing and fine beaches. There are good restaurants, specializing in seafood, and comfortable hotels. Taxis, car hire, and banking facilities are available.

As in Brazzaville, a knowledge of French is a necessity in Pointe-Noire.

OTHER CITIES

West of Brazzaville, the southern city of **LOUBOMO** is an important transportation center. Its highways and railroads link the western part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and southern Gabon with cit-

ies in the Congo. It is a gold and lead mining center. Loubomo also has markets for leather, sisal, and cattle. The town has several small industries which produce sawed lumber, wood veneer, and carbonated beverages. An airport is located in Loubomo. The population in 2000 was approximately 62,000.

NKAYI is west of the capital, in the southern region of the Congo. It is the major sugar-producing center in the Nkayi Valley agricultural region. Other industries in Nkayi include a sawmill, a flour mill, and plants for peanut oil and cattle feed production. The population in 2000 was estimated at 40,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Congo, which has a total area of 342,000 sq. km. (132,000 sq. miles), is located near the Equator in West-Central Africa. It extends more than 1,280 kilometers (800 miles) inland from the Atlantic Ocean and is bordered by Gabon, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Zaire and the Angolan enclave of Cabinda.

The country has four topographical regions: a coastal plain extending inland about 64 kilometers (40 miles) to the foothills of the Mayombe Mountains; the alluvial soils of the fertile Niari Valley in the south-central area; the Central Bateke Plateau separating the basins of the Ogooué and the Congo Rivers; and the Congo River Basin in the north, composed of mainly impassable flood plains in the lower portion and dry savanna in the upper portion. Much of the Congo is densely forested.

In December of 1993 nearly a million acres of land in the north became Nouabale-Ndoki National Park - one of the most significant tropical forest preserves in the world.

The climate is tropical; with the rainy season lasting from October to April and the dry season from June to September. Humidity is high during the rainy season and temperatures can climb to 31 centigrade. Humidity and temperatures are lower during the dry season, ranging from 25 to 28 centigrade.

Brazzaville, a city of over 1.2 million people, lies on the north bank of the Congo River, 315 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean and 4.25 degrees south of the Equator. Surrounded by a vast savanna of high grasslands and dark green thickets of low trees spread over rolling hills, the town is fairly level, with an altitude of 1,043 feet.

Violent rapids make the Congo River unnavigable from Brazzaville to the Atlantic. To the east the river widens into Stanley Pool - 15 miles wide and dotted with many small islands (during dry season). From Brazzaville inland, the river becomes navigable for 1,000 miles. Goods arriving at the Atlantic seaport of Pointe Noire are shipped by the Congo Ocean Railway (CFCO) to Brazzaville which, due to its position above the rapids, is a transit point for commercial and passenger traffic.

The city of Pointe Noire, with over 400,000 people, is one of the best ports on the African west coast between Luanda, Angola and Lagos, Nigeria. Almost all goods moving into and out of the Congo pass through Pointe Noire.

Population

Over 2.8 million Congolese reside in over 133,538 square miles of land, an average density of less than seven persons per square mile. Most live in Brazzaville, Pointe Noire, and along the connecting rail line. Few people live in the northern sections which are covered by savanna, swamp and rain forest.

Outside the main towns, the Congolese are divided into small communities. Among 75 distinct subdivisions, the Kongo, the Teke,

and the Sangha are the three principal ethnic groups.

Two million Kongo are found on both sides of the Congo River, about one-fourth in the Congo, the rest in Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Lari and related groups live around Brazzaville, and the Vili, a coastal group, predominate in the Pointe Noire area. The Sangha inhabits the northern part of the country along with the M'Bochi group. However, many of the M'Bochi group have migrated to Brazzaville.

The Teke group is spread over a large area north and northeast of Brazzaville. They are the most traditional of the ethnic groups, engaging in hunting and fishing. Animistic worship is still predominant, although most of the urban population is Christian. In rural areas, the Congolese live in small communities having little outside contact. The European community in the Congo number over 8,000, principally French nationals.

History

First inhabited by pygmies, Congo was later settled by Bantu groups who also occupied parts of present-day Angola, Gabon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Several Bantu kingdoms, notably those of the Kongo, the Loango, and the Teke, built trade links along the Congo river basin. The first European contacts came in the late fourth century, and commercial relationships were quickly established with the kingdoms, trading for slaves captured in the interior. The coastal area was a major source for the transatlantic slave trade, and when that commerce ended in the early 19th century, the power of the Bantu kingdoms eroded.

The area came under French sovereignty in the 1880s. Pierre Savignion de Brazza, a French empire builder, competed with agents of Belgian King Leopold's International Congo Association (later Zaire) for control of the Congo River basin. Between 1882 and 1891,

treaties were secured with all the main local rulers on the river's right bank, placing their lands under French protection. In 1908, France organized French Equatorial African (AEF), comprising its colonies of Middle Congo (modern Congo), Gabon, Chad, and Oubangui-Chari (modern Central African Republic). Brazzaville was selected as the federal capital.

Economic development during the first 50 years of colonial rule in Congo centered on natural resource extraction by private companies. In 1924-34, the Congo-Ocean Railway (CFCO) was built at a considerable human and financial cost, opening the way for growth of the ocean port of Pointe-Noire and towns along its route.

During World War II, the AEF administration sided with Charles DeGaulle, and Brazzaville became the symbolic capital of Free France during 1940-1943. The Brazzaville Conference of 1944 heralded a period of major reform in French colonial policy, including the abolition of forced labor, granting of French citizenship to colonial subjects, decentralization of certain powers, and election of local advisory assemblies. Congo benefited from the postwar expansion of colonial administrative and infrastructure spending as a result of its central geographic location within AEF and the federal capital at Brazzaville. The Loi Cadre (framework law) of 1956 ended dual voting roles and provided for partial self-government for the individual overseas territories. Ethnic rivalries then produced sharp struggles among the emerging Congolese political parties and sparked severe riots in Brazzaville in 1959. After the September 1958 referendum approving the new French constitution, AEF was dissolved. Its four territories became autonomous members of the French Community, and Middle Congo was renamed the Congo Republic. Formal independence was granted in August 1960.

Congo's first president was Fulbert Youlou, a former Catholic priest

from the southeast region. He rose to political prominence after 1956, and was narrowly elected president by the National Assembly at independence. Youlou's three years in power were marked by ethnic tensions and political rivalry. In August 1963, Youlou was overthrown in a three-day popular uprising (Les Trois Glorieuses) led by labor elements and joined by rival political parties. All members of the Youlou government were arrested or removed from office. The Congolese military took charge of the country briefly and installed a civilian provisional government headed by Alphonse Massamba-Debat. Under the 1963 constitution, Massamba-Debat was elected President for a five-year term and named the current President, Pascal Lissouba to serve as Prime Minister. However, President Massamba-Debat's term ended abruptly in August 1968, when Captain Marien Ngouabi and other army officers toppled the government in a coup. After a period of consolidation under the newly-formed National Revolutionary Council, Major Ngouabi assumed the presidency on December 31, 1968. One year later President Ngouabi proclaimed Congo to be Africa's first "people's republic" and announced the decision of the National Revolutionary Movement to change its name to the Congolese Labor Party (PCT).

On March 16, 1977, President Ngouabi was assassinated and, less than one week later, Archbishop Biayenda was also killed. Although the persons accused of shooting Ngouabi and Biayenda were tried and some of them executed, the motivation behind the assassinations is still not clear. An 11-member Military Committee of the Party (CMP) was named to head an interim government with Colonel (later General) Joachim Yhomby-Opango to serve as President of the Republic. Accused of corruption and deviation from party directives, Yhomby-Opango was removed from office on February 5, 1979, by the Central Committee of the PCT, which then simultaneously designated Vice President and Defense

Minister Colonel Denis Sassou-Nguesso as interim President. The Central Committee directed Sassou-Nguesso to take charge of preparations for the Third Extraordinary Congress of the PCT, which proceeded to elect him President of the Republic. Under a congressional resolution, Yhomby-Opango was stripped of all powers, rank, and possessions and placed under arrest to await trial for high treason. He was released from house arrest in late 1984 and ordered back to his native village of Owando.

After decades of turbulent politics belabored by Marxist-Leninist rhetoric, and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Congolese gradually moderated their economic and political views to the point that in 1992 Congo completed a transition to multi-party democracy. Ending a long history of one-party Marxist rule, a specific agenda for this transition was laid out during Congo's national conference of 1991 and culminated in August 1992 with multi-party presidential elections. Sassou-Nguesso conceded defeat and Congo's new president, Professor Pascal Lissouba, was inaugurated on August 31, 1992.

Congolese democracy experienced severe trials in 1993 and early 1994. The President dissolved the National Assembly in November 1992, and called for new elections in May 1993. The results of those elections were disputed, touching off violent civil unrest in June and again in November.

With the help of Angolan troops and other forces, Sassou-Nguesso, a northerner, defeated the forces of Lissouba, a southerner, in 1997. President Sassou-Nguesso's Government replaced the country's 1992 Constitution with a new Fundamental Act, which established a strong and highly centralized presidential system of government. The President appoints all members of the Government, all senior military officers, and all subnational government officials, serves as commander in chief of the armed forces, and specifically is mandated to direct the

general policy of the Government and to exercise regulatory powers. Legislative authority is vested in the 75-member National Transition Council (Conseil National de Transition, or CNT). The judiciary is overburdened and subject to political interference. Renewed civil conflict broke out in August 1998 and continued throughout the south until the end of 1999 between forces supporting Sassou, which included Angolan allies, Rwandan Hutu militiamen, and irregular fighters of Chadian and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) nationality, and southern rebel groups supporting Lissouba. In 1999 the Government reestablished effective control over most of the south through military offensives, offers of amnesty, negotiations, and efforts to broaden the Government's political base. In November and December 1999, the Government signed cease-fire and reconciliation accords with rebel groups.

In the presidential election held in March 2002, Sassou-Nguesso won with 74.7% of the vote. In May 2002, parliamentary elections were held for the 137-member National Assembly, the first vote since the civil wars ended in 1999.

Arts, Science, and Education

Designated by the French during the colonial era to be the civil servants of Equatorial Africa, the Congolese have traditionally taken great pride in their French-oriented educational system. With the exception of Senegal, no country in Africa had a more developed educational system at the time of independence than the Congo. The literacy rate is still among the highest in Africa, and professors and teachers are held in high regard.

While the glory days of the Congolese educational system are long gone, all school-age children (6-19) are entitled to free education. School attendance is, in principle, compulsory until age 16. Almost all school-age children in urban areas

attend classes, though enrollment drops off in the countryside. Brazzaville's Marien Ngouabi University is the sole institution of higher learning in the country. Founded in 1961, it has an average enrollment of approximately 16,500 students.

The Congo is widely known throughout Africa as a center of francophone literature, and several Congolese writers have worldwide reputations. The American Cultural Center welcomes these authors and often provides a forum for lectures and discussions. The French Cultural Center, known locally as the Espace Andre malraux, opened its doors in 1991 and is one of France's finest centers in sub-Saharan Africa. It regularly offers plays, concerts, exhibitions, and film shows.

The Poto-Poto Art School was founded by Pierre Lods in 1951 and is accessible to the general public throughout the week. Works by Congolese painters and sculptors can also be found in their workshops throughout the city. Traditional handicrafts are not as prevalent as they were in the past, though there are some fine craftsmen working in the production of pottery, baskets, rattan and wood furniture, and textiles.

As the regional headquarters of the World Health Organization and as a base for the Food and Agricultural Organization, Brazzaville remains an important center of scientific research.

Commerce and Industry

Debt continues to be one of the largest impediments for development of the Congo. During the petroleum boom years, the Congo mortgaged its oil revenues and became one of the most heavily indebted countries per capita in the world. When the price of oil fell, the Congo found its economy paralyzed by the debt burden and its over dependence on this one industry.

In recent years, the Government has engaged in considerable structural adjustment efforts and made some progress in diversifying the economy. Agricultural production in manioc, peanuts, bananas, rice, coffee, and cocoa has increased. The Congo also has tropical hardwoods and eucalyptus trees under cultivation. Finally the Congo has increased regional economic cooperation, most notably with South Africa.

Structural reform efforts include: civil service downsizing, customs/tax reforms and measures to promote private sector development. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a \$14 million credit in November 2000 to aid post-conflict reconstruction.

A signatory to the Lome Convention, the Congo conducts most of its external trade with members of the European Community, particularly with France. Due to increasing purchases of Congolese petroleum, the U.S. is currently the Congo's leading overall trading partner. The Congo is also a member of the UDEAC (Union Douaniere et Economique de l'Afrique Centrale), composed of the former territories of French Equatorial Africa, Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea, and the CEEAC (Communaute Economique des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale).

Transportation

Local

Local buses are not used by Europeans and Americans because of overcrowding and unsafe driving. Taxi service is adequate and prices are reasonable. However, taxis are not recommended at night due to security concerns.

Regional

Many roads in Brazzaville are paved; however, there are numerous pot holes. South of Brazzaville there is a road once paved but now in poor condition which leads to Kinkala (about 75 km). The road continues unpaved to Pointe Noire. There is a paved road north of Brazzaville that

leads to Owando (about 500 km). Many roads, paved or unpaved, are almost impossible to travel without a four-wheel-drive vehicle, particularly during the rainy season.

Driving is on the right. French traffic rules prevail; the vehicle on the right has the right-of-way. Since main roads are crowded with pedestrians, motorbikes, and speeding taxis, driving can be dangerous.

Large boats with modest accommodations make river trips possible up the Congo and Oubangui Rivers to Bangui, capital of Central African Republic. A distance of about 600 miles, the trip takes 11 days upriver and 7 days down. River travel, however, is unpredictable due to water levels and is often difficult to arrange.

There is a 315-mile railway that connects Brazzaville with Pointe Noire. However, because of frequent derailments and track reparations, long delays are not uncommon.

Air

Sabena, Air France, Air Afrique, Air Portugal, Swissair and Aeroflot fly to Brazzaville from Europe; Air Afrique, Ethiopian Airlines, Angolan Airlines, Cameroon Airlines, Air France, Air Gabon serve Africa. Lina Congo, Aeroservice and Trans Air Congo serve Pointe-Noire. The Brazzaville airport, Maya-Maya, is 6 kilometers from downtown.

Communications

Telephone and Fax

Local telephone, cable and wireless communications are adequate, although delays can be common.

Radio and TV

Congolese radio broadcasts on short-wave, medium wave, and FM from 6:00 a.m. until late evening. Broadcasts are in French and local languages, with one English-language program per week. RFI, BBC, African Number 1, and Canal Afrique are also received locally. With a short-wave receiver, individ-

uals can listen to VOA, BBC, and European broadcasts.

Tele Congo Broadcasts afternoon and evenings in French and local languages, with a weekly English news program on Sundays. Individuals can also receive Zairian television, CFI (Canal France International), RFO (Regie France Outre-Mer), Canal Zaire, DSF (Deutsches Sportfernshen), and sometimes CNN. Local television broadcasts on the SECAM system.

Newspaper, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Since the transition to democracy in 1991-92, there has been a developing free press in Congo and more than a dozen Congolese weeklies and monthlies are available. French magazines and newspapers, other European magazines, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the International Herald-Tribune are available in Brazzaville, though at high prices. All papers and periodicals are several days old.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

The local hospitals and clinics are not up to U.S. standards.

Kinshasa has a few facilities for obstetric and gynecological patients, but many American women living in the country travel to Europe or the U.S. for medical attention and to give birth.

A reputable dentist practices in Brazzaville and another in Kinshasa, DRC, but all preventive dental work should be done prior to arriving.

Preventive Measures

Malaria is endemic to the Congo region. Mefloquine, Chloroquine/Paludrine and other antimalaria pills must be taken regularly. Begin taking malaria pills 2 weeks before arrival and continue for 4 weeks after departure.

Proof of small pox vaccination is not longer required in the Congo, but typhoid and yellow fever immunizations are still required by the State Department. Tetanus and polio immunizations should be completed prior to arrival. Also highly recommended, are rabies vaccines, hepatitis A and B vaccines and gamma globulin injections.

Up-to-date cholera stamps are recommended for all travelers to the Congo in order to minimize problems with quarantine officials when entering the country. These cholera stamps are required for travel to DRC.

Diarrhea diseases, skin infections, hepatitis, and intestinal parasites are also common. General respiratory ailments take longer to cure than in more temperate climates. For some, the heat and humidity are the most unpleasant medical aspects of life here. The climate aggravates respiratory, sinus, and low blood pressure problems. Fluoride tablets are recommended for children's teeth. Supplementary vitamins in the daily diet may be helpful.

Brazzaville has a water purification plant; however, the questionable quality of the water, water distribution facilities, and climate dictate that drinking water be boiled and filtered. Vegetables and fruits should be washed thoroughly. If these items are to be eaten raw, outer skins should be removed. In preparing lettuce for salads, wash each leaf at least twice in cooled, boiled water.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

A passport and a visa are required. Information on entry requirements may be obtained from the Embassy of the Republic of Congo, 4891 Colorado Ave., N.W., Washington D.C. 20011, telephone (202) 726-0825, or

from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Congo to the United Nations, 14 E. 65th St., New York, NY, 10021, telephone (212) 744-7840. Overseas, inquiries should be made at the nearest Congolese embassy or consulate. Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or via CDC's Internet site at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

As of 1997, there were no quarantine or restrictions on pets.

Firearms may not be imported into the Congo.

The official currency unit is the XAF (Communaute Financiere Africaine) franc and is pegged to the French franc at the rate of 100/1. The exchange rate fluctuates. In January 2001, the rate was 699 XAF = US \$1. From January 1, 1999, the XAF is pegged to the euro at a rate of 655 XAF per euro.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1 New Year's Day
 Feb. 5 President's Day
 Feb. 8 Youth Day
 Mar/Apr. Easter*
 Mar. 8 Women's Day
 Mar. 18 Marien
 Nguabi Day
 May 1 Labor Day
 June 22 Foundation of
 the National
 People's Army
 July 31 Upswing of the
 Revolution
 Congo
 Aug. 12 Revolution
 Anniversary
 Aug. 15 Assumption
 Aug. 15 Independence
 Day

Nov. 1 All Saint's Day
 Nov. 17 Army Day
 Dec. 25 Children's Day
 Dec. 25 Christmas
 Dec. 31 Foundation of
 the Congolese
 Labor Party
 Dec. 31 Republic Day
 * variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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Congo. New York: Chelsea House, 1990.

Countries of the World and Their Leaders Yearbook 1993. Detroit: Gale Research, 1993.

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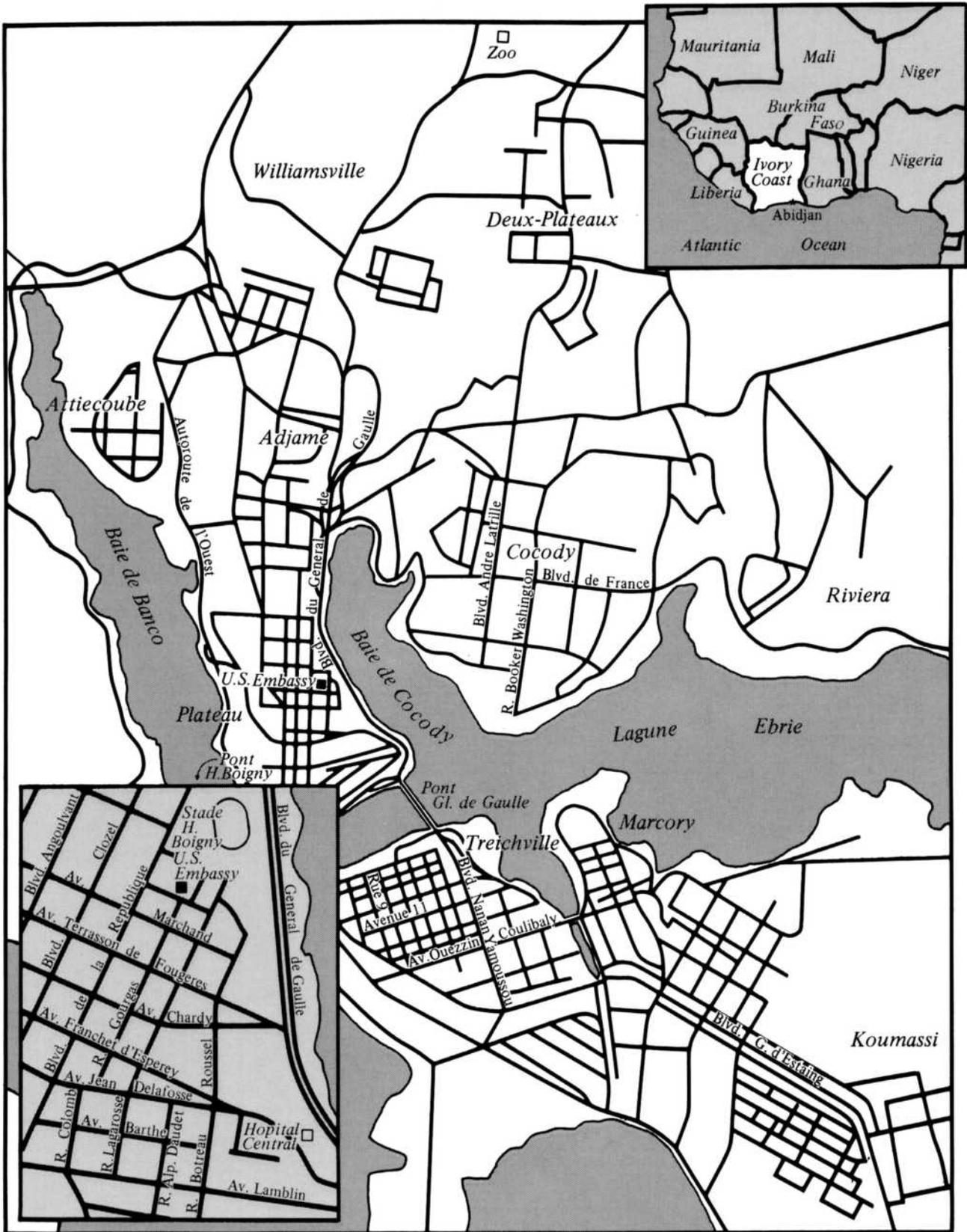
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Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

CÔTE D'IVOIRE (Ivory Coast)

Republic of the Ivory Coast

Major Cities:

Abidjan, Bouaké, Yamoussoukro

Other Cities:

Aboisso, Agboville, Assinie, Assouinde, Bingerville, Bondoukou, Comoe, Ferkessedougou, Grand Bassam, Grand Lahou, Jacquerville, Korhogo, Man, San Pedro, Sassandra

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 1999 for Cote d'Ivoire. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

France made Côte d'Ivoire a protectorate in 1842, but did not actively occupy the territory until 1882. The country became a French colony in 1893. Côte d'Ivoire became an autonomous republic within the French Community in 1958 and achieved full independence on August 7, 1960. In October 1985, the United Nations approved a request from the Ivorian government to change the country's official name from Ivory Coast to Côte d'Ivoire.

Côte d'Ivoire maintains close ties with France, but also seeks to expand its contacts with other nations. It is Africa's largest exporter of coffee and cocoa, and

also one of the largest exporters of timber and other tropical products.

MAJOR CITIES

Abidjan

Abidjan, with a population of approximately 2 million, is 4.8 kilometers inland from the Gulf of Guinea, but its suburbs stretch to the sea. Abidjan is often called the "Paris of West Africa," and much of its beauty derives from its setting on the rim of a lagoon at the edge of the ocean. The ever-present contrast between traditional African clothing, markets, and ways of life and the most modern public and commercial establishments gives the city a special charm and character.

Food

Abidjan has the only mall in West Africa. The supermarket of the mall is open every day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Local shops are generally open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon and 3 p.m. until 6 p.m.; on Sundays most shops are closed except for supermarkets, which are open in the morning.

A wide variety of food is available in Abidjan's many local markets and

supermarkets. The bakeries offer a delicious variety of breads and pastries. Tropical fruits and locally grown vegetables are plentiful and reasonable but the selection is limited. The supermarkets carry a complete selection of imported European fresh fruit and vegetables at much higher prices. The choice of all types of food and household items in supermarkets is excellent and shortages are rare. Both local and imported meat is available; meat is sold in continental cuts and local meat should be well cooked for health reasons. Local poultry, fresh fish, and shellfish is plentiful and reasonably priced.

A limited variety of frozen foods is available. All dairy products are imported and sterilized-pasteurized long-life milk is sold. Butter and cheeses are excellent. Plain and flavored yogurts are good. All dairy products have an expiration date.

Beverages available include bottled soft drinks, American colas, and European and South American imported wine. Côte d'Ivoire cocoa and chocolate are superb; the coffee is distinctive.

Clothing

Abidjan's year-round climate resembles summer weather in Washington, DC. During the rainy summer months, the weather is somewhat



Courtesy of Carolyn Fischer

Building in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

cooler, and long-sleeved clothing is comfortable. Rainwear and umbrellas are necessary items. Men find that either business suits (light-weight) or locally tailored bush suits are appropriate for most occasions. However, those whose work does not entail contact with the host government or the public normally wear slacks with either short- or long-sleeved shirts, and no tie. Sports clothes and casual wear are recommended for leisure activities.

Most women wear summer dresses or blouse and skirt combinations, supplemented by sweaters for air-conditioned buildings. Neither shorts nor very short dresses are worn in the downtown area or while traveling in the country. Washable fabrics are preferable, since local dry cleaning is expensive; in Abidjan's hot, humid climate, wrinkle-resistant fabrics that breathe are desirable. Hosiery usually is

worn only for special occasions, and gloves and hats (with the exception of sun hats) are seldom seen. Sandals, comfortable walking shoes, and sports footwear are all useful.

Abidjanais are fashion conscious, and the latest styles from Paris often are available at extremely high prices in local boutiques. Contemporary African fashions are popular with both Ivorian and foreign women. Local batiks, tie-dyes, and wax prints, sometimes enhanced with elaborate embroidery, are made up into attractive dresses, skirts, and pants outfits. Prices range from moderate to expensive.

Children need a good supply of cotton or washable synthetic clothing. Girls wear everything from dresses to shorts and jeans. Boys wear jeans, slacks, and shorts with jerseys; sneakers and sandals are pop-

ular. Replacement items ordinarily are purchased from U.S. mail-order outlets, since children's clothes on the local market are quite costly. Uniforms are not worn at the International School of Abidjan, but those attending private French schools wear locally-made uniforms.

Swimming is a year-round activity, thus swimsuits and swimming goggles for each family member are essential.

Supplies and Services

The skills and fees of tailors and dressmakers in Abidjan vary widely. Minor shoe repairs can be done adequately. Dry cleaning facilities are satisfactory for everyday items, but not for delicate clothes; most laundry is done at home. Beauty and barber shops offer a complete line of services, but are expensive. Estheticians, masseurs,

and sauna bath facilities are available at health and exercise clubs.

Radio, phonograph, video, and television shops service European and Japanese models successfully, and American models with varying degrees of skill. A good selection of cassettes and CDs is available at somewhat higher than U.S. prices. Several companies, including Westinghouse, Singer, Frigidaire, and General Electric, have local representatives who stock limited supplies of spare parts for small appliances. Service technicians, however, are unfamiliar with American equipment. Local jewelers can repair most clocks and watches. Several local printers do moderate quality work, but no engraving, and prices are high. Catering service is available from several hotels, restaurants, and bakeries.

Pet shops and supermarkets carry a limited variety of basic pet supplies. An Ivorian Government veterinary clinic offers shots and minor treatment for pets. Several qualified veterinarians have clinics in Abidjan.

Domestic Help

Americans in Abidjan find domestic workers to be a very pleasant and affordable aspect of life. Domestic workers are usually men who come from other West African countries. Women also do domestic work and many are employed as nannies.

In most households, an experienced steward who does all types of housework, laundry, and simple cooking is sufficient. If additional help is needed, less-skilled servants and full-fledged cooks are available. A qualified cook usually will do marketing and kitchen chores, but no housework. General-category stewards normally do all other tasks. Small families sometimes share the services of one servant for general housework and laundry on a part-time basis. Generally, servants do not live in.

Hours and minimum wages are fixed by law. Servants work a maxi-

mum of ten hours daily, with one full day or two half-days off each week, and one month's paid holiday per year. On local holidays, servants receive full pay and are not required to work. If uniforms are worn, they are provided at the employer's expense. When employment is terminated, servants are entitled either to notice or notice payment, settlement for any unused leave, termination pay, and a certificate of previous employment. In addition, employers must pay social security contributions amounting to about 11 percent of salary and a transportation allowance.

Almost all servants speak French, and some also can read that language. A few speak English. All domestics must be trained to individual preferences and supervised carefully to assure satisfactory performance. Night guardians are available for the protection of residences; many of these will care for gardens and lawns for an agreed-upon extra monthly stipend

Religious Activities

Regularly scheduled Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim worship services and activities are conducted in French throughout the Abidjan area. Affiliated schools, activities, and services are readily available to the French speaker. Kosher meat can sometimes be obtained locally. English-speaking Christian congregations include: The International Fellowship of Christians, an interdenominational, evangelical congregation meeting in Deux Plateaux for two Sunday worship services, classes for children and adults, and a variety of study groups and other activities during the week; the Protestant Church of the Plateau, an interdenominational, liturgical congregation, holding its Sunday worship service, classes and activities in a Methodist church near the U.S. Embassy; and a Roman Catholic church in Deux Plateaux holding mass, confessions, and confraternity of Christian doctrine classes for children on Saturday.

Education

The International Community School of Abidjan (ICSA), founded in 1972, is the only English-language school in Abidjan. It is an independent, coeducational day school, offering an American educational program from kindergarten through grade 12. A solid academic program is offered. The school is accredited from kindergarten through grade 12 by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and the Upper School is also accredited by the European Council of International Schools (ECIS). The Upper School presents a developmental program with the express purpose of preparing students for entry into U.S. colleges and universities. French, the official language of Côte d'Ivoire, is required at all grade levels. English as a Second Language (ESL) is required of non-English speakers until they reach a certain level of proficiency. Even after they are mainstreamed, ESL students receive continuing support. The school is not equipped to handle children with learning disabilities, physical handicaps, or emotional or behavioral problems. Qualified high school students may enroll in advance placement courses in English, French, European History, American History, Computer Science, Biology, and Calculus. A new school was constructed in 1990-91 in the residential section of Riviera III, with new sports facilities, including a basketball/volleyball court, track, soccer field, softball field, and shower facility.

The school is sponsored by the U.S. Government and governed by a nine-member Board of Directors, two of whom are appointed by the U.S. Ambassador. Membership in the Association, the school's official parent body, which oversees the whole school, is automatically conferred on the parents or guardians of children enrolled in the school.

The full-time faculty is composed of qualified teachers recruited both from abroad (about 40%) and from the English-speaking community in



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Skyline of Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

Abidjan (60%). The Director is contracted from the United States. Enrollment in 1997-98 was about 440 students, some 35% American. The school receives regular support and assistance from the Office of Overseas Schools in the Department of State.

The school sponsors interscholastic soccer, basketball, volleyball, swimming for boys and girls, intramural sports, a yearbook, drama, Girl Scouts, Brownies, Boy Scouts, and Cub Scouts. Other extracurricular activities are offered but may change from year to year based upon the availability of instructors. There is also a strong community service program.

Annual tuition fees are set in dollars. Fees for the 1998-99 school year are as follows: kindergarten-\$9,000; grades 1 through 5-\$9,450; grades 6 through 8\$11,260 and grades 9 through 12\$11,530. The

capital development fee of \$3,570 is charged only once per family. A school registration fee of approximately \$540 is charged annually for all children enrolled.

Many families arrange car pools for transporting children to and from school, since school-sponsored bus transportation is not available. There is no school uniform required. Students dress casually, in consideration of the tropical climate.

School hours are 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The school year begins in late August and ends in mid June. Students have a 2-week Christmas vacation and one week at Easter; some U.S. national and all local holidays are observed by the school. ICOSA sponsors a 5-week summer program during the months of July and August, depending on demand.

Further information about the school or about early registration can be obtained by writing to: Director, International Community School of Abidjan c/o Administrative Officer (ICSA) Am Embassy-Abidjan, Department of State Washington, D.C. 20521-2010 Email: icsa@compuserve.com Website: <http://urworld.com-puserve.com/homepaaees/ICSA>

The school asks that families register their children as soon as their plans are made, and preferably well in advance of their arrival

Local public and private schools follow French methods of instruction and curriculum, and make no provision for introductory language instruction for non-French-speaking children. Classes in the French system are divided as follows:

(1) "maternelle" or nursery school, ages 3 and 4.

(2) "jardin d'enfants" or kindergarten, ages 5 and 6.

(3) "ecole primaire" (1eme through 7eme), which corresponds to American grades 1 through 5. At the end of the 7eme, all children must pass a national exam to gain admittance to the "Lycee"

(4) ecole secondaire (lycee or college) which corresponds to grades 6 through 12 in American schools. At the end of the last year (grade 13), exams are taken for the baccalaureate.

Public schools no longer enroll non-Ivorian students who did not enter the school system in the first grade. Some very good private primary schools admit non-French-speaking children but generally only in the early elementary grades. Children must have sufficient French fluency to pass exams and survive in the secondary grades. In all cases, enrollment in the better local schools is competitive and should be accomplished as early in the spring as possible for the following school year.

The local school year runs from October to mid-July and is divided into trimesters ending in December, March, and June. Christmas and Easter vacations are at least one week each. Classes meet 5 days a week, Monday through Friday, in the upper grades; in the primary grades students have Wednesday off. Hours vary somewhat in different schools, but morning classes usually run from 7 a.m. to noon and from 2:30 to 5 p.m.

School uniforms, required for attendance at local schools, are not reimbursable. Transportation costs are reimbursable within the limits of total tuition and other school related costs. Limited summer school programs are offered for young children.

Special Educational Opportunities

Private instruction is available for languages, musical instruments, judo and karate, riding, tennis, swimming, and horseback riding. Additional academic tutoring for school children can also be obtained.

Some eligible family members enroll in an intensive French program at the University of Abidjan. Since French is so important for everyday living and social contacts, it is strongly encouraged that you participate in some French-language training program.

Sports

Sports are an integral part of recreational life in the Côte d'Ivoire. For Ivorians, soccer is the most popular sport, followed by basketball and boxing. You can pursue a wide variety of sports activities in Abidjan: aerobics, pool swimming, fishing, bowling, tennis, horseback riding, ice skating, pool and billiards, golf, volleyball, basketball, softball, soccer, and martial arts. Softball is played almost every weekend at the International school. Many of the players participate in U.S. Embassy-sponsored West African competitions. In addition to weekend activities, the Marines offer volleyball at their residence. Sports equipment is available on the local market but the cost is high.

Salt and freshwater pools at major hotels in and around Abidjan are open to the public on a reasonable daily fee basis; a few offer pool memberships. Use of tennis courts can be arranged at local hotels, and memberships and instruction are available at several clubs and hotels. An excellent 18-hole golf course is located at the Golf Club in the Riviera section of Abidjan. Golfers can play there by paying a greens fee or an individual club membership. There is also a 9-hole public course with reasonable fees.

The beaches near Abidjan tend to be dangerous, with extremely treacherous surf. Riptides and heavy

undertow make ocean swimming dangerous. Swimming is not recommended in these waters. You must use extreme caution in supervising young children at the beach. Despite these drawbacks, many families in Abidjan rent small beach lots at Grand Bassam or Assinie with a changing but and shaded picnic table. There are a number of small hotel-restaurants in Grand Bassam where you can spend the day for the cost of lunch. The beach is a close, pleasant weekend escape.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Abidjan is an attractive city, laced with lagoons and close to the ocean, with many hills and lush tropical flora. In and around Abidjan, you can visit the beautiful Cathedral of Abidjan, perched on a hill overlooking the city; the zoo, modest but still enjoyable for children; the Parc du Banco, a virgin rain forest; and the large open-air markets in Cocody, Treichville, and other suburbs. A lagoon boat tour offers an impressive view of Abidjan's skyline.

There are many options for trips outside of Abidjan. It is possible to go north to Korhogo or Comoe Game Park on a 3-day weekend, and there are many pleasant day trips.

Social Activities

A good knowledge of French is essential for developing contacts among Ivorians and Europeans. The Professional Women's Network meets on a monthly basis and features guest speakers of various topics. An international playgroup has been developed for pre-schoolers and toddlers. The American Chamber of Commerce meets monthly and draws its membership from representatives of American businesses operating in Côte d'Ivoire. The "Hash House Harriers" are a group of motivated individuals who meet each weekend and go on excursion runs/walks within and sometimes outside of Abidjan.

Entertainment

Several modern, air-conditioned theaters in Abidjan show European and American films in French. Children's matinees are screened frequently during holiday periods. A cinema club at the French Cultural Center features French film classics.

African theatrical and folkloric presentations are given periodically at various theaters in Abidjan. Most traditional rites are limited to family and village circles, but folk dancing is often the featured entertainment at local hotels. Parades and festivals organized on certain national holidays also feature dancers from all regions of the country. Touring groups, including some well-known French and international performers, offer live theater several times a year at the Hôtel Ivoire, Theatre de la Cite, and the French Cultural Center. Occasionally, foreign embassies sponsor concerts and recitals with visiting and local guest artists.

A variety of restaurants offer French, Italian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Lebanese, Korean, African, and other cuisines. Restaurants range from moderately to extremely expensive, but some *prix fixe* menus are available on certain evenings at several hotels and restaurants. Discotheques and nightclubs around town open after 10 p.m.; the cost of a drink at most nightclubs in 1990 was \$10 (U.S.). A casino is located at Hôtel Ivoire.

Fashion shows featuring French *haute couture* and Ivorian styles are presented several times a year at Hôtel Ivoire for a small admission fee. Exhibits are frequently held by European and African artists in hotels and small gatherings.

Photographers find many worthwhile subjects in Côte d'Ivoire. Local people are often pleased to have their pictures taken, but it is best to ask first and be prepared to pay for the favor. Most types of film are available locally at high cost, and processing is adequate,

although the majority of Americans send their film to the U.S. for developing.

Shopping at the Treichville, Adjame, Plateau, and Cocody markets can be a pleasant leisure-time activity. The animated bargaining that goes into making a good purchase is something of an art form in itself. A good rule of thumb when bargaining for an item is to cut the asking price at least in half, and then move upward slowly to a mutually agreeable price. Traders are appreciative of those who drive hard bargains, and everyone comes away satisfied from such a negotiation. It should be noted, however, that bargaining is not acceptable in artisan shops and outlets where prices are fixed as marked.

Dinners, bridge sessions, cocktails, picnics, and barbecues at the beach are a common form of entertainment in Abidjan, but a good knowledge of French is needed to develop contacts among Ivorians and Europeans.

The Professional Women's Network meets on a monthly basis and features guest speakers on various topics. The American Chamber of Commerce meets monthly and draws its membership from representatives of American businesses operating in Cote d'Ivoire.

Bouaké

Bouaké, north of Abidjan and in the heart of the country, is the second largest city in Côte d'Ivoire. It is on the main road and rail lines from Abidjan to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and is the commercial and transportation center for the interior. Cotton, rice, and tobacco are the chief products of the region. The city has many factories, among them the oldest textile mill in the nation. Bouaké (alternatively spelled Bwake) is the center for Côte d'Ivoire's educational television programming. There is a government hospital in the city, as well as an American mission, and a Benedictine monastery constructed

of interesting local materials. Bouaké also has several mosques. Notable native weavers work in nearby villages. Many visitors make special trips to Katiola, north of the city, where a factory outlet sells distinctive pottery.

Several good hotels and a large *marché* (market) are among the popular spots in Bouaké. A major tourist attraction is the sacred forest of Foro-Foro, several miles outside the city.

Yamoussoukro

The official capital of Côte d'Ivoire has a large hotel, The President, which is normally occupied by tourists. Several splendid buildings can be visited, notably the Basilica, known as the largest cathedral in Christianity. It was built by the former President, Felix Houphouët-Boigny, as his dedication to the city. This is a must-see attraction. In an attractive hilly region nearby is the Kossou Dam, the source of electrical power for Abidjan.

OTHER CITIES

ABOISSO, on the Ghana border, about 90 miles east of Abidjan, is an interesting town with a pleasant restaurant. A short distance away is Ayame, where two dams provide electric power to Abidjan.

AGBOVILLE, two hours from Abidjan, is a provincial inland town which features a colorful market and French-run hotels.

The small villages of **ASSINIE** and **ASSOINDE** lie between the lagoon and the sea, about fifty miles from Abidjan by car and boat. Two large resort hotel complexes are located along the beautiful beaches. Assinie features a Club Med that caters mainly to adults; weekend reservations can sometimes be arranged for a night with full board. The resort village of Assouinde is run by an Italian company and caters to large tour groups from for-

foreign countries. Reservations at Assouinde are for a night's accommodation with full board.

BINGERVILLE, the former capital, is 11 miles from Abidjan. It is surrounded by coffee and cocoa plantations, and enjoys an unusually picturesque setting on a hill overlooking the rim of the lagoon. It is also an educational center, and has a large botanical garden and a school of African art where artisans can be seen plying their crafts. A national boy's orphanage is now housed in what was formerly the colonial governor's mansion.

BONDOUKOU, on the eastern border, is one of Côte d'Ivoire's oldest cities. Founded at least 500 years ago, it grew as the caravan trade increased. Bondoukou became a prosperous agricultural plantation area after the French introduced cocoa in 1914. It is at the center of the Agni kingdom.

COMOE In Comoe Game Park one can find hippopotamus, lions, panthers, elephants, buffalo, warthogs, monkeys, and many kinds of antelope, notably the hartebeest. While the larger animals are rarely seen, it is still a popular trip. A pleasant small hotel in the park organizes full or half-day safaris by Land Rover. By road Comoe is an all-day trip.

FERKESSDÓUGOU, 100 miles north of Bouaké, is a major center of new agricultural development projects. It is predominantly Muslim, as evidenced by the market and mosque.

GRAND BASSAM Located on the seacoast about 20 miles east of Abidjan, Bassam is a favorite weekend escape because of its close proximity to Abidjan, pleasant beaches and hotels, and its interesting shopping. There is a cooperative of craftsmen in the center of town selling masks, brass work, wood carvings, and batik work. A mile-long strip of shops located outside the town of Bassam sells African carvings, carved chests, leather goods,

furniture, jewelry, and tie-dye and wax print fabric. All sorts of African art and paraphernalia can be found in this central area.

GRAND LAHOU A lagoon town three miles to the west. It offers picturesque old buildings, a rustic hotel-restaurant, and both ocean and lagoon swimming. You will experience a nice drive through the rubber and palm oil plantations.

JACQUEVILLE, roughly one-and-a-half hours from Abidjan, with a car ferry ride included, this lagoon town on the beach has a nice hotel-restaurant.

KORHOGO is a bustling city near the Mali and Burkina Faso borders. A seven to nine-hour drive from the capital and a center of Senoufo culture, it has some interesting markets and artisans' quarters with woodcarvers, weavers, and bronze casters using the ancient lost wax technique. Surrounding villages are centers of distinctive cloth painting and strip weaving activities.

The town of **MAN** is a 10-hour drive from Abidjan. It has a somewhat drier and cooler climate, since it lies in the western hills fairly close to the Liberian border. The area is noted for its Yacouba dancers, featuring the "stilt men," as well as its unusual carvings and masks. A nice hotel is in operation here. Somewhat north of town, in the village of Guessesso, is another pleasant tourist hotel.

SAN PEDRO, a new port on the seacoast 300 miles west of Abidjan, has fine sandy beaches, sea fishing, and softwood reforestation plantations.

SASSANDRA, also on the coast, and a five-and-a-half hour drive from the capital, is a town with simple hotels and campsites for those who come to enjoy the lovely beaches.

Travel arrangements can be made to visit any of these towns. Hotels

are comfortable and have good food. Air Ivoire links the country's major regions and provides regular flights to Korhogo, Man, Yamoussoukro, San Pedro, Sassandra, and Bouaké. The railroad passes through Bouaké and Ferkessedougou on the route north to Ouagadougou; this train trip is one of the more interesting travel bargains in the country.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Côte d'Ivoire rests on the Gulf of Guinea, covers 124,500 square miles, and is about the size of New Mexico. It is bounded on the west by Liberia and Guinea, on the north by Mali and Burkina Faso, on the east by Ghana, and on the south by 340 miles of Atlantic coastline.

The southern third of the country is covered by tropical rain forest. A network of interconnecting lagoons parallels the coast from the Ghanaian border 200 miles westward. Important cash crops are grown in the forest belt, but to the north lies a savanna area of lathyratic soil where vegetation becomes more sparse. In the northwest, the Man Mountains (4,800 feet) break the rolling inland plain which rises from the sea to about 1,000 feet in the north. Four rivers—the Cavally, Sassandra, Bandama, and Komoe—flow from north to south.

Temperatures vary in the north, where there is only one rainy season, averaging 51 inches of annual rainfall and 71 percent humidity.

The tropical climate of the south keeps temperatures between 75°F and 90°F, with humidity averaging 85 percent. Two rainy seasons, April to July and September to December, are separated by a short dry season in August. Over half of the annual precipitation (82 inches in Abidjan)

falls in May, June, and July but even then the sun often shines.

Population

Côte d'Ivoire's population, estimated at approximately 15 million, is growing at about 3.8% each year. It includes more than 5 million non-Ivorian Africans, approximately 25,000 French and 10,000 other Europeans, and a community of Lebanese estimated at more than 100,000. All West African states have expatriate communities in Côte d'Ivoire, but by far the largest communities are from Burkina Faso (2,853,000), Mali (1,299,000), Guinea (412,000), and Ghana (305,000) (1996 estimates). Some 150,000-200,000 Liberian refugees reside in western Côte d'Ivoire.

Approximately 50% of Côte d'Ivoire's population is urban, with more than 20% residing in the country's two largest cities, Abidjan and Bouake. The next three largest towns, Daloa, Gagnoa, and Korhogo, each have over 300,000 inhabitants.

The approximately 60 separate ethnic groups in Côte d'Ivoire, each with its own language or dialect, may be grouped into five or six major ethnic categories. Of these, the Akan group includes the largest Ivorian tribe, the influential Baoule who inhabit the center of the country, and the Agni who reside in the east. The north is populated by the Voltaic group - the Senoufo, Koulango, and Lobi. The Mande are divided into northern and southern groups, the more recently established northern Mande, including the Malinke in the northwest and the Dioula who reside around Kong in the northeast. The southern Mande include the Yacouba, Toura, and Gouro, who inhabit the center west of the country. The Krou group consists of 15 tribes, the most prominent being the Bete, who inhabit the center-west and southwest of the country. In addition, there are numerous small tribal groups living along the lagoons on the southern coast of the country, collectively referred to as the Lagoon peoples,

that include the Ebrie, the original indigenous population of Abidjan. With the exception of the southern Mande, established since ancient times, and the Senoufo, residents are the descendants of relatively recent immigrants. The Baoule and Agni, for example, are closely related to the Ashanti of Ghana and immigrated from that region in the 1700s.

Although most recent government statistics indicate that 38% of the population is Muslim and 26% is Christian (most of whom are Catholic), more realistic estimates place the Muslim population between 55% and 65%. Many of these are resident aliens from the Sahel countries. Official government estimates place traditional animist religions at 17% of the population. Some 13% are considered "without religion." Both Muslim and Christian holidays are celebrated nationally. Muslim and Christian populations continue to grow at the expense of the traditional religions. In recent years there has been a large increase in the number of Protestant missionary groups operating in the country, leading to an increase in the Protestant portion of the Christian population. The most significant religious trend, however, is the increasing number of conversions to Islam over the past decade. The Muslim proportion of the population has also been growing from immigration.

Since 1964, polygamy has been illegal. However, it is still widely practiced throughout Côte d'Ivoire through traditional weddings. The courts and other civil institutions do not recognize such marriages. At the same time, monogamy is prevalent among urban and educated groups. The 1964 civil code also bans child betrothal and bride price, and it promulgates rules on civil registry, marriage, separation and divorce, paternity and adoption, succession, and wills. The civil code is designed to provide uniformity for a country with diverse traditional practices. It is also an attempt to

modernize Ivorian society by fostering monogamy, nuclear families, and patrilineal, instead of matrilineal, descent rules. As of 1998, a bill before the National Assembly would also strengthen the legal protections of women's rights.

Public Institutions

The constitution provides for a system of government with a strong executive branch, a single legislative chamber, and a separate judiciary. The executive branch is headed by the President, elected for a five-year term, who is assisted by a Cabinet of appointed ministers.

Constitutional changes passed by the National Assembly in July 1998, creating a Senate, lengthening the presidential term to seven years, and allowing the President to postpone elections, were under discussion with the opposition as of late 1998.

The National Assembly, the legislative body, has 175 members elected by direct universal suffrage for 5-year terms. The Supreme Court is composed of four chambers: constitutional, judicial, administrative, and auditing.

The Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) has been the dominant force in Ivorian politics since its formation in the pre-independence period. A major political development occurred in 1990 when the country held its first multiparty elections. With the December 1993 death of President Felix Houphouët-Boigny, National Assembly President and constitutional successor Henri Konan Bedie became President.

Côte d'Ivoire became a U.N. member in 1960. Maintaining ties with its Francophone neighbors, it is a member of Conseil de l'Entente (a group including Niger, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Togo). Other memberships include the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the West African Economic and Monetary Union

(WAEMU or UEMOA), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS or, in French, CEDEAO).

Arts, Science, and Education

Since independence, Côte d'Ivoire has spent a significant portion of its budget on education. Currently, 43% of the operational budget goes toward education, which Ivorians view as essential for personal advancement and for the overall development of the country. Public school enrollment for 1993-94 was estimated at 2.6 million in elementary schools, 580,000 in secondary schools, and at least 50,000 in higher education.

Academics are respected members of society and, unlike some other Francophone countries in the region, academic institutions are a prime labor pool for ministerial and senior-level government appointments.

The Ministry of National Education administers primary, secondary, pre-university professional, and technical education for the entire country. Professional and technical education is becoming increasingly important as competition for space in the higher education system becomes greater and as the university produces more graduates than there are jobs.

Another ministry, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, responsible for post-secondary general, professional, and technical education, directs all research efforts in the country and works closely with Ivorian students abroad. Agreements for educational exchanges, Fulbright programs, training programs, and other bilateral and multilateral educational programs are all arranged through this ministry.

Until the beginning of the 1992-93 academic year, Côte d'Ivoire had only one university, the National University of Côte d'Ivoire, which

was established in Abidjan in 1963. The initial student capacity of the National University was 7,000. For more than a decade, a large number of Ivorians enrolled there before they pursued graduate studies in France or elsewhere.

However, the steady growth in the number of students entering higher education in Côte d'Ivoire has outstripped the ability of the Government to provide adequate facilities. This has resulted in the university having to accommodate up to 28,000 students per year in facilities planned initially for only 7,000 students. During the 1993-94 academic year, the National University added two other affiliated campuses in Adjame-Abobo (an Abidjan suburb) and Bouake, the second largest city located in the center of the country.

Apart from the National University, there are other institutions of higher learning. As Ivorians at the National University begin to look beyond the French educational models, closer ties have been established between Ivorian research institutions and American institutions. Some Ivorian research institutes, such as the Ivorian Center for Social and Economic Research (CIRES) and the Center for Audiovisual Teaching and Research (CERCOM), have a large number of U.S. graduates on their staff and, consequently, are receptive to American innovations in education. Supplemental to the National University are Côte d'Ivoire's five grandes écoles, modeled on the French system, which are prestigious institutes of higher learning designed to train Ivorians in specialized technical fields which used to be dominated by French expatriates in the country. Three institutes (ENSTP, INSET, and ENSA), specializing in civil engineering, management and business, and agriculture, respectively, are located in the first president's hometown of Yamoussoukro, a 2 1/2-hour drive north of Abidjan. Admission into the three schools is more difficult than to the National University (which is open to all who have a baccalaure-

ate or high school diploma); applicants must pass rigorous written and oral tests to be accepted. Also, unlike the university, students graduating from these institutes have a better chance of securing employment. In fact, until the recent economic crisis, many of the students went directly from schools into slotted positions in the government and private sector.

The other two grandes écoles, in public administration (ENA, modeled after its French counterpart) and teacher training (ENS), are located in Abidjan. They supply a steady stream of civil servants and teachers for the government. ENA also has training courses for junior and mid-level government cadres. The best and brightest technocrats study at the grandes écoles.

Côte d'Ivoire has approximately 90 government and 100 private high schools, the graduates of which are all eligible to attend the National University. Approximately 2,000 Ivorians teach English in these schools.

Various research institutes study coffee, cocoa, rubber, cotton, oils and oleaginous plants, forestry, and marine life to determine the best strains, growing conditions, control of natural enemies, efficient production, and processing techniques. African and U.S. institutions maintain close contact regarding research in these fields of research.

The National Museum, with a small but excellent collection of local art and artifacts, was renovated in 1988. Artisan training centers are located in Bingerville, Grand-Bassam, Daloa, Korhogo, and other places upcountry.

Because of Côte d'Ivoire's reputation for stability, the spending power of its elite, and the active nature of Abidjan's French Cultural Center, many African and European artists and entertainers appear here on a regular basis.

For art and objets d'art collectors, Abidjan has several small but well stocked private art and sculpture galleries which are frequented by both expatriates and elite Ivoirians.

Writers and filmmakers are also viewed as important in defining a national ethos. Their views on society, as expressed in their works and in press interviews, are featured in the cultural sections of the newspapers and on television and radio.

Commerce and Industry

Since the colonial period, Côte d'Ivoire's economy has been based on the production and export of tropical products. Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries account for over one-third of GDP and two-thirds of exports. Côte d'Ivoire produces 35 to 40 percent of the world's cocoa crop every year and is a major exporter of bananas, coffee, cotton, palm oil, pineapples, rubber, tropical wood products, and tuna. The January 1994 devaluation of the CFA Franc and accompanying structural adjustment measures generally favored the agricultural sector by increasing competitiveness. However, reliance on raw cocoa and coffee exports, which account for 39 percent of total exports, exposes the economy to sharp price swings on world markets for these commodities. The government encourages export diversification and intermediate processing of cocoa beans to reduce this exposure. This policy has yielded results, processed cocoa exports were up 35 percent in 1997, with new processing plants coming on stream. Electricity exports to neighboring countries are also up sharply, and Côte d'Ivoire's oil refinery will soon expand its capacity to process (mostly Nigerian) crude oil for re-export.

By 1998, Côte d'Ivoire succeeded in straightening out its daunting debt problem, a legacy of its economic problems of the 1980s. Though Côte d'Ivoire got back on track with its official creditors, both bilateral

(Paris Club) and multilateral (IMF and World Bank), resolution of its outstanding commercial bank debt was not completed until 1998, when Côte d'Ivoire signed a new 3-year IMF program. This IMF program allowed not only the commercial bank deal (London Club) to go forward, but also opened the door to the Paris Club rescheduling and Côte d'Ivoire's inclusion in the IMF/World Bank debt forgiveness initiative for highly-indebted poor countries (the HIPC initiative). All of these events, particularly the London Club deal, have reduced Côte d'Ivoire's public sector external debt from USD 16.2 billion at year-end 1997 to about USD 12.0 billion at year-end 1998. If Côte d'Ivoire adheres to the ambitious reforms required by the new IMF program, the HIPC initiative will provide additional debt forgiveness in 2001 by the Paris Club and, for the first time, the World Bank and IMF, thereby reducing the country's debt burden to about USD 9.1 billion.

Côte d'Ivoire's economic performance was impressive over the 1995-97 period. Real GDP growth was 7.1 percent in 1995, 6.8 percent in 1996 and 7.0 percent in 1997. The country has been meeting its IMF targets for growth, inflation, government finance, and balance of payments. Traditional commodity exports were boosted both by the devaluation and by higher world prices for cocoa and coffee (though improved prices in local currency terms were only partially passed through to farmers). At the same time, the devaluation and the generally favorable business environment produced growth in non-traditional crops, local processing of commodities and expansion of the service sector. In 1996, according to government statistics, inflation fell to only 3.5 percent, as the government continued to keep a tight lid both on salary increases and on the size of the public sector work force. In 1997, the consumer price index edged up to 5.2 percent.

Public sector finances are another bright spot: government revenues

are on a strong upward trend since 1993, rising from 847 billion CFA in 1994 to 1,348 billion CFA in 1997. The stronger revenue picture, when combined with restraint on the spending side, has resulted in four years of primary surpluses (i.e., receipts minus expenditure, excluding borrowing and debt service). Following a concerted government repayment effort, domestic arrears had been virtually eliminated by the end of 1996. But lapses in controls on spending during 1997 caused delays in IMF approval of the new three-year plan (ESAF) until February-March 1998.

The outlook for the near and medium term in Côte d'Ivoire remains positive. The government hopes to attain double-digit real GDP growth. This goal appears achievable only in a best-case scenario, including continued or enhanced investment flows, additional oil or mineral production, and no drop in world commodity prices. Short of this optimistic scenario, a continuation of 6-7 percent growth for 1999 and 2000 appears likely. Absent a sharp drop in cocoa or coffee prices, there are no looming threats to the country's current boom.

It is important to bear in mind when considering these positive trends that Côte d'Ivoire remains a country confronted by a vast array of developmental problems and challenges: environmental, medical, demographic, educational and economic. Progress on all these fronts will depend on Côte d'Ivoire staying the course on its adjustment policies.

Transportation

Trains run daily between major cities in Côte d'Ivoire.

Air Ivoire serves the country's principal cities. Airfares are very expensive. Tour rates are available for travel to points of interest within the country, and small planes are available for charter. Air travel to neighboring countries is expensive,

heavily booked, and subject to numerous delays. Daily flights can be booked to many European capitals on European or African carriers. Air Afrique has the only direct flight to New York (with a stop in Dakar), twice a week, and offers special fares. Special group fares, between Abidjan and New York are available.

Taxis are plentiful in Abidjan, and metered by law. Fares are moderate, but double after midnight. An extensive bus and "bush-taxi" network operates in and around Abidjan. Buses, which tend to be crowded, are rarely used by Americans, except for some new air-conditioned express buses operating between hotels and the city.

Car rentals can be arranged easily on a daily or weekly basis, but they are fairly expensive.

A personal vehicle is necessary for those on extended assignment in Abidjan. Foreign cars can be shipped to Côte d'Ivoire, but customs clearance procedures should be initiated early. Practically all foreign cars can be purchased locally at favorable prices. Compact cars are preferable because of the high cost of gasoline. Third-party liability insurance, registration, and drivers' licenses are mandatory. Insurance is available locally from the American International Assurance Company, an affiliate of American International Insurance Underwriters, or Les Assurances Conseils.

Automobile makes sold and serviced locally include Fiat, all Japanese, all French and most German cars. American spare parts must be ordered from the U.S., and parts for European cars may have to be ordered from Paris. It is advisable to ship a supply from home before moving to Côte d'Ivoire.

Driving is on the right. The custom of yielding to the car on the right (*priorité à droite*) prevails in the absence of traffic lights or posted stop signs. The high accident rate makes defensive driving necessary.

A national law requires that passengers wear seat belts and that children under 12 yrs. of age ride in the back seat.

Most roads in Abidjan are paved, and macadam roads lead to major towns throughout the Côte d'Ivoire. Secondary roads are laterite and become corrugated after heavy use. Other roads are little more than dirt paths, sometimes heavily rutted and dusty during the dry season, and slippery and treacherous during the rainy season. Occasional floods and washouts on roads outside Abidjan interrupt traffic for several days at a time. Heavy-duty vehicles are essential for trips into the more isolated areas.

Communications

Local telephone service is generally adequate. Direct-dial to most countries is available from home phones but is not recommended due to constant billing errors. It is recommended that travelers obtain an AT&T or MCI calling card since these are the only American calling card plans currently available in Côte d'Ivoire. Internet access is available through local service providers.

Airmail to or from the U.S. takes from one to two weeks. Packages can be sent and received by international mail, but it is time-consuming and involves considerable negotiation and completion of forms in French at the Post Office.

Radio and TV

Despite the increasing availability of satellite television, radio is still the most important medium in Côte d'Ivoire. Government-owned Radio Côte d'Ivoire broadcasts in French and several national languages on two FM frequencies. It also broadcasts a one-hour evening news program in English. The second station, *Frequence II*, plans to broadcast outside of Abidjan its mix of music and talk shows geared to a younger audience.

Radio Nostalgie, affiliated with a French network of the same name, broadcasts a 24-hour stereo mix of music on FM in Abidjan, with regular news headlines in French during the day. It is the most popular station in Abidjan. Radio France Internationale (RFI), which until recently was confined to short-wave, now relays its program of French news and features via a FM transmitter in Abidjan. The British Broadcasting Service (BBC) transmits on FM in Abidjan a mix of its London-based African service in French, some locally produced French language programming and selected world news and focus on Africa programs in English. Libreville, Gabon-based Africa Number 1 heretofore transmitted on short-wave now also transmits its popular French language programming on FM to Abidjan.

Short-wave remains the best vehicle for receiving international news in English. Most of the major international services, including the VOA and BBC, are heard clearly in Abidjan. A multiband set is advised. A 110v radio will require a transformer.

Ivorian television operates on two channels in Abidjan, one of which is seen in many interior towns. The program day generally begins at noon on the main channel, with continuing broadcasts on the weekends and some weekdays. Both channels operate each evening until around 11 pm. Programming consists mainly of news and special events, with reruns of old French and American TV programs and movies (dubbed in French), as well as some local programming and both foreign and domestic cultural programs. In addition, there is a private subscription television service, Canal Horizon, that features sports, current movies, and other programming in French 21 hours a day, as well as TV5, an international consortium that broadcasts programs produced in Francophone countries and regions worldwide. Local videos in both French and (some) English are also available for rent, mostly in the

SECAM and PAL TV formats. To receive local TV broadcasts, as well as to view the wide range of videos available locally and within the American community (or sent from home), a multisystem TV set and VCR are recommended.

Satellite dish receivers are growing in popularity in Côte d'Ivoire, with hundreds installed on houses, apartment buildings, and businesses throughout Abidjan. Many signals, both coded and uncoded, are available in the skies overhead, including two French channels, CNN, BBC, Bop TV, and Worldnet/C-span, and M-NET.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Nine daily and a half-dozen principal newspapers are among the several dozen local French language publications produced in Abidjan. Focusing primarily on local news, most of them represent the views of a political party or party faction, although a few are independent. The dailies draw mainly from the wire services for their international news stories, mostly from Agence France Presse. The largest daily, the government controlled *Fraternite Matin*, offers the full range of news, sports, commentary, and human interest features, plus comic strips. The opposition daily *Notre Voie* offers similar, though more limited, coverage. Independent daily *Le Jour* offers the most balanced political reportage. A number of specialty newspapers and magazines cover fashion, sports, entertainment and the arts, restaurants and what's happening about town.

Several current American and British newspapers and news and specialty magazines, including the *International Herald Tribune*, the international editions of *Time* and *Newsweek*, and *The Economist* are available in Abidjan from bookstores, street kiosks, and from itinerant vendors. All of the major French newspapers and magazines are also available, as are other African and some Spanish, German, Italian, and Lebanese publications.

Subscriptions to U.S. magazines and newspapers arrive by pouch 2-3 weeks after their publication date.

Recently, an English language bookstore, *The Book Shop*, opened carrying a variety of periodicals, children's books, school supplies and various other items and selections that are comparable to U.S. prices. Bring a supply of books or join a book club to receive new books regularly. Book clubs should be notified that you are an overseas member with slow mail service.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Abidjan has the best medical facilities in West Africa. The *Polyclinique Internationale de Ste. Anne Marie (PISAM)*, the hospital used most frequently by the American community, has a 24-hour emergency room, intensive care unit, dialysis, five surgical suites, x-ray and CT scan facilities. Most physicians have trained in France as well as Côte d'Ivoire. The hospital staff includes nearly all the major medical and surgical specialties.

Routine dental care can be found in Abidjan. Dental offices are modern and equipment sterile. There are several orthodontists. However, it is recommended that more elaborate dental work be done prior to arrival.

Eyeglasses and contact lenses are very expensive in Abidjan. It is advisable to bring at least two pairs of glasses and extra contacts and know the source from which more can be ordered.

There are modern pharmacies in Abidjan, but they carry chiefly French brand names. Persons taking medicines chronically should bring sufficient quantities from the U.S. When necessary, prescriptions can be sent to the U.S., but delivery through the mail is often slow. The Health Unit stocks essential medicines for treatment of acute ill-

nesses, emergencies, and some tropical diseases.

Mental health needs are met by the regional psychiatrist. Counseling is available and is confidential. Medications are in limited supply at the Health Unit. Medications taken on a regular basis should be obtained from your psychiatrist/ MD in the U.S.

Preventive Measures

Sub-Saharan Africa has 90% of the world's AIDS cases, 90% of the world's deaths from malaria, and a large portion of the world's deaths from dysentery. However, these problems can be avoided during a prolonged stay in the region. AIDS is contracted only by sexual contact and blood products, not by casual contact, preparing food, or courtesy kissing.

To prevent malaria, which has increased dramatically in the region during the past five years, prophylactic medications are taken routinely. Mefloquine (*Lariam*) taken weekly or doxycycline taken daily are extremely effective in preventing malarial illness. Doxycycline cannot be taken by pregnant women or children under nine years of age. Chloroquine with paludrine provides only about 65% protection and therefore cannot be recommended as a first choice. Mefloquine is started one week (two doses) before arrival and doxycycline is begun one day before arrival. Anti-malarials should be taken for four weeks after leaving the area, along with primaquine (if normal G6PD) to eradicate latent liver forms. Mosquito repellents containing greater than 17% DEET are recommended when outdoors.

All the infectious diarrheas can be avoided by proper food cleansing and water purification. Fresh vegetables must be washed in chlorinated water (one tablespoon 5% Clorox in one gallon of water) or cooked. Abidjan is a very modern city by West African standards, with adequate water and plumbing. Bottled water is also safe to drink.

Because of arising incidence of active tuberculosis, it is recommended that a skin test for tuberculosis (the PPD) be done annually for PPD-negative Americans stationed in Côte d'Ivoire. Persons who convert to a positive PPD, which indicates new tuberculosis infection, are treated with isoniazid for six to nine months. This treatment markedly reduces the risk of developing illness.

Most of the fresh water in Côte d'Ivoire contains schistosomiasis, a parasite which causes insidious problems in bowel and urinary function. For this reason, visitors should never swim in fresh water. The water in the many lagoons along the coast is sufficiently salinated to prevent schistosomiasis.

All West African countries require a yellow fever vaccination. Therefore, it is mandatory to have this vaccination before traveling to the region. In addition, vaccination against meningococcal meningitis, typhoid, hepatitis A and B, as well as the routine childhood vaccinations are recommended. The routine childhood vaccinations are available for the children of families assigned to Abidjan.

Roads in Côte d'Ivoire are some of the best in West Africa. But, as might be expected, good roads bring high speed driving, rush hour congestion, and accidents. It is important to bring car seats for children.

Abidjan is in the tropics. Sunblock should be brought and used liberally. The beaches are beautiful, but surf conditions demand constant vigilance of children. Rip tides and undertows make ocean swimming perilous, and drownings are distressingly common.

Abidjan is an enjoyable city. In spite of the health risks, good health can be maintained while living in Abidjan.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

Vaccination against yellow fever is required to enter Côte d'Ivoire. Ivorian officials generally verify that appropriate inoculations have been obtained before issuing the initial entry visa. No rules cover the entry of cameras, perfume, tobacco, and liquor in accompanying baggage, but only reasonable amounts will be passed without question.

Travel within Côte d'Ivoire is unrestricted. However, the Ivorian Foreign Ministry requests notification whenever official travel of officers on the diplomatic list is contemplated upcountry. Travel to neighboring West African countries invariably requires a visa.

A passport is required. U.S. citizens traveling to Cote d'Ivoire for business or tourism do not require visas for stays of 90 days or less. For longer stays a visa or "carte de sejour" is required (NB: "cartes de sejour" are not issued to children under the age of 16; they are covered under their parents' "carte de sejour"). Travelers may obtain the latest information and details from the Embassy of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, 2424 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 797-0300. There are honorary consulates for Cote d'Ivoire in San Francisco and Detroit. Overseas, inquiries should be made at the nearest Cote d'Ivoire embassy or consulate

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Cote d'Ivoire are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Cote d'Ivoire and obtain updated information on travel and security within Cote d'Ivoire. The U.S. Embassy is located in Abidjan at 5 Rue Jesse Owens, mailing address 01 B.P. 1712, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, telephone (225) 20-21-09-79, consular

fax (225) 20-22-45-23, central fax (225) 20-22-32-59.

Special Note: Outside the American community in Abidjan, little English is spoken. A knowledge of French is essential for shopping, sight-seeing, and conducting business.

Pets

No quarantine or restriction on the importation of pets exists, but a veterinarian's certificate of rabies vaccination dated within 1 year of arrival and a recent certificate of good health should accompany the pet.

Do not schedule the arrival of unaccompanied pets on weekends, holidays, or after 7 pm, as the customs and transit agencies close at 8 pm. Pets arriving after normal working hours remain in the customs cargo shed until the next workday.

Côte d'Ivoire requires the payment of a 10% customs fee, and a 20% added value tax (TVA) on all pets under 6 months old. Taxes are determined by the Côte d'Ivoire Government, based on the value of the pet, or on the bill of sale for the animal.

Firearms and Ammunition

Ivorian regulations on the importation of firearms and ammunition have been undergoing revision for some time.

Indications are that one would be allowed to import firearms and ammunition, but that the paperwork could outweigh any benefits. Ranges and hunting clubs are virtually non-existent.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

Côte d'Ivoire is part of the franc zone. The CFA franc, the official currency of Côte d'Ivoire, is the currency of the Communauté Financière Africaine, a financial grouping of the Francophone African countries. The CFA franc is fully convertible with the French franc at the

rate of 100 CFA francs to 1 French franc. The average exchange rate in December 1999 was about 68 CFA to US \$1.

The metric system is used for all weights and measures.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| May/June | Ascension Day* |
| May/June | Pentecost* |
| May/June | Pentecost Monday* |
| Nov. 15 | National Peace Day |
| Dec. 7 | Independence Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |
| | Tabaski (Id al-Adah)* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

General

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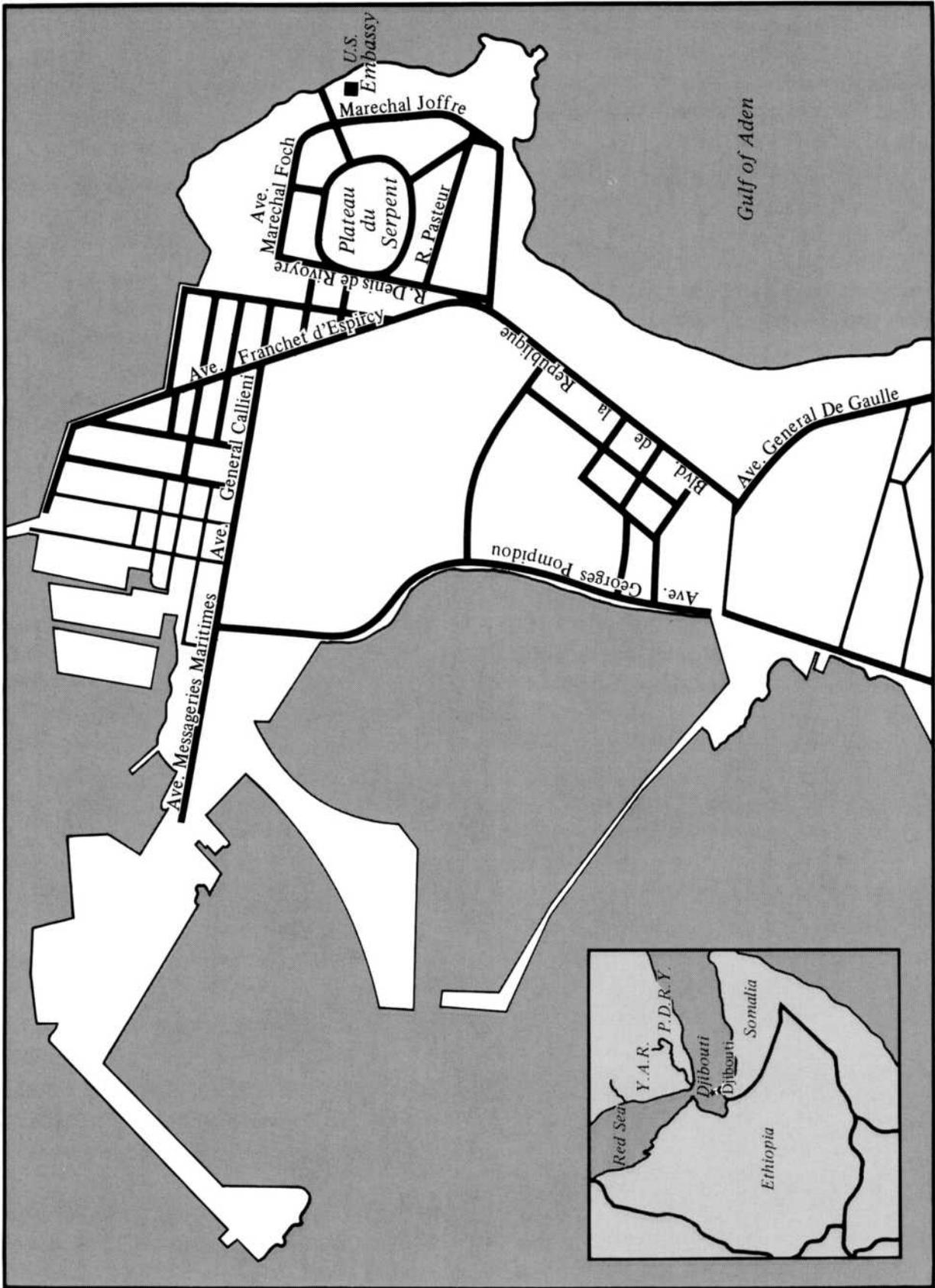
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Djibouti, Djibouti

DJIBOUTI

Republic of Djibouti

Major City:

Djibouti

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated December 1996. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

DJIBOUTI, a tiny city-state tucked between Ethiopia and Somalia, has been one of Africa's most stable and secure nations since gaining its independence from France in 1977. It was known for nearly a century as French Somaliland, and briefly as the French Territory of the Afars and Issas. A large percentage of its population of 560,000 is nomadic, herding in the country's harsh, stony desert and low, barren hills.

Djibouti is a nation with an open society—a crossroads where Africa, the Middle East and, in many ways, Europe meet. Its Afro-Arab culture is spiced with post-colonial French influence. It has been said that Djibouti is “the set from *Casablanca*,

the geography of Death Valley, the cast of *Beau Geste*, and the spirit of a Graham Greene or Joseph Conrad novel.”

MAJOR CITY

Djibouti

The city of Djibouti, capital of the republic and largest city in the country, is built on three coral islands, joined by filled-in causeways, on the Gulf of Aden. The influence is more Arab and Muslim than African, but the people are a mixture of races from Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

Djibouti's town population is about 493,000. A large French colony exists here, and many stores are owned and operated by European merchants. Sizable numbers of Arabs and Yemenis, and some Indians, also have similar businesses in the capital.

The local markets are colorful, but neither large nor clean. Since Djibouti is a port city, almost anything can be found in the stores or markets. Items are imported from India, Thailand, Burma, Taiwan, the People's Republic of China, Eastern and

Western Europe, and the United States.

The architecture is old-style French colonial/tropical, and the spacious, older houses are built for hot weather, with excellent cross ventilation. The newer homes are smaller and many have air conditioning.

Westerners find that living in Djibouti can be comfortable, however quiet the pace. In addition to the United States, other countries are represented in the capital, including the People's Republic of China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Iraq, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen.

Education

French-speaking education is available in French- or Djiboutian-run schools from kindergarten through high school. All curricula follow the French system, and no English-language schools exist. No special educational opportunities, such as universities and museums, are available.

A knowledge of French is essential in Djibouti. Those who speak Arabic or Amharic are able to use those languages in most non-European situations.



Street in Djibouti, Djibouti

© Wolfgang Kaehler/Corbis. Reproduced by permission.

Recreation

The life-style in Djibouti is gentle and informal, although social life can be busy. Activities tend to revolve around home and family, plus boating, beach outings, or safaris to the interior. Some culture shock may be experienced upon arrival, but usually this is temporary. The torrid climate also necessitates a period of adjustment.

The majority of Americans live an outdoor life of tennis, swimming, and snorkeling; some are members of the Cercle Hippique (riding club).

Djibouti has only a few pools, but beaches are plentiful, fairly clean (outside the city proper), and enjoyable. Diving and snorkeling are popular sports; the coral and fish are spectacular. It is important to provide one's own equipment for these activities; a small air compressor for divers is useful, as local ones do not always function properly.

Deep-sea and surf fishing, water-skiing, and wind surfing also are possible. The use of small sailboats is limited to the October-through-May season.

The Club des Cheminots provides judo, karate, and gymnastic classes. The Club Hippique in Ambouli

offers horseback riding, but all equipment should be brought from home as it is expensive locally. Jodhpurs should be washable and lightweight.

Djibouti's landscape offers excellent photography subjects. Permission to photograph people must be obtained beforehand, and this usually requires a monetary payment. Cameras and film are available, but processing must be done in Europe or the U.S.

Bird-watchers find the limited species interesting. From August through May, water birds can be seen on their southward and northward migrations.

Weekend trips can be arranged to the Forest of Day, Lake Assal, Lake Abbe, and Ardoukoba (the volcano which erupted in 1978).

Entertainment

The French Cultural Center sponsors monthly concerts, legitimate theater, dance (ballet and modern), and has an extensive French book and film library. Several open-air cinemas show French-language films.

Almost all entertaining is done at home. Several good restaurants in

the city serve French and Chinese food.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Djibouti is situated in the Horn of Africa on the continent's east coast. It encompasses 8,400 square miles (21,883 square kilometers), and is about the size of Massachusetts. It is bordered on the north and west by Ethiopia, on the south by Somalia, and on the east by the Gulf of Aden. Djibouti shares with Ethiopia and the Republic of Yemen direct access to the strategic strait of Bab el Mandab ("Gate of Tears"), which controls the southern approach to the Red Sea.

The capital city of Djibouti is a verdant oasis in an area of dry watersheds composed of low hills and rough, torrid desert. To the north of the Gulf of Tadjoura, the terrain is more varied, with a large desert region rising to Mount Mousa Ali, at 3,600 feet the highest point in the country. Also to the north is the Forest of Day, a national park on Mount Goda. In the last vestige of the forest which once covered the area, several rare species of plants, trees, and birds may be found. About 80 miles west of the capital is Lake Assal, a unique natural phenomenon over 500 feet below sea level. This salt lake is the lowest point on the African continent, and the second lowest point on earth (after the Dead Sea, which is 1,296 feet below sea level).

In addition to the city of Djibouti, the country has four provincial capitals: **OBOCK**, **TADJOURA**, **DIKHIL**, and **ALI SABIEH**. These centers provide the focal points for the nomads who herd in the country's barren interior.

Because of its peculiar geographical location between the Ethiopian and Yemeni escarpments, Djibouti gets

little precipitation. Occasional rains occur mostly in the hills of the interior, but the average rainfall is only five to 10 inches; some years are rainless.

Djibouti sits astride the East Africa, Red Sea, and Gulf of Aden rift systems, providing a singular environment for studying movements of these three tectonic plates. The location also provides an abundance of earthquake, volcanic, and geothermal activity. More than 600 tremors are recorded every year, but few are strong enough to be felt.

Djibouti's hot season is from May through September, when temperatures range from 100°F to over 120°F. During this period come the hot, sandy winds of the northeastern *Kahm Sin*. The cooler season lasts from October through April, providing refreshing breezes and temperatures that dip into the 80's. Humidity is high throughout the year.

Population

Djibouti has an estimated population of 455,000. Of these, two-thirds live in or around the capital. Unlike most other African countries, the nation is inhabited by only two major cultural groups, the Somali Issas and the Afars. Arabs comprise less than five percent of the population.

Little is known about the area's original inhabitants. Archaeological investigations in the west and north confirm settlement of this zone by Oromo and other Cushitic peoples now dwelling in Ethiopia. The Oromo are thought to have been known to early Greek and Egyptian voyagers in the Red Sea area about the time of Christ. The development of Islamic communities in the lowlands of Cape Horn is well documented, and this area probably provided troops to the many conflicts between the Islamic lowlands and the Christian highlands of Ethiopia.

Nearly all of the geographical names in Djibouti are of Afar origin, suggesting their longtime presence

in the region. Somali ethnic expansion into the Horn has been the subject of many studies, but there is scanty information about the confrontation between the Afars and the Somali groups spreading north into the territory around Djibouti. Historians are certain that the arrival of foreigners (Turks, Egyptians, British, French, and Italians) caused greater population movements in the interior.

Djiboutians are heir to a strong tradition of individuality, independence, and hospitality. They are known for their friendliness to Westerners in their midst. Djibouti City is one of the less crime-prone capitals of Africa.

Government

On May 8, 1977, the people of the French Territory of the Afars and Issas voted overwhelmingly in favor of independence; seven weeks later, on June 27, the Republic of Djibouti was born.

The National Assembly has 65 elected members and, with few exceptions, ministers are chosen from these elected representatives.

A new 1992 constitution provided for multiparty politics. In 1999, Ismail Omar Guellah was elected to a 6 year term as president.

As a result of a defense agreement made with France during the transition from territory to republic, Djibouti hosts some 3,200 French military personnel, including the Foreign Legion. The French also have assumed responsibility for creating a national army. Djibouti's navy and air force are small, but efficient.

The flag of Djibouti consists of blue and green horizontal bands with a white triangle enclosing a red star at the upper left.

Commerce and Industry

Most of the country's commerce centers around the maritime and commercial activities of the Port of Djibouti; the international airport, Djibouti-d'Amboulie; and the railroad, Compagnie du Chemin de Fer Djibouti-Ethiopian, which is the only line serving central and southeastern Ethiopia. The railroad did not function during the Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977-78, but has since reopened. This line handles a significant portion of Ethiopia's import and export trade.

Services and commerce, mainly because of the substantial French military presence in Djibouti, account for most of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The greatest part of the country is desert, with virtually no arable land. Only about 200 acres are under cultivation. Agriculture accounts for only three percent of GDP. Crop production is limited to mostly fruits and vegetables. Djibouti's industrial capacity is limited to a few small-scale enterprises, such as dairy products and mineral-water bottling. Mineral deposits are extremely limited. However, considerable potential exists for using geothermal energy. The country is heavily dependent on foreign aid to finance projects.

The Chambre Internationale de Commerce et d'Industrie is located at place Lagarde, B.P. 84, Djibouti; telephone: 351070.

Transportation

Djibouti is linked to Europe by several Air France flights per week to Paris. Flights are also available to Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa (Ethiopia), Jeddah, Sanaa, Taiz (Yemen), Reunion, Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Dubai, and Cairo.

Slow but inexpensive rail travel is available between Djibouti and Addis Ababa. Rail travel suffers from overcrowding, lack of travel

support infrastructure en route, and the potential for banditry.

Most Americans in the area have private vehicles, which can be imported duty free. Registration is standard, and a driving permit easy to arrange. Traffic moves on the right. The best service facilities are for Toyota, Daihatsu, Isuzu, Peugeot, Renault, and Suzuki. It is advisable to choose a light-colored car (to reflect sunlight) with air-conditioning and complete rustproofing. Local laws require yellow headlights. Standard-drive autos are adequate for city driving; four-wheel-drive vehicles are used only for cross-country trekking. It is an advantage to use diesel fuel because of the high price of gasoline in the country.

In the capital, inexpensive bus and taxi services are available, but are often in poor condition and driven erratically. Taxi fares are controlled, and rates are posted in the vehicles.

Communications

The telephone system in Djibouti City functions reasonably well and is reliable. Long-distance calls are via a satellite system to France. Direct-dial service to the U.S. has recently been made available, although rates are about three times as high as for calls initiated in the U.S. Outside of Djibouti City, there are few telephones. An international radio telephone service connects Djibouti with Europe.

Domestic and international telegraph service usually is dependable. All airmail letters should be sent through U.S. Department of State facilities. Letters from the U.S. can take up to two weeks or longer to reach Djibouti; mail from Djibouti to the U.S. requires about six days for delivery.

Television and radio programs are broadcast by the government station, Radiodiffusion-Télévision de Djibouti (RTD). There are 24 hours of radio and seven hours of television daily; TV news is given in French, Afar, Somali, and Arabic,

and usually is followed by a feature film, nature program, documentary, or sports program. Many expatriates have VCR's. The U.S. Embassy has a video club which purchases current films and keeps a well-stocked library in both VHS and Beta format.

Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) can be received on shortwave radio. A set that operates on both AC and batteries is useful.

Time, *Newsweek*, and the *International Herald Tribune* arrive from Europe. French newspapers, magazines, and books are readily available.

Health

Djibouti has no major infectious diseases. Routine immunizations currently are required for cholera and yellow fever for persons arriving from affected areas. Endemic diseases in the country include extensive polio, tuberculosis, and hepatitis A, but these maladies are due to diet and social circumstances and present little danger to Americans.

Because the tap water is brackish in Djibouti, Americans and Europeans use bottled mineral water for drinking, ice cubes, coffee, and tea. Unpeelable fruits and vegetables should be soaked in a chlorine solution.

Persons arriving here from a temperate climate require adjustment to the intense heat. More rest, fluids, and salt intake are needed; copious amounts of water prevent kidney stones and other medical problems.

Once infected, any wound heals slowly. Bites, scratches, or other skin penetrations require prompt treatment to prevent infection.

Prescription drugs and personal medical supplies for which there is no substitution should be brought to

Djibouti; French pharmacies are adequate, but their supplies differ from those in the U.S. Prescription glasses should be brought in pairs. Strong sunglasses are essential for everyone.

Clothing and Services

Washable, lightweight clothing is the only practical attire for Djibouti. Adequate dry cleaning is available, but expensive. Clothing wears out quickly from frequent washing; shoes also have a short life in the hot climate. A few articles of warmer clothing (sweaters or shawls, a cotton jacket, a tropical suit) are useful for the cooler season or for travel; neighboring Arta, for instance, is cool at an altitude of 1,200 feet. French-made clothing can be bought in the city at high prices.

Informality is the rule in Djibouti. Suits are seldom worn, even for formal evening functions; slacks and sport shirts are standard for men, and cotton dresses and sandals for women. Women find that both long and short style dresses are popular for special functions. Nylon hosiery is never worn. Every family member needs sports clothes and bathing attire, and a hat (either straw or cloth) for protection from the sun.

Djibouti Muslims do not practice widely the custom of *purdah*. The severe restrictions on women's dress and employment opportunities, evident elsewhere in the Arab world, are not observed here. Common sense and good taste are, however, in order.

Children's clothing should be lightweight. Bring a generous supply of underclothes, jeans, long- and short-sleeved polo shirts, and a few sweaters. Small children wear a minimum of clothing during the hottest months, often only shorts. Several pairs of sandals are needed; sneakers or jellies (rubber sandals) are used for swimming and for walking across hot sand. Shoes can be found locally, but are expensive.

Despite all these admonitions, the climate in Djibouti is reasonably comfortable for most of the year (October through May).

Most services are available, although they can be either expensive or rudimentary. In Djibouti City, there are several beauty and barber shops. The best European salon provides good service, but prices are high. Appointments are required.

Tailoring and dressmaking is fair. Dry cleaning is available, but expensive.

Domestic Help

Domestics are not highly trained and their salaries are high by African standards. Night guards will also water gardens while they are on duty.

It is advisable, if possible, to hire a domestic who has worked for other Americans. Frequent supervision in the kitchen and throughout the house is necessary, and personal cleanliness should be stressed. Some families provide towels and soap for their domestics for use before starting the day's work and before serving food.

In addition to salaries, the employer provides the necessary uniforms (white) and pays into the local social security system which includes medical care. All employees are entitled to one month's paid vacation each year. Depending on length of service, either notice or severance pay is required before termination of employment. A fifteen-day trial period is imposed, during which time there is no obligation on the part of the employer or employee.

Domestics should sign for all money received and employers should keep receipts in order to avoid disputes.

All domestics should have medical examinations prior to employment to screen out the possibility of tuberculosis.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

European air connections for Djibouti can be made in Paris, Marseilles, and Nice.

Visas are required. Proof of yellow fever and cholera immunization must be submitted by persons arriving from infected areas.

Pets are not quarantined, but must have valid health certificates and documentation of rabies inoculation. Veterinarian care in Djibouti is intermittent and of varying quality. Dogs are considered filthy by Muslims. It should be well noted that Djiboutians will not touch dogs; few dogs are seen, and no rabies exists in the country.

In the capital, masses in French are conducted at the Roman Catholic Cathedral on Saturday and Sunday evenings (Sunday is a regular workday). English-language Catholic mass is celebrated on alternate Fridays. A French-language Protestant church has Sunday evening services. The Red Sea Mission conducts ecumenical services in English on Sunday mornings. There is no provision for Jewish worship.

The time in Djibouti is Greenwich Mean Time plus three.

The official currency is the Djibouti franc (DF). Among the capital's several banks, all providing good facilities, are: Banque de l'Indochine et de Suez, Mer Rouge; Banque pour le Commerce et l'Industrie, Mer Rouge; the British Bank of the Middle East; Commercial and Savings Bank of Somalia; Bank of Credit and Commerce International; and Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

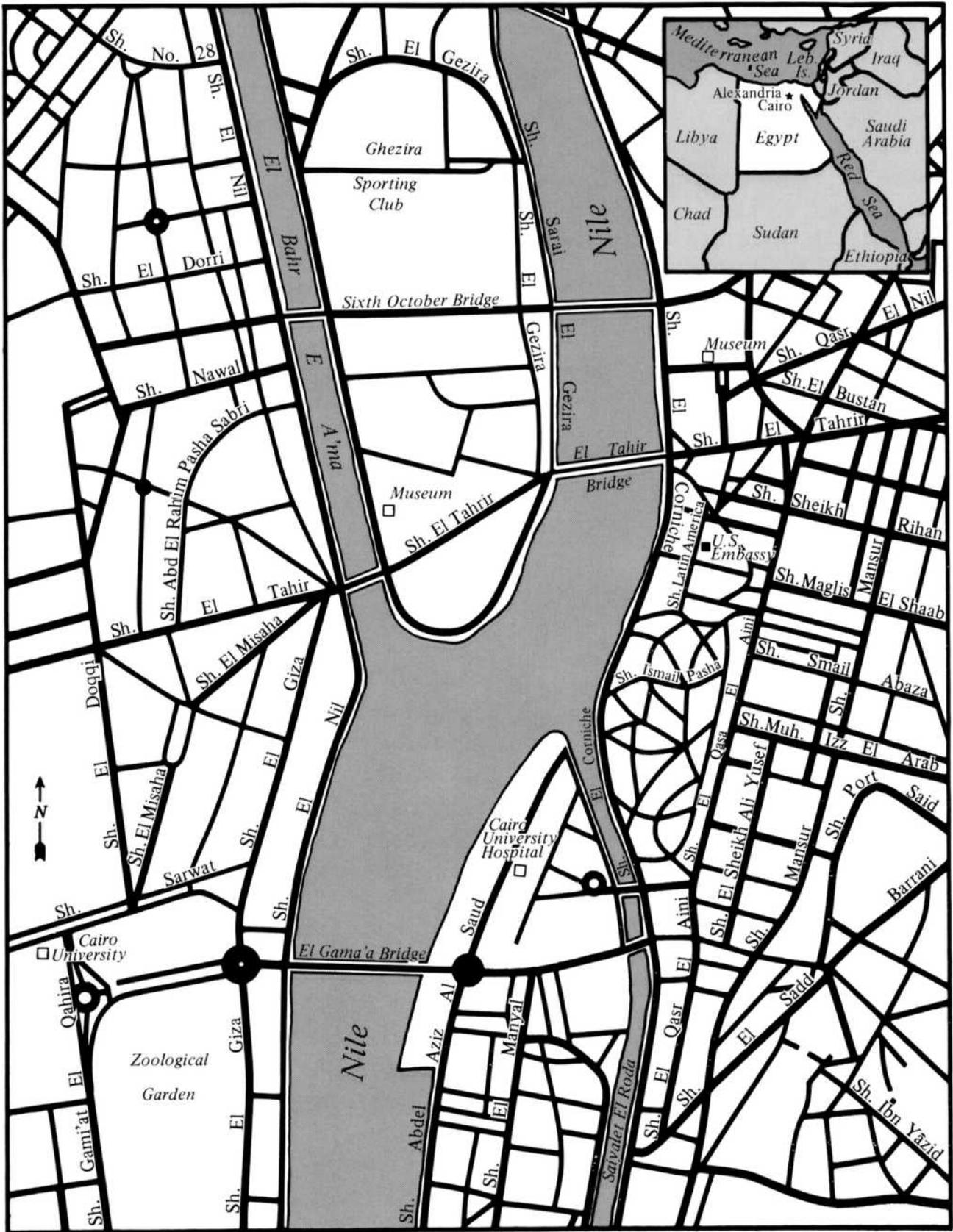
LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1New Year's Day
 - May 1Labor Day
 - June 27 & 28Independence Day
 - Dec. 25Christmas
 -Id al-Adha*
 -Hijra New Year*
 -Mawlid an Nabi*
 -Lailat al-Miraj (Ascension of the Prophet Mohamed)*
 -Ramadan*
 -Id al-Fitr*
- *variable, based on the Islamic calendar

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

- Countries of the World 1993.*
Detroit: Gale Research, 1993.
- Africa South of the Sahara 1992.*
London: Europa Publications, 1991.
- Tholomier, Robert. "Djibouti, New Nation on Africa's Horn."
National Geographic, October 1978.
- Thompson, Virginia and Richard Adloff. *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa.* (trans.) Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1981.



Cairo, Egypt

EGYPT

Arab Republic of Egypt

Major Cities:

Cairo, Alexandria, Aswan

Other Cities:

Abu-simbel, Akhmim, Asyût, Beni Suef, Giza, Idfu, Ismailia, Luxor, Port Said, Suez, Tanta, Zagazig

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated May 1995. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Located at the crossroads of the Middle East and Africa, EGYPT has fascinated travelers for thousands of years. Its stone monuments are scaled to giants. Of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the Giza pyramids alone endure. Superlatives continue to the present: Egypt has the highest dam, the largest textile mill, and the oldest university. Nowhere else are the masterpieces of Islamic art and architecture to be seen as in Cairo, the city of a thousand minarets, great "Mother of the World."

Egypt is the land of motion within the stillness of centuries. The silent white wing of a felucca sail on the ancient Nile co-exists with the

cacophony of the street traffic's seemingly random chaos. The pounding noise of construction, the cries of street vendors, the braying of donkeys, the rhythm of an ever-expanding city is absorbed by the eternal quiet of the desert. The brooding figures there have seen 5,000 years of foreigners come and go, while Egypt remains Egypt. Egypt is a new land built upon layers of history—Pharaonic, Coptic, and Islamic. It is a country with an ancient past that first began to govern itself in 1952. It is a people struggling to merge heritage, tradition, and contemporary life.

Egypt is a country that does not give up its secrets easily. It is an explorer's land, a place to find treasures, whether in spices, jewels, or copper in the bazaar; a restored 17th-century house in Old Cairo; or flowers blooming in the desert after a rain. Rewards for the traveler are rich. For those who stay to "drink the water of the Nile," the rewards are magnificent.

MAJOR CITIES

Cairo

In 2000, Cairo had an estimated population of 10,772,000. The urban

area stretches from Shubra in the north to Helwan in the south; from the Moqattam Hills in the east to Giza in the west. This megalopolis legally encompasses all of the Cairo governorate, most of the Giza governorate, and a small part of the Qalyubia governorate in the north.

Near two of the newest suburbs archeologists have found some of the area's oldest remains. West and south of Maadi, Neolithic communities flourished about 4000 B.C. Heliopolis was once home to an important religious and intellectual center. One of a pair of 22-meters high, pink granite obelisks, dating from the 12th Dynasty reign of Senusert I, circa 1950 B.C., remains. Another pair of obelisks, dating from the reign of Tuthmosis III, of the 18th Dynasty, circa 1450 B.C., were later exported. One now stands in London, the other in Central Park in New York City.

From its seventh century origin, Cairo flourished as the "victorious city" under a series of Moslem rulers. Just one of its masterpieces of Islamic architecture would be the pride of a city, but Cairo has hundreds of outstanding mosques, madrassas (schools), and palaces. Inside the medieval walls, the Khan el-Khalili bazaar flourishes.

The foreign contingent of the population lives and works in many neighborhoods. Garden City, on the east bank of the Nile, where the Embassy is located, borders the modern downtown section, with shops, squares, hotels and markets. The island of Gezira has both Embassy-owned and leased housing in its Zamalek residential area. This island was once restricted to foreigners only, who lived and played by the fields of the Gezira Club.

On the west bank, Mohandessin, Agouza, Dokki and the Giza areas all have Mission residents. These downtown neighborhoods offer the excitement of big city living, with museums, shops and restaurants nearby, as well as proximity to the Embassy.

South, about 8 miles, is the suburb of Maadi, home of Cairo American College, the international school most American children attend. Its shaded streets and local shopping area contrast with Cairo's bustling atmosphere.

Food

Egyptian cuisine features vegetables, fruits, grains and pastas. Locally grown vegetables include potatoes, onions, garlic, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, celery, green beans, beets, carrots, green and red cabbage, spinach, okra, radishes, turnips, eggplant, parsley, dill and mint. Local fruits include bananas, apples, citrus, mangoes, melons, dates, figs, grapes, papayas, strawberries, pears, coconuts, persimmons and pomegranates.

In the more traditional shops, poultry and seafood are sold every day of the week, but red meats are sold only on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. For religious reasons, pork and products containing pork are sold only in special shops. But these customs are not observed in the newer supermarkets and neighborhoods with large foreign populations.



AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

Ancient district, "sayedna el-hussin," Cairo, Egypt

Popular beverages are hot tea, sweetened and often served in a glass, Turkish coffee and carbonated drinks. Local and imported bottled water, both still and sparkling, is available, as are locally produced wine and beer.

Clothing

Men: Slacks and a short-sleeved shirt with tie is common dress during the summer months. Office attire is generally more relaxed than in Washington D.C. A dark suit is commonly worn for dinner parties or other evening functions.

Summer entertaining is frequently outdoors, and casual dress for summer evenings is common. Egyptians do not wear shorts in public. Clothes can be made to order at very reasonable cost. Tailors often stock their own fabrics but will also make clothes from fabric you supply. Several fine shirtmakers are available.

Women: Since Egypt is a Moslem country, discretion should be observed in clothing. Sleeveless and low-cut blouses and dresses, mini-skirts, tank tops and shorts will give offense to most Egyptians and should not be worn in public. You will feel more comfortable in below-the-knee skirts or slacks or pant-

suits and find flat walking shoes more comfortable and safer.

Office clothing is the same as is worn in Washington D.C. Seasonal dresses are appropriate for teas, luncheons, and other daytime functions. Egyptians may wear far more ornate clothes than Americans.

Since the transitional seasons are not clearly defined, warm-weather clothing is suitable from April through October. Cottons and drip-dries are most popular during summer months for comfort. Wools, sweaters and light jackets are worn in winter. Warm dresses, suits, long-sleeved blouses and sweaters are all useful in Cairo. In winter, light-to-medium-weight coats are useful.

Sun hats and caps are worn on the beach and on desert outings. Although locally made handbags are attractive in design and price, shoes, whether readymade or made-to-order, are generally less satisfactory. Open-toe shoes are not advised.

Several boutiques carry ready-made clothing matching U.S. taste and quality expectations, but at expensive prices. Dress-makers are available, but quality varies. The many fine fabric stores in Cairo stock a

good variety of Egyptian cotton and silk.

Children: Cairo American College's dress code for grades 6 to 12 expects students to wear what's appropriate both for a learning institution and the local culture: modest and neat. Specifically prohibited are: cut-offs, torn clothes, shorts shorter than 3" above the bend of the knee, shirts and blouses not covering the shoulders, tank tops and midriffs. Wearing hats and caps in class requires the classroom teacher's approval. Shoes or sandals should be worn at all times and clothing worn in P.E. classes should not be worn in other classes. Final judgment on acceptable appearances is reserved by the College's administration.

Locally manufactured sandals are available and inexpensive.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: Although the availability of supplies is improving greatly, selections are still limited, and imported items are expensive. But most things can be found after a persistent search.

Basic Services: Dry-cleaners, tailors, barbers, hairdressers and shoe repair services are easily found locally while the E-mart offers both laundry and drycleaning. Clothing repairs and reweaving are Cairene specialties.

Religious Activities

Five times a day, from thousands of minarets, muezzins call Moslems to prayer at the mosques, to reaffirm their faith in Islam. But non-Moslems must not enter a mosque during prayer time and should respect the sensitivity to their dress and behavior at all other times. Unless you are specifically invited to enter a neighborhood mosque, only the designated Tourist Sites are accessible to non-Muslims.

Cairo also offers a range of places of worship. The monthly magazine *Egypt Today* lists churches holding services in English.

Education

Cairo American College (CAC), founded in 1945, is a private, co-educational day school serving students from 56 countries in kindergarten through 12th grade in a general, college-prep curriculum.

The address for official correspondence is: Superintendent, Cairo American College, Unit 64900 Box 21, APO AE 09839-4900.

On a campus of 11 acres in the Maadi Digla suburb, kindergarten through 2nd grade classes are housed in low buildings; 3rd, 4th and 5th grades are in a three-story building; grades 6 through 8 are together in a separate structure. Grades 9 through 12 are in the secondary school complex, which includes six science labs, the media center and rooms for computer and business education.

The industrial and the fine arts departments occupy separate buildings.

There is a 600-seat theater, a gymnasium, swimming pool, 400-meter track, soccer field, weight-training area and tennis, volleyball and basketball courts.

The school year runs from mid or late August to early June and includes 175 school days in two semesters and four quarters. Classes are held Sunday through Thursday.

To be eligible for a CAC high school diploma, students must complete 23 units, spending a minimum of four years in high school and their entire senior year at CAC. All the graduation requirements must be satisfied before their 20th birthday.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) program is offered. Students may participate by undertaking the full IB Diploma, taking a package of IB certificates or enrolling in IB courses without the external examinations.

Secondary school students enroll in seven classes daily. The curriculum

includes English, social studies, science, math, physical education, foreign language (Arabic, French, Spanish) and English as a 2nd Language for grades 9 and 10. Electives include music, drama, art, computers, business and industrial arts courses.

Middle school (grades 6, 7 & 8) students enroll in eight classes daily, including English, social studies, science, math, physical education and elective courses in applied, fine and performing arts and foreign languages. English as a 2nd language is also offered.

Elementary school includes kindergarten through 5th grades. The program includes reading and language arts, science, math, social studies, physical education, music art and Arab culture. Foreign languages (Spanish, French or Arabic) are available to grades 3-5 and English as a 2nd language to grades 1-5.

The school buzzes with student activities including language clubs, concerts, plays, art exhibits, a model UN and athletic events. At the high school level, students involved in these various activities make trips to Europe and the Middle East for competitions.

Bus service is available to CAC from most areas of Cairo. Many children living in Maadi ride bicycles to the school but the roads are rough and a heavy-duty model is needed.

CAC requests you have the last school the child attended send transcripts and school records directly to the Office of the Registrar. For seniors, three years of records are required; two, for other grades. You may want to bring an extra copy of these transcripts if you'll be arriving near the beginning of the school year.

Three CAC medical forms also must be completed before admission, including a full report of a physical examination made no more than four months earlier.



Pyramids outside Cairo, Egypt

Courtesy of Arlene Kevonian

Families with children having learning disabilities should carefully weigh the acceptance of an assignment in Cairo. CAC has a limited program for resource-room support but no self-contained classroom services. The school offers a maximum of one period for resource assistance per child per school day. You must confirm directly that they will be able to accept the child, given the learning disability and CAC's facilities. Before deciding, parents should write to the superintendent at the school's address given above and discuss their options with the Office of Overseas Schools in the Department of State.

CAC reserves the right to refuse admittance to any child not meeting its academic standards. Kindergarten students must be 5 years old prior to September 30.

Most textbooks are from U.S. publishers and are furnished by the school. Students must supply notebooks, paper and pencils, available at the school store. Lunch is not provided. A small cafeteria sells snacks and light lunches.

In addition to CAC, there is the U.S.-accredited American International School in Nasr City and other schools organized by French, Ger-

man and British educators. Space availability fluctuates constantly, parents should seek current detailed information. There are often lengthy waiting lists for entrance to the non-American schools, particularly the British School in Zamalek.

Special Educational Opportunities

College Level Courses: The American University in Cairo (AUC) has undergraduate and graduate courses to audit or take for credit. Courses in Islamic Art and Egyptology are popular, as is the master's degree in teaching English as a foreign language. About 1,000 undergraduates pursue degrees in Arabic studies, English and comparative literature, political science/sociology and other fields. Master's degrees include economics, management and sociology/anthropology.

The AUC Center for Adult and Continuing Education has part-time courses for working professionals in computer science, engineering, travel and hotel service, translation and interpretation. A catalog is available from the public relations office in Ewart Hall or AUC's office at 866 United Nations Plaza, New York City, NY 10017. (Enclose \$2.) The University of Maryland's Euro-

pean Division has been offering lower and upper level undergraduate courses since 1989. Five eight-week terms are scheduled per year and credits are transferable. The CLO has up-to-date information and catalogs.

Community Courses: In Maadi, the Community Services Association (CSA) offers a variety of daytime and evening classes and special programs on such subjects as Egyptology, personal development, various hobbies and other interests.

Instruction in art, music and dance is available. Pianos may be rented or purchased but it takes patience to find a good one.

Membership in the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) is tax-deductible and permits you to join their Archaeology Club, which sponsors at least one lecture and tour a month.

The Egyptian Exploration Society, sponsored by the British Council, has bimonthly lectures on ancient Egypt.

Sports

Sports activities include golf, tennis, softball, volleyball, soccer, swimming, horseback riding, squash, jogging, fishing, diving and hunting. For downtown residents there are private clubs. Membership is usually open to foreign residents and waivers and discounts on their annual fees are offered, but they are still relatively expensive.

The Gezira Club in Zamalek has two swimming pools, basketball, tennis and squash courts, a golf course, croquet lawn, a race course and a running track. Next door is a riding club while the Shooting Club in Dokki attracts skeet-shooters.

Several commercial riding stables are located near the Giza pyramids and used by many Embassy employees.

The yacht clubs may arrange for boating adventures but are restau-

rants, primarily. Feluccas can be hired, casually, at many places along the river, for as long as you want. A picnic or sunset cruise for six or eight people is a typical summer activity, with the north wind providing motion and coolness.

Soccer is the national sport with well-attended matches being played every weekend around the city.

The Cairo Divers meet once a month and organize trips to the Red Sea, one of the world's finest diving locations. Instruction in diving is offered through several sources.

Other energetic local groups are the Cairo Rugby Club and the Hash House Harriers, a non-competitive group holding pre-sundown fun runs on Fridays, which are for walkers, too. The Cairo Classic is an annual running and cycling event. *Egypt Today* magazine carries contact numbers in its listings.

Cairo American College has a 25-meter long pool and an active and varied swimming program for all ages, which runs throughout the year. This pool is open to the immediate family of students, at selected hours, for a fee.

CAC has two large playing fields and a children's play-ground. A circular 1/4 mile track is a popular site for jogging after hours and on weekends. Children's activities held on weekends include soccer and Little League baseball for ages 6-13.

The Maadi Club, a private organization, has two pools, croquet, tennis courts, stables and big crowds on weekends.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

In Egypt, one lives in the shadow of the pharaohs, the sultans, the caliphs and the emirs. The legacy they left can be seen today in the great monuments and buildings. A trip gives a unique opportunity to visit some of the outstanding sites of world history. You can go alone, with a guidebook, map and a few words of Arabic or join a group. Without

leaving metropolitan Cairo, you can visit the walls of the citadel Saladin built to withstand the assault of the Crusaders, see medieval houses with harem windows, private gardens, mausoleums, mosques and palaces. You can wander down streets full of tent and saddlemakers or other traditional craftsmen, still at work.

In solitude the visitor can see the petrified forest just outside Maadi or, amidst crowds, spend time at the Zoo or the pyramids and the Sphinx at nearby Giza.

Many archeological sites are within a day's drive: Saqqara, Memphis, Maydoun and Hawara. Two villages, Harania and Kerdassa, are known for their fabrics, rugs and weaving.

With a few restrictions because of security considerations, many areas are accessible by car: Alexandria and other cities in the Delta; the Mediterranean beaches; the Suez Canal cities, Port Said and Ismailia and the Red Sea resort of Hurghada; Fayoum, the "land of roses" and other cities along the River Road to Aswan as well as much of the Sinai.

There are nine oases in the Western Desert. Since 1958 a project for agricultural development has been underway in these natural depression areas. Some are below sea level, all have artesian wells. Already they provide many economic benefits.

Siwa, isolated in the northwest, is famous for its Berber culture, bird migrations, dates, olives, Cleopatra's bath and Alexander's pilgrimage in 331 B.C., when he sought certification of his hereditary relationships with Zeus and Amun, the ram-headed god.

Mediterranean, Sinai and Red Sea resorts are also served by combined flights and bus tours. Luxury boat trips in Upper Egypt between Aswan and Luxor include such famed archaeological sites as Kom

Ombo, Esna, Edfu and Abydos. Abu Simbel is accessible by air and road.

Local travel agents can plan and confirm trips. As prices vary with the seasons and the number of tourists, it is best to plan in advance and keep in touch for last minute changes. All flights must be reconfirmed before the return departure. Hotel reservations and boat charters need to be monitored but not paid in full in advance of your arrival.

Entertainment

Ballets, concerts, plays and dance troupes schedule performances all year. Theatrical productions are held at the Howard Theater, the New Theater and the Children's Theater at AUC. The Cairo Opera House has a year 'round program including touring ballet companies, musical programs, plays and exhibitions at reasonable prices. The Maadi Community Players, the Cairo Players and the Greek Theater Group at AUC all produce plays.

The Government of Egypt's Center for International Cultural Cooperation and the French, Dutch, German, Italian, Spanish and U.S. Cultural Centers all present readings, lectures, concerts, plays, films and exhibits.

Feature films are shown at the American Cultural Center, Ewart Hall of AUC, the Maadi Club and at Maadi House.

A film festival brings a selection of foreign films to local screens each fall. Shown with Arabic subtitles, English-language films dominate the offerings, although many are not new releases.

Clubs throughout the city and at major hotels feature Nubian and Egyptian performers. The shows usually start around 11 p.m.

Cairo has a large number of restaurants, ranging from small, inexpensive, noisy neighborhood places serving local specialties through fast food franchises doing chicken

and hamburgers, frozen yogurt, pizza and doughnuts to the luxury halls with European and Middle Eastern menus. The big hotels contain restaurants with a variety of price levels. River barges offer food with entertainment.

Social Activities

Among Americans: The Maadi House Recreational Center has activities for all ages in a homelike atmosphere. For tots, play groups under the super-vision of volunteers, are available. The garden is a pleasant social center with tennis courts and lawns for quiet repose by the pool. Karaoke nights, videos, exhibits and other events are organized by the manager.

The Women's Association and the Maadi Women's Guild have educational, philanthropic and social programs. The Petroleum Wives Group is open to the community and involved in activities. Cub Scout, Brownie and Girl and Boy Scouts are active.

Special interest groups include: bridge, yoga, the Choral Society and the CAC Parent Teacher Organization. Summer Circus and Awesome Adventures are summer vacation time programs of activities sponsored by CSA for children aged three to 13.

International Contacts: Some groups that meet are the CAC Women's International Club; the American Chamber of Commerce, which has a monthly luncheon; the All Nations Women's Group and the Baladi Association for the Preservation of Nature. The sports-minded can meet members of the international community at clubs and tournaments.

Alexandria

Alexandria (El Iskandariyah), with a population of 3,995,000 in 2000, is the second largest city in the country. It was founded in 331 B.C. by Alexander the Great and, for more than 1,000 years, was the capital of Egypt and a center of Hellenic cul-

ture rivaling even Athens. It was the site of the Pharos Lighthouse, one of the "Seven Wonders of the World", and of the magnificent Library of Alexandria, which housed the greatest collection of ancient times. Founded by Ptolemy I, the library was burned during Julius Caesar's invasion in 48 B.C. St. Mark introduced Christianity into Egypt early in the Christian era, and was martyred in Alexandria in the year 62.

In contrast to Cairo, Alexandria has a more outward looking and cosmopolitan air. It is a leading commercial center, the home of nearly half of Egypt's industry, and its chief port. Industries in Alexandria produce cotton textiles, paper, chocolate, processed foods, asphalt, and oil.

The city is built along 20 miles of low sand dunes between the Mediterranean and Lake Mareotis (Maryut). Its principal commercial area is close to the busy port, and stretches along the eastern harbor. Most Europeans and wealthy Egyptians live east of downtown, within a few blocks on either side of the main boulevard, Avenue Horreya.

With its mild climate and sandy beaches, Alexandria is a favorite summer resort for more than a million visitors each year, the bulk of whom are from within Egypt or the Arabian Peninsula. The weather at that time is pleasant and, although humidity is often high, there is normally a cooling breeze. In winter, homes are cold, but days are frequently sunny and bright. Alexandria receives about eight inches of rain a year, as well as some storms accompanied by strong gales. Flooding and power outages often occur.

Education

The Schutz American School in Alexandria, which attracts students from many parts of the Middle East, provides classes from preschool through grade 12. Founded in 1924 as a Presbyterian school for children of missionaries in the Middle East, it has grown into an independent institution governed by a board

of American and Egyptian directors, and supervised by an American headmaster.

The Schutz faculty and administration is composed mostly of Americans. The school has a capacity of 250 students. In addition to Americans, Schutz accepts foreign students from a variety of diplomatic and foreign business families.

Schutz's two campuses span a total of three acres. There are 20 classrooms, an auditorium/gymnasium, cafeteria, two infirmaries, a 20,000-volume library, tennis court, playing field, two science labs, a computer lab, and swimming pool.

The curriculum offers courses in science, math, English, social studies, and Middle Eastern cultural studies. Courses in Arabic and French are also taught at Schutz. Extracurricular activities include art, music, crafts, sewing, cooking, typing, photography, computer instruction, dance, drama, gymnastics, and various field trips. Schutz has an excellent record on college admissions. The academic year runs from September to June. The school is coeducational. Information on entrance requirements can be obtained by writing to Schutz School, P.O. Box 1000, Alexandria.

Alexandria also has two English-language nursery schools, an English Girls' College, Sacred Heart School, Nasr Boys' School, Victoria College, St. Marc (French), and a German Girl's School, offering primary and secondary education in Arabic and other languages. Few American children are enrolled in these establishments.

Recreation and Entertainment

Alexandria's weather and location on the Mediterranean provide opportunity for a varied sports life for the adventurous and the versatile. The coast around the city is good for rod and reel fishing. During winter, duck shooting is possible on Lakes Mareotis and Edko, and a variety of migratory game birds, quail, turtle dove, sand grouse, and

bustard are found within easy reach of the city, on the fringes of the desert. Snorkeling and swimming are popular. Scuba diving is prevalent, mostly along the Sinai and Red Sea coasts.

Of the several recreational and social clubs in the city, the Alexandria Sporting Club, with almost 30,000 members, is the largest. Here are offered a large swimming pool, golf course, lawn croquet, bowling green, basketball and tennis courts, a gymnasium, physical therapy department, a race course, and a riding school. Another sports club, Smouha, has a golf course and a riding school. The Egyptian Yacht Club provides opportunities for sailing, rowing, swimming, and diving. Water skiing is possible, but rental skis are not available.

The Hunting and Shooting Club at Qait Bay has trap, skeet, and box pigeon shooting several times a week, and will help make arrangements for interested hunters and for its members on the lakes. The Alexandria Club is a popular, private downtown luncheon and supper club. Monthly dinner meetings by the Egyptian-American Friendship Association are held at this site. Membership in all organizations is composed of foreign residents and Egyptians, and annual fees are reasonable, varying slightly among the clubs.

As everywhere in Egypt, Alexandria has antiquities well worth visiting: Pompey's Pillar, a Roman amphitheater at Kom El Dekka, catacombs of Kom al-Shqafa, Al-Shatby Necropolis, the Tombs of Al-Anfushi, the Tombs of Mustafa Kamel, and the exhibits at the excellent Graeco-Roman Museum. A jewelry museum, large antique *souk* (bazaar), an Islamic fortress, historic mosques, and a wide variety of attractive urban architecture contribute to Alexandria's unique Mediterranean flavor.

The fortress of Qait Bay, overlooking the harbor, features an aquarium and a naval museum.

Alexandria also has an attractive zoo and botanical garden.

Memorials of the World War II battle at El Alamein, including cemeteries of the British, German, and Italian troops, are 65 miles west of Alexandria on the coast road. A war museum, with battlefield relics, maps, uniforms, and medals of the combatants, is also there. A well-attended commemoration is held each October.

Alexandria is widely known as a seaside resort. Many Egyptians and foreigners rent houses, apartments, or cabanas in the city, west in Agami and Sidi Abdel Rahman, or east in Montazah and Maamoura.

A number of social and cultural events are held here in winter. Several national cultural centers give language lessons and sponsor art exhibits, film showings, concerts, and guest performances. Every two years, the Fine Arts Museum presents the *Biennale*, a special display of art from Mediterranean countries. The city has some good film theaters. The American Cultural Center also screens and offers programs of interest to Egyptians and Americans.

Summer beach parties are popular among members of the foreign community in Alexandria. Informal dinners, cocktail parties, bridge parties, and other impromptu entertainment are common.

Aswan

Aswan is located in southern Egypt on the right bank of the Nile, about 10 miles north of Lake Nasser. Its 2000 population was estimated at 219,000. Aswan is a popular winter health resort, an administrative and commercial center, and has a huge, fascinating bazaar. There are several industries in Aswan. These include a cement plant, a sugar refinery, a steel plant, and marble quarries.

In ancient times, the city was called Syene or Seveneh, and described in the Bible as the southern limit of

Egypt. It is the site of the ruins of a temple built by Ptolemy Euergetes. Aswan has become an important industrial center since production of hydroelectricity began here in 1960. A chemical fertilizer plant is the largest of the new industries.

The creation of Lake Nasser and the construction of the Aswan High Dam (built 1960-1970, dedicated 1971) required the relocation of 90,000 people and many archaeological treasures. Under the auspices of United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization UNESCO, the Nubian Temples at Abu-Simbel were moved (1963-1968) to a cliff above the old site. In return for financial assistance, the United States was given the Roman Temple of Dendur. It was disassembled, shipped to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and reconstructed.

Elephantine Island is a small piece of land, less than a mile long and a third of a mile at its widest point, situated in the Nile River within viewing distance of Aswan. It is a quiet spot, away from the big-city atmosphere of Cairo, and the perfect place for relaxation, especially from October through April when the weather is excellent. Passage to Elephantine Island is via a free, three-minute trip on one of two hotel ferries shaped like the ancient reed boats used by the pharaohs. The only hotel on the island is the Aswan Oberoi, considered one of the best in Egypt. All 150 rooms have balconies and excellent views, and are comparatively reasonable in price, even in the peak season. There are no cars on the island. The only motorized vehicles are the two vans used by the hotel to transport visitors from the ferry. Nightlife on Elephantine Island is practically nonexistent, although there is a belly dancer at the nightclub. During the day, a *felucca* (lateen-sailed boat) can be rented for a nominal fee to sail as far as the Nile's First Cataract. The island has ruins of temples built in the second century B.C., as well as a small museum which exhibits some of the local antiquities.

OTHER CITIES

The village of **ABU-SIMBEL**, or Ipsambul, is located on the Nile about 20 miles from southern Egypt's border. It is the site of two temples hewn from rock cliffs, and of colossal statues of Ramses II, built during his reign, about 1250 B.C. The temples were raised 200 feet in 1966 to escape the advancing waters of Lake Nasser, which rose with the construction of the Aswan High Dam. UNESCO solicited funds from 52 nations to salvage the treasures. The statues of Ramses II and the temples were cut into 950 blocks, raised, and reassembled farther inland.

On the east bank of the Nile River, **AKHMIM** is almost 250 miles south of Cairo. Once an ancient Theban city, Akhmim now produces silk, sugar, and pottery. The city serves as a center for date, cotton, sugarcane, and cereal processing. Industries such as clothing, brick, and textile manufacturing are represented here. Akhmim has a substantial number of Coptic Christians. The population estimated is over 70,000.

ASYÛT, located on the Nile, about 250 miles south of Cairo, is the largest commercial center in central Egypt. There are several ancient sites in the city, including the remains of a culture dating to 4500 B.C. Today, Asyût is known for its ivory carvings, pottery, and rugs. In addition, there are modern textile mills and a fertilizer plant. A teachers college and a university are located in Asyût. In 1996, the population was approaching 334,000.

BENI SUEF is 68 miles south of Cairo on the Nile River. The city has a marketplace for trading cereals, sugarcane, and cotton. Beni Suef's industries include cotton ginning, textile manufacturing, and flour milling. It is on the main rail line along the Nile. The population was estimated at 172,000 in 1996.

GIZA, also known as El-Giza or Al-Jizah, is a suburb of Cairo, situated

on the left bank of the Nile. With a population of about 2,156,000 in 2000, it is a well-known resort that is also the center of Egypt's motion picture industry. Giza is an agricultural trade and manufacturing hub, producing cotton textiles, cigarettes, and footwear. Other industries produce iron products, wood products, cement, automobile parts, textiles, beer, and footwear. The University of Cairo and a center for research on schistosomiasis are located here. Other educational institutions in Giza include an ophthalmic research center, the Higher School of Applied Arts, and the Academy of the Arabic Language. Giza is best known, however, for the Pyramids and the Great Sphinx, which are located five miles west of the city. Ten miles to the south, a visitor can spend an entire day exploring the Step Pyramid (the first-built before 2000 B.C.) and necropolis in Saqqara (Sakkara). Between Giza and Saqqara lie the ruins of the Fifth Dynasty pyramids of Abu Sir. These can be seen on a three-hour safari by camel or Arabian horse, easily arranged by any hotel or travel agent in the Giza area.

IDFU lies on the west bank of the Nile in the southeastern region, 60 miles north of Aswan. The city is best known for the Temple of Horus, the sky god. Preserved intact, the temple was begun by Ptolemy III Euergetes in 237 B.C. and completed in 57 B.C. Idfu trades dates, cotton, and grain with nearby communities. It is linked to the Cairo-Aswan railway by a bridge across the Nile River.

ISMAILIA (in Arabic, Al Ismā'īlyah is a halfway point on the Suez Canal, 65 miles northeast of Cairo. It is the seat of the Suez Canal administration. Ferdinand de Lesseps, the chief engineer for the construction of the canal, founded the city in 1863 and used it as a base of operations. Part of the population had to be evacuated and resettled elsewhere in Egypt during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, when Israeli forces shelled the city. Today, Ismailia, with a burgeoning population of 254,000 (1996 est.), is an

important commercial and rail center.

LUXOR, whose population was estimated at 1360,500 in 1996, lies on the Nile in central Egypt, about 110 miles north of Aswan and 310 miles south of Cairo. It is situated on part of the site of ancient Thebes. The greatest monument of antiquity in the city is the temple to Amon, built during the reign of Amenhotep III. The temple was altered by succeeding pharaohs, especially by Ramses II, who built many statues to himself on the grounds. The temple was converted to a church in early Christian times; later, a shrine to a revered Muslim was constructed in the great hall. Beginning in 1883, the temple was restored. Other temples and burial grounds are also in the vicinity, including the Valley of the Kings and the famed Tomb of Tutankhamen (King Tut). Luxor is home to numerous churches and mosques. There is also an airport, railway station, and a ferry service. In recent years, a new museum and modern tourist facilities have been constructed.

PORT SAID, or Bur Sa'id, is a Mediterranean port at the entrance of the Suez Canal, just over 100 miles northeast of Cairo. The city was founded in 1859 by the builders of the canal. It is connected to Cairo by a railroad that was completed in 1904. During the Sinai War of 1956, the city was severely damaged by air attacks and invasion by French and British troops. During the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1967 and 1973, Port Said came under Israeli attack, and the harbor was closed to shipping for six years. Major industries include textiles, glass, automobile batteries and tires, watches, china, cosmetics, fishing and salt, which is produced by the commercial evaporation of sea water. Port Said is the fueling point for ships using the Suez Canal. The estimated population was 461,000 in 2000.

The city of **SUEZ** lies at the southern tip of the Suez Canal, about 80 miles east of Cairo. It was a small village throughout most of its history, becoming a major port only

after the completion of the canal in 1869. The economy of the city suffered when the canal was closed during the Arab-Israeli Wars. Heavy damage was incurred in the 1973 war, and Israeli forces occupied parts of the city. Suez (or Al-Suweis), with an approximate population of 417,600 (1996), is a center for restoring and refining oil and for manufacturing petroleum products, paper, and fertilizers. A railroad links the city with Cairo and Ismailia. Suez is a departure point for pilgrims traveling to Mecca.

TANTA is in northern Egypt, in the Nile River Delta about 60 miles north of Cairo. This city of approximately 371,000 (1996 est.) is a cotton-ginning center as well as the main rail hub of the delta. Three annual festivals are held in Tanta in honor of Ahmad al-Badawi, a 13th century Muslim figure, who is buried here in a mosque. Traditionally a center for Arab learning, a branch of Al-Azhar University is located in the city. Tanta University opened in 1972 and another college opened in the early 1980s. Several industries are located in the city. These include cottonseed oil extracting, wool spinning, flour milling, petroleum refining, and the production of pasta and tobacco products.

The city of **ZAGAZIG** is 47 miles north of Cairo on the Nile Delta and the Ismailia Canal. The city, an important road and railway junction, has markets for cotton and grain. It is linked by rail or canal with Nile Delta cities. Zagazig is two miles southeast of the ruins of Bubastis, an ancient city (also called Tell Basta). The population was about 267,300 in 1996.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Arab Republic of Egypt is located in northeast Africa and, with the Sinai Peninsula, extends



Cityscape of Port Suez, Egypt

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

into southwest Asia. It consists of 1,002,000 square kilometers of land. There are three land borders: Israel, Libya, and the Sudan, as well as four water barriers: the Mediterranean Sea, Gulf of Suez, Gulf of Aqaba, and the Red Sea. Most of the country is part of the band of desert stretching from the Atlantic coast of Africa to the Middle East.

Geological changes have produced four distinct physical regions: the Nile River's Valley and Delta, where 95 percent of the population live; the Western Desert, with two-thirds of the country's total land area in barren limestone plateaus and depressions; the Eastern Desert, scored by gullies in rugged hills; and the Sinai Peninsula, geographically a barren part of the Asian Continent, separating slowly from Africa.

Only the Nile Valley and Delta and a few desert oases can support productive agriculture. The date palm is the most prevalent indigenous tree, though frequently seen are: eucalyptus, acacia, sycamore, juniper, jacaranda, and tamarind. Papyrus, once prevalent throughout Egypt, exists now only in botanical gardens.

According to reports written in the first century A.D., seven branches of the Nile ran through the Delta to

the Mediterranean. Since then, nature and man have closed all but two outlets—the Damietta and the Rosetta. These channels are now supplemented by a network of canals, salt marshes, and lakes.

Lower Egypt is the area north of the 30th parallel of latitude, which passes through Cairo and Suez. Upper Egypt is everything south. The highest point in the country, Jebel Katrinah (Mount St. Catherine), is 8,600 feet above sea level—a part of the red-colored Sinai terrain that gave the Red Sea its name. Nearby is Jebel Musa, the legendary site where Moses received the Ten Commandments.

The lowest point, the Qattarah Depression in the Western Desert, drops at places to 132 meters below sea level and covers an area the size of New Jersey.

What rainfall there is falls mostly in Alexandria, where 19 centimeters (about 7½ inches) is the yearly average. Two centimeters. (about ¾ inch) is the usual annual total in Cairo. There are seven regularly scheduled storms, supposedly. A northeasterly, named al-Muknisa, is expected to begin the season on November 20. The others are: al-Kassem, Ras al-Sana, al-Fayda, al-Kabira, al-Ghotas, and al-Karam,

which ends it with 6 days of northwesterly wind and rains beginning on January 27.

From November to April, temperatures range in Cairo from 40° to 65°F and during the hot period, May to October, from 70° to 110°F. The Mediterranean coast is usually 10° cooler, while Upper Egypt is 10° to 20° warmer. Extreme temperatures during both seasons are moderated by the prevailing northerly winds. The exception is the hot, dry southerly Khamsin, named for the number 50 because it lasts about that many days, from April to June. With winds up to 90 miles an hour some years, the resulting sandstorms close down airports and roads.

Population

Egypt's population was probably 2–3 million at the time Napoleon arrived in 1798. In 2000, Egypt's estimated population was 68,494,600. Within its limited habitable areas, more than 3,250 people per square mile make the Nile Valley one of the world's densest populated areas.

Although more than half still live in rural areas, this proportion is decreasing as jobs lure people to the urban centers. Cairo is now the largest city in Africa and the Arab World. The disparity between national resources and this ever-growing population is an obstacle facing the government's drive to raise living standards.

Because of its location, a heterogeneous population, blended from Hamitic-Armenoid and Arab stock, has developed. Today the majority are considered a single people, sharing a common ancestry and culture. Arabic is their common language. Colloquial Cairene is expressive and rich in words of Coptic, European, and Turkish origins. The written language differs from the spoken. Modern standard Arabic, based on the language of the Koran, is heard on radio and TV and in formal speeches. About 94 percent of Egyptians are Moslem, and Islam is the state religion. Most others are

Christian, either Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, or Anglican Protestants. Indigenous minorities include 4–6 million Copts, Nubians, and Bedouin, and a small Jewish community. Coptic has remained the liturgical language of the Coptic Church. Dialects of Arabic include the Bedouin and some Sudanese-Hamitic, spoken in Upper Egypt, and a Berber language.

Public Institutions

In 1952, a group of Egyptian "Free Officers" overthrew the monarchy and exiled King Farouk, who had inherited the throne in 1935 from his father, King Fuad. A republic was established under a Revolutionary Command Council.

The revolution established the first purely Egyptian leadership since Pharaonic times. From the time of Alexander the Great, Egypt had been continuously under various foreign rulers. The "Free Officers" divested their military connections and sought to raise the standard of living while developing both military and economic strength.

In 1958, Egypt merged with Syria and formed the "United Arab Republic." In 1961, Syria separated from this union, but Egypt kept the name until 1971, when it was formally designated the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The Egyptian Constitution provides for a strong executive. Authority is vested in a President elected by the People's Assembly and confirmed by a popular referendum. The President appoints the Prime Minister and Cabinet and may appoint a Vice President. President Hosni Mubarak was re-elected and confirmed for a third 6-year term in 1993.

The legislature is bicameral. The more active house, the People's Assembly, has 448 elected members and 10 appointed by the President. The 210 members of the National Consultative or "Shura" Council are known as the "Upper House." Seventy are appointed, 140 are elected.

The Council's functions are advisory rather than legislative. The governing National Democratic Party was established by President Anwar Sadat in 1978. There are five legal opposition parties, three of which are represented in the Assembly and the Consultative Council.

Egypt's judicial system is based on a combination of French and Islamic legal concepts and methods. The Supreme Court, with presidentially appointed judges, is the highest. Under President Mubarak, the judiciary has strongly maintained its independence from executive intervention. The principles of due process and judicial review are generally observed.

Politically, the government aims to preserve stability by gradually expanding and liberalizing democratic processes while attempting to improve the standard of living and quality of life.

Following the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979, most Arab States broke relations with Egypt. The value of the peace treaty was demonstrated by Egypt's regaining full control of the Sinai Peninsula in 1982 and by the freeing of its resources for development.

The Amman Arab Summit Conference in November 1987 paved the way for other Arab states to restore relations with Egypt and most have now done so. In spring 1989, Egypt was readmitted to the Arab League. Founded in 1948, it has 22 member nations, and covers 14 million square kilometers.

President Mubarak has maintained the peace treaty's commitments to Israel and worked to broaden the overall Arab-Israeli peace process in the Middle East.

Many international organizations maintain headquarters or field offices in Cairo, including CARE, FAO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, Project Hope, Catholic Relief Services, American Field Service International, American Friends of the Middle East, the Ford Founda-

tion, and the Fulbright Commission.

Arts, Science, and Education

Of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, only the pyramids remain, still subject to speculation as to their purpose. The latest theory suggests a correlation between seven of them and the constellation Orion, with the Nile cast as the Milky Way.

Temples such as Karnak, Luxor, Philae and Abu Simbel span 5,000 years of history, beginning with the Pharaonic period 3,000–341 B.C., the Greek period 332–30 B.C. and the Roman and Byzantine period 30 B.C. - A.D. 638, which saw the rise of the Coptic Church. Then the Arab conquest introduced Islam and the Omayyads from Damascus, who remained until A.D. 750, when the Abbasids from Baghdad brought both violent change and their slaves, the Turkish Mamelukes, who would become the rulers and remain until Napoleon invaded in July 1798.

In September 1801, British and Ottoman forces drove the French out, only to come up against Mohammad Ali, an Albanian soldier serving in the Turkish Army. Leading his regiment in a rebellion over their lack of pay, subsequent conquests in Greece, Syria, Sudan, and on the Arabian peninsula led to his eventual control of the entire Ottoman Empire. This was passed on to his son and to his grandson, who sponsored the building of Egypt's railways and the Suez Canal. After them came the Pasha Ismail, who would open the Canal in 1869 and declare independence in 1873, but lose it all in 1879, a victim of foreign debts and international events. The British took control again and remained until 1952 while establishing a constitutional monarchy with an elected king, Fuad I, in 1922.

Each period brought new monuments and changes to the old.

Because of the preserving climate of Egypt and its unchanging nature, these ruins are world renowned. The most famous of all the extant treasures came from the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamen, who had reigned for only 9 years, 1361–1352 B.C. Discovered in A.D. 1922, virtually undisturbed in the Valley of the Kings, these tributes are now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

The cultural capital of the Arab world, Cairo has two dozen museums. The Egyptian, Coptic and Islamic Arts Museums each present an array of masterpieces. More esoteric collections include the geologic, railway and post office, and agricultural, military and carriage museums. Fine art exhibitions are sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and many private organizations. In addition to four art museums, the Ministry administers four historic buildings, in which artists and artisans have studios.

The Cairo Opera House is a part of a \$30 million cultural complex which includes the Museum of Modern Arts. It was opened in 1988 on Gezira Island, 17 years after a fire had destroyed its predecessor in the downtown Opera Square. Egyptian ballet, choir, dance, opera, and symphony performances in the three theaters alternate with offerings by touring companies and a puppet show. The latest season drew about 150,000 people to 462 performances.

The Academy of the Arabic Language and l'Institute d'Egypte, the latter established by the French administration in 1798, are both located in Cairo, as are newer research institutes and specialized libraries spanning all fields.

Egypt has over a dozen state-run universities. Five are in the Cairo area. The oldest university in the world, Al-Azhar, was founded in A.D. 970 in a mosque being built near the then-new eastern wall. It is still the center of Moslem theology.

Ayn Shams University was founded in 1950 in the Zafaran Palace in the Abbasiyya area. It took over a space

vacated by the Egyptian University, which became Cairo University after it was reconstituted with 11 faculties in the Giza area.

The American University in Cairo is a private enterprise, close by the Embassy, on the east side of al-Tahrir Square.

The University of Maryland has an extension program offering a few evening courses in 8-week-long terms and a few shorter term seminars on Egyptian subjects.

Cairo American College, a private, co-educational day school in Maadi, serves students from kindergarten through grade 12 and is covered in detail in the Education section.

Commerce and Industry

The Government of Egypt is in the midst of a major economic reform program, contending with the legacy of a socialist past, when the state controlled internal and external trade and industry. Reforms initially began in the mid-1970's with President Anwar Sadat's "Open Door" policies. The pace of reform quickened in mid-1991 when, by agreements with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the donor nations, Egypt began implementing a comprehensive economic reform and structural adjustment program.

Significant progress in stabilizing the economy and encouraging private initiative has been made. The program is predicated on dismantling the inefficient public sector, with support in the form of international debt relief from the Paris Club donor community as well as substantial financial assistance.

By the end of 1993, the program showed striking results. Foreign reserves (which had been minimal) exceeded \$16 billion, the equivalent of 1½ years of imports. Controlled government spending and new revenue measures reduced the budget deficit from double digits to 4 per-

cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Inflation dropped to 11 percent at the consumer level, and interest rates drifted downward. In recent years the country has seen inflation as low as 3 percent and has experienced annual growth near 5 percent.

Potentially Egypt is a large consumer market. Job creation is minimal for the half-million annual entrants to the labor market and is growing even less rapidly with problems such as material shortages, restrictive labor laws, and insufficient legal protection.

With good resources, a low-cost labor force and an ever-improving infrastructure of communication, transportation, and education, the Government of Egypt has begun to concentrate on such structural reform issues as privatization, deregulation coupled with the imposition of new, free enterprise-oriented regulations and trade/tariff liberalization.

About 29 percent of the labor force works in agriculture, 22 percent in industry and commerce, and 49 percent in services.

While one of the world's leading producers of high-quality, long-staple cotton, Egypt imports cotton for domestic purposes. Other important crops are rice, wheat, corn, cane and beet sugar, citrus fruits, and vegetables of all kinds. Also important are dairy and beef cattle, sheep, and a fishing industry.

Domestic industry ranges from food processing and textiles and light industry, which includes vehicle assembly, to heavy industry, including aluminum and steel. Phosphates, salt, iron, sulfur, gold, manganese and limestone are other natural resources.

Private-sector factories, particularly those in textiles, wearing apparel, foods and other consumer goods, are becoming increasingly important, both domestically and as exporters. The traditional pillars of foreign-exchange revenue have

remained the same for decades: remittances from the 2.5 million Egyptians working abroad, Suez Canal fees, petroleum exports and tourism, which was the top source of foreign exchange until the sector was affected by global economic problems and terrorism.

The remittance from each overseas worker is estimated to amount to 2,000 LE (\$600) annually.

The Suez Canal was opened in 1869, but only since 1957 has it been controlled by Egypt. Ships in transit paid \$1.7 billion in fees in 2001.

In 1913, oil was discovered. The Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation now controls the industry through 200 concession and revenue-sharing agreements covering 125,000 square kilometers. Crude oil reserves are estimated by the Ministry of Petroleum at 4.5 billion barrels. In 1993, the value of petroleum exports reached \$1.8 billion, a 12.5 percent annualized growth rate over 1992.

Natural gas production is increasing as it becomes more widely used. Proven reserves are 15 trillion cubic feet with an equivalent amount estimated to be available. A developing a gas export market aids in current and future economic growth.

Tourists have come to Egypt for eons and the country is well served now by airlines and hotels. An extensive industry has developed to service both the energetic traveller, wanting sun, scuba dives and camel rides and the lethargic, settling for a floating hotel decorated in neo-Victorian fashion, considering Neolithic sites between Sybaritic meals.

Banking reforms now encourage foreign investments and further the goal of privatization.

Egypt is committed to economic cooperation with the U.S. and over 50 U.S. joint venture factories already exist. Others are planned. More than 200 U.S. firms have offices and at least 1,800 others

have agents and distributors. "Free Zones" have been created in Nasr City, Port Said, Suez, Ismailia, Safaga, and Alexandria.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, established in 1983, has become the largest business interest group in the Middle East. It is a branch of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Imports from the U.S. were worth about \$1.2 billion in 2000, down from \$3 billion in 1992.

Egypt's exports to the U.S. were worth \$608 million in 2000, up from recent years.

At the annual Cairo International Fair, the U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service sponsors a Pavilion. It also offers the specialized "Gold Key" appointment/market consultation service and programs to introduce U.S. suppliers to potential customers and representatives.

Major USAID projects have modernized the telephone and power generation sectors, installed water and waste water systems in cities and developed agriculture and villages.

A current project concerns the Aswan High Dam, which has controlled the annual flood of the Nile since 1972 and reclaimed over 1 million acres of land. With 12 turbines, it can produce 2,100 megawatts of electricity a year and perennial irrigation. But it also restricts the downstream passage of crocodiles and the rich soil, which had been distributed to the delta area.

Transportation

Local

Using Cairo's black-and-white taxis effectively requires some basic Arabic phrases and practice as well as a fatalistic attitude. If going to an area you do not know well, a map may help both you and the driver, who won't have one.

During rush hours, a taxi may be shared, reducing an individual's fare. Negotiating the fare is best done before the trip. Although taxis have meters, the official rate is so low, the obligation to pay something realistic is clear. Other variables are your familiarity with the city, the driver's demeanor and the taxi's physical attributes. Its age and size count. While newer, larger taxis command higher fares, the cost is very reasonable, much less than in the U.S.

Persons under 18 years of age are not allowed to drive cars or motorcycles. Accidents involving unlicensed motorcyclists have caused problems in the past and strained relations. Bicycles can be used in the suburbs and may be shipped with household effects. The most practical and safest is a heavy-duty model with a horn, light, and reflectors.

The Cairo Metro is a light rail system, partly underground. One line is now running from al-Marg in the north through the center of the city to Maadi and on to Helwan. Future lines will cross the Nile to Giza and Imbaba and connect Shubra al-Kheima in the north with Salah Salim in the east. Although the Metro may be used between Maadi residences and the offices near el-Tahrir Square and outside of rush hours is perhaps the most relaxing way to get north or south, it has done little to ease traffic congestion. Though the traffic police are becoming more stern with both pedestrians and drivers, the streets remain chaotic. Getting across or along one becomes a test of nerve, wit and patience. Flocks of sheep, donkey carts, broken-down vehicles and horn-blasting buses, trucks, taxis and private cars are just some of the usual obstacles facing drivers and pedestrians. Broken or missing sidewalks encourage most people to walk in the streets. Other difficulties are nonexistent signs or signs written only in Arabic, confusing traffic patterns and undisciplined driving techniques.



Feluccas in the Nile River, Aswan, Egypt

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Regional

Alexandria and Cairo are connected by both the Western Desert Highway, a high-speed toll road and the busier Delta Road. Buses take 31/2 hours, with a rest stop. A non-stop *Turbino* train takes just over 2 hours but the required seat reservations can only be made for the outbound trip. The return trip must be booked at the destination.

Travel by ship from Alexandria to Crete and Athens, Bari, and Venice by Adriatica liners was suspended in spring 1994, when advance bookings failed to materialize. This luxury passenger and car ferry service is expected to resume in more prosperous times.

Air Sinai, Egypt Air and ZAS Airlines serve these domestic destinations: Abu Simbel, Alexandria, Aswan, Hurghada, Luxor, the New Valley development at Kharga Oasis, and Sharm el Sheikh.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

With new equipment going into service, completing local calls is becoming more routine. But in many areas pulse-style telephones are still required and TouchTone signals ignored.

Most large hotels have business centers open to the public. The country code for direct dialing Egypt is 20. The city code for Cairo is 2, for Alexandria, 3.

Radio and TV

The Voice of America and the BBC's World Service programming are carried periodically on a variety of radio frequencies while CNN International, MTV and NBC's Super Channel programming are available 24 hours daily with cable service, available at prices comparable to U.S. rates.

Cairo has three government-controlled TV channels, which operate in color at varying times during the day and evening. Although most programs are in Arabic, newscasts are presented daily in English and French. A satellite ground station transmits live coverage of events from around the world. Some American TV series and old movies are shown in English, with Arabic subtitles.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The E-Mart sells the *Stars and Stripes*, *Federal Times*, and *USA Today* newspapers and a variety of periodicals, ranging from comic books to Foreign Affairs journals, plus paperbacks and travel guides.

The *International Herald Tribune* is available at local outlets 1–4 days after its publication date.

Local newsletters include the *Maadi Messenger*; Cairo American College's monthly, *Cairo-Glyphics* and the *HelioScope*.

Publications in English and other languages are sold at hotels and from street kiosks. *Egypt Today* is a glossy monthly magazine, whose articles, ads and listings may be useful. The bookstores of the American University in Cairo (AUC) carry English-language fiction and non-fiction titles and put them on sale twice a year, including photo books. But prices are high, more like Europe than the U.S. To save money, you may wish to subscribe to magazines and order books via clubs or through a publisher's mail order service.

Many of the books published in the Arab world come from Egypt's major publishing houses. The AUC Press represents Naguib Mahfouz, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988. Born in Cairo in 1911, he was cited for his "Arabic narrative art."

Cairo has four major Arabic-language daily newspapers and two in English: *The Egyptian Mail* and *The Egyptian Gazette*. *The AlAhram Weekly*, an English language offshoot of a major Arabic daily, appears every Thursday.

Libraries

The American Cultural Center at 4 Ahmed Ragheb Street in the Garden City area is a U.S. Information Service facility. The library and the film and video programs are intended to help foreign nationals plan trips to the U.S.

The Development Information Center Library is located at Cairo Center, on the sixth floor of the building where USAID has its offices. Managed by the Program Project Support Directorate, there are more than 9,000 documents in hard copy format and over 80,000 microfiche

works, emphasizing development activities.

The American Research Center's (ARCE) library is close by, at 2 Midan Qasr el-Dubaraji (also known as Simon Bolivar Square). The library of the American University in Cairo has over 100,000 volumes, but not for circulation.

The British Council's library is at 192 Sharia el-Nil, on the west bank of the river, in Agouza. Since economics forced the focus to change from cultural activities to technology tutoring at a fee, public access, acquisitions, and services have been curtailed, and this traditional resource in foreign capitals seems headed for extinction.

Maadi residents may use the libraries of the Cairo American College and the Community Services Association, closer to home.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Emergency and some elective cases can be handled locally. The As-Salam International Hospital on the Corniche el-Nil, between downtown and Maadi, is recommended for emergencies.

While there are many physicians, surgeons, dentists and a variety of medical specialists in Cairo, the quality of care provided varies greatly.

Community Health

Standards of health and cleanliness in Cairo are well below those in the U.S. Tuberculosis, rabies and such waterborne diseases as bacillary dysentery, hepatitis A, and schistosomiasis are prevalent.

Preventive Measures

Staying healthy means taking precautions and considering preventive measures. Cairo's high level of dust and air pollution, worsened by the continuing use of leaded gas, can play havoc with an individual's bronchial system. Persons prone to

asthmatic and respiratory diseases, animal and dust allergies, and hay fever may experience difficulties. Bring medications which work for you and consider getting an air purifier.

The high concentration of airborne particles may lead to eye irritation for those who wear contact lenses. It is prudent to bring a backup pair of regular eye glasses and an extra pair as the opticians are expensive. Limited supplies of contact lens treatments are available.

Flies, mosquitoes, fleas, and other insects are prevalent, but controllable with screened windows and insect repellent. Garbage and trash, often uncollected, attract numerous flies. This fact, combined with inadequate refrigeration, requires careful preparation of meals in the home and discretion in selecting restaurants.

Cairo's water supply is considered safe *only* when it first leaves filtration plants. The distribution system is antiquated and many possibilities for contamination exist. To avoid possible infection, all water should be boiled and filtered, including that used for ice cubes. Water filters are provided in government-owned and -leased housing.

Locally bottled water is generally safe but fresh dairy products are not, because pasteurization is not a uniform process locally. Long-life and powdered milks are sold at some local stores.

All immunizations recommended by the Department of State should be taken prior to arrival. These include typhoid, polio, gamma globulin, tetanus-diphtheria, hepatitis B, yellow fever and the usual childhood vaccinations: measles, mumps and rubella. In addition, the pre-exposure rabies vaccination series (diploid cell immunization) should be taken, if possible, before arrival at post. Meningococcal meningitis vaccine is also recommended.

If you have a medical problem requiring special or long-term medications, bring your own supply.

Traffic accidents are probably the biggest danger you face. Violent crimes are rare but pickpockets, working at the tourist attractions, including the mosques, can cause injuries. Sports-related accidents also happen. Baseball games and horseback riding on rock-strewn trails have produced some serious ones.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Each traveler must have a valid diplomatic or official passport, Egyptian visa and international immunization certificate. Everyone must show evidence of a valid cholera immunization at least five days, but not more than six months, before arrival. Travelers from yellow fever areas must have had yellow fever shots at least eight days before arrival. These rules are enforced and anyone arriving without proper immunization records may be quarantined.

Egypt has no quarantine restrictions for pets. Dogs and cats entering the country must have proof of a valid rabies shot given within the year and a certificate of good health authorized by a licensed veterinarian within the two weeks before arrival. These documents should accompany the pet which, ideally, accompanies you. Ask about preferential airline rates for accompanied pets.

The currency denomination is the Egyptian Pound (marked L.E.), which is comprised of 100 piasters (PT). A piaster contains 10 millemes, which are rarely quoted and physically extinct. The dollar was worth about L.E. 3.84 in January 2001.

Five and ten-piasters coins are in use although change in those amounts is not always given. An old

20-piasters coin is occasionally seen. A new coin, with a distinctive hole in the middle, is beginning to replace the short-lived 25-piaster banknotes. Coins are replacing the 50-piaster and the one-pound banknotes. New fifty and hundred L.E. banknotes have been introduced to accompany the fives, tens and twenties.

In Egypt the metric system of weights and measures is used. Land is measured by the feddan, which is 1.038 acres or 45,215.28 sq. ft. or .4152 hectares. The Nile flows from south to north across 1030 kilometers or 640 miles.

Egypt is in the Greenwich Mean Time +2 hours zone, seven hours ahead of the U.S. Eastern Standard Time zone. Summer time, GMT+3, is observed from May 1st until October 1st.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Jan. 7 | Christmas (Coptic) |
| Mar. 8 | Revolution of Mar. 8 |
| Apr/May | Easter* |
| Apr/May | Sham al Nessim(first day of Spring/ Easter Monday)* |
| Apr. 26 | Sinai Liberation Day |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| June 18 | Evacuation Day |
| July 23 | National Revolution Day |
| Aug. | Wafa'a el Nil (the flooding of the Nile)* |
| Sept. 11/12 | Coptic New Year* |
| Oct. 6 | Armed Forces Day |
| Oct. 24 | Popular Resistance Day |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Id al-Adha* |
| | Muharram* |
| | Mawlid al Nabi* |
| | Waqf al-Arafa* |
| | *variable |

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EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Republic of Equatorial Guinea

Major City:
Malabo

INTRODUCTION

EQUATORIAL GUINEA is a small West-Central African country divided into a mainland region and an island region. People of Equatorial Guinea are warm and friendly. The country has a variety of landscapes from pristine white sand beaches to Vermont-like hills on the continent. Equatorial Guinea is a new country and inhabitants are striving to build a stable nation.

MAJOR CITY

Malabo

The capital of Malabo is a picturesque, small city of 30,000 inhabitants. Spanish architecture predominates, with a lovely view of the ocean from many of the houses. It is a quiet city, with little traffic, and streets which are nearly deserted during the afternoon.

The pace of life is slow, and people seem to have the luxury of being unhurried and able to relax. Malabo is in the process of reconstruction and renovation. Many new houses are under construction but many old houses are falling apart.

A feeling of isolation exists in this small city as well as the inconvenience of not being able to procure many usual and essential commodities. These inconveniences can be overcome with trips to nearby Douala, Cameroon, to make necessary purchases and to enjoy a more varied social life.

Recreation

Swimming may be enjoyed at any of the several scenic beaches along the coast between Malabo and Luba. A good four-wheel-drive vehicle is needed to get to the better beaches. Snorkeling, boating, and fishing are also common pastimes. The continent also has lovely beaches. The water temperature is always pleasant. Soccer is the most popular local sport. Hunters will not find big game on the island.

Mount Malabo National Park affords a panoramic view of the island and Gulf of Guinea on a clear day. A road goes to the top of the mountain, but permission to go there must be granted by the Government. This can take several weeks. The road along the northern half of Bioko Island is also interesting. It goes by many cocoa plantations, small villages, a large palm plantation, a suspension bridge, and many scenic views of the ocean. The town of Moka is high in the mountains of Bioko Island, and has an

Alpine atmosphere. During the growing season, vegetables are available there and local guides can be found for hikes to the volcanic crater lakes. The beaches are the most popular places for foreigners during the weekend. All are within a one-hour drive from Malabo. Insects may make the beaches unpleasant.

It is not possible to take organized tours of the Continental region. The only hotel is in Bata, but the people in the interior have been hospitable to those traveling through. For the more adventuresome, the national ship and private ships make trips to the small island of Annobon. It is a three-day voyage, round trip, with a stay of five to six days on the island. The island is very much a culture in itself, as no currency is used there. There are no hotels, but the people are hospitable and welcome such items as soap, batteries, or garden seeds in exchange for lodging.

It is also possible to tour parts of Cameroon and Gabon while living in Equatorial Guinea.

Entertainment

The Spanish-Guinean Cultural Center in Malabo has art exhibits, movies, programs, and free language instruction for the public. A local movie theater operates and, on special occasions, the theater may

be used for other programs. Malabo has some very lively discos and late evening restaurants. Traditional Guinean dancers often perform on local holidays.

Life in Malabo is informal. The small size of the foreign community makes it easy to get acquainted. Spanish is normally spoken at social events with Guineans and Europeans. Social activities usually include private parties or viewing videotaped movies. A person's social life can be active or quiet, depending on personal preference.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is located in west central Africa and consists of two distinct provinces. The first province is Bioko Island. It is situated in the Atlantic Ocean, about 20 miles west of Cameroon. Rio Muni is a province on the African mainland and is bordered on the north by Cameroon, on the east and south by Gabon, and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean. The provinces of Equatorial Guinea comprise a combined area of 10,832 square miles, slightly larger than Maryland. Bioko Island is a boot-shaped island formed from three extinct volcanoes. Southern parts of the island are steep, rocky and generally undeveloped. In the north, the terrain is less rugged and very fertile due to the presence of volcanic soil deposits. The topography of Rio Muni consists mostly of jungle with a coastal plain rising steeply toward the Gabon border. Interior portions of Rio Muni exhibit a series of valleys separated by low hills. The province is virtually cut in half by the Mbini River. Except for a 12-mile section, the Mbini is unnavigable.

Equatorial Guinea exhibits a tropical climate. Rainfall is very heavy,

especially on Bioko. February through March, however, is usually dry. Humidity and temperatures are high throughout the year, although Rio Muni tends to be drier and cooler than Bioko. Equatorial Guinea periodically experiences violent windstorms.

Population

The estimated population of Equatorial Guinea was approximately 477,800 in 2000. Most Equatorial Guineans are of Bantu origin. The mainland province of Rio Muni has 75 percent of the population. Approximately 90 percent of the province's inhabitants are from the Fang tribe, which is comprised of about 67 clans. Small tribes of Bujebas, Balengues, Ndowes, and Bengas live in coastal areas of Rio Muni.

Nearly 60 percent of Bioko Island's population are from the Bubi ethnic group. Small groups of Fang and Fernandinos, a small Creole community, reside on Bioko.

Prior to 1968, Equatorial Guinea had a large contingent of foreign residents. Many foreigners fled during the brutal Macias regime and did not return. Today, less than 1,000 Europeans and a few hundred other foreigners live and work in Equatorial Guinea. Most Europeans are from Spain, but other foreigners are from Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and Gabon.

Spanish is the country's official language, although Fang and Bubi dialects are also spoken. The vast majority of the population are Roman Catholic. Traditional native religions are also practiced.

In 2001, estimated life expectancy at birth was 53 years for males, 56 years for females.

History

Until the mid-20th century, the provinces of Bioko and Rio Muni had separate histories. Bioko was discovered by the Portuguese

explorer, Fernando Po. The Portuguese maintained control of Bioko Island, formerly known as Fernando Po, until 1778. In that year, Portugal ceded Bioko and Rio Muni to Spain in exchange for Spanish territory in South America.

During the early 1900s, Bioko Island was used by the Spaniards as a trading center and a transfer point for slaves to North and South America. Also, the Spanish established several profitable cocoa plantations. From 1827–1843, Great Britain maintained a naval base on the island. France also established a base there. However, by the late 1800s, the British and French abandoned their positions on Bioko for bases on the African mainland. The Spaniards became the island's primary European inhabitants.

The mainland province of Rio Muni was virtually unexplored until the early 1920s. The Spaniards had expended most of their time and energy developing cocoa plantations and settlements on Bioko. From the 1920s to the 1940s, attempts were made to develop coffee, cocoa, and palm oil plantations in Rio Muni. Also the Spanish government sought to improve health conditions and educational opportunities in the territory.

On July 30, 1959, Spain united the provinces of Bioko and Rio Muni into one colony known as the "Territories of the Gulf of Guinea." Native inhabitants of Rio Muni and Bioko were not pleased and demanded complete independence from Spain. Two political parties, Monalige (Movimiento Nacional de Liberacion de Guinea Ecuatorial) and Idea Popular de Guinea Ecuatorial (IPGE), were created and went into exile in neighboring Cameroon and Gabon. In 1962, representatives of Monalige and the IPGE appeared before the United Nations and presented a series of grievances against Spain's colonial rule. The Spaniards denounced the two groups as communist agitators. However, in an attempt to obtain international sup-

port, Spain enacted the Basic Law in December 1963. The Basic Law granted limited self-government to non-European persons in Bioko and Rio Muni. Also, the country's official name was changed to Equatorial Guinea. Despite these changes, Spain's colonial rule of Equatorial Guinea was nearing its end.

In March 1968, after intense pressure from Monalige, IPGE and the United Nations, Spain announced that it would grant independence to Equatorial Guinea. A convention was held with representatives from the Spanish government and the two opposition parties attending. The delegates, after a series of lengthy negotiations, drafted and approved a constitution. The constitution stated that Equatorial Guinea would be an independent and democratic republic. Presidential elections were held in September 1968. Francisco Macias Nguema defeated Bonofacio Ondo Edu and three other candidates. On October 12, 1968, Equatorial Guinea was granted complete independence from Spain.

Equatorial Guinea's experiment with democracy proved to be short-lived. Shortly after independence, President Macias began to dismantle the country's democratic constitution and instituted a brutal dictatorship. In 1970, Monalige, IPGE and other political parties were banned. In their place, Macias created the Partido Unico Nacional de los Trabajadores (PUNT). PUNT became the country's only legal party and all members were fanatically loyal to Macias. To enforce his policies, Macias established a vicious paramilitary organization. This group, the Juventad en Marcha con Macias, hunted down and executed all suspected political opponents and quelled public dissent. In 1972, Macias named himself President-for-Life. The democratic constitution was formally abolished in 1973 and a new authoritarian constitution enacted. Equatorial Guinea had been plunged into a period of terror and bloodshed.

From 1969–79, the Macias dictatorship was one of the most brutal in the world. Intellectuals, political opponents and their families were ruthlessly hunted down, tortured and executed. Macias suppressed all religious freedom and education was abolished. Up to one-third of the country's 300,000 people were murdered or fled into exile. As skilled citizens and foreigners were killed or left Equatorial Guinea, the country's transportation, health, sanitation, electrical and water systems were devastated by neglect and mismanagement. Macias' reign of terror was finally ended after he was overthrown in a military coup by his nephew, Lt. Col. Obiang Nguema, in August 1979. Macias was captured and executed after a trial supervised by international observers.

Upon coming to power in 1979, Obiang Nguema sought to repair some of the damaged caused by the Macias regime. He released political prisoners and reinstated the freedom of religion and education. He also reestablished diplomatic and economic ties with the outside world, especially Spain. The Spaniards responded by sending massive amounts of financial aid to help rebuild Equatorial Guinea's shattered economy. Obiang Nguema transferred broad governmental powers to a group of military officers who called themselves the Supreme Military Council. Obiang Nguema was named president. Much to the dismay of Equatorial Guineans, political opposition parties were not allowed. In April 1981, an attempt to overthrow the government was unsuccessful. Obiang Nguema responded by arresting 150 civilians, including 30 top army officers. Following the coup attempt, Obiang Nguema decided to draft a new constitution with the help of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. This constitution, which took effect August 15, 1982, provided for the return of a civilian government after a period of seven years. Obiang Nguema was

appointed president for seven more years.

Despite this new constitution, Equatorial Guinea continued to experience political upheaval and repression. Two other military coups were foiled in May 1983 and January 1986. In August 1987, Obiang Nguema authorized the creation of a single government-controlled party, the Democratic Party for Equatorial Guinea (PDGE). This move ended a nine-year ban on political parties and raised the hopes of many that multi-party democracy would be granted soon. In June 1989, the first presidential elections since 1968 were held. Obiang Nguema, running as the sole candidate, received 99 percent of the vote.

To date, Equatorial Guinea remains under the grip of a one-party dictatorship. Although more flexible and less brutal than his predecessor, Obiang Nguema continues to delay the return of true multi-party democracy. In 1990 Amnesty International alleged that prisoners are still being tortured in Equatorial Guinea. Although opposition parties are nominally recognized, they boycotted the November 1993 legislative elections, in which only 20 percent of the electorate voted. Boycotts occurred again in the 1999 legislative elections.

Government

Equatorial Guinea's government is comprised of an executive branch, State Council, and a House of Representatives. The executive branch consists of a president and a prime minister. The president wields tremendous powers. He is granted the ability to create and decree laws, negotiate and ratify treaties, command all military forces, call for elections, and dissolve the House of Representatives. Prime ministers are responsible for all governmental activities apart from foreign affairs and military defense.

The State Council is an 11-member committee which has the power to approve or reject any presidential candidate. Also, the State Council is authorized to control all presidential powers should the president die or become incapacitated.

In 1983, a House of Representatives was created. This 41-member body is elected for a five-year term and convenes twice a year for two-month periods. The House of Representatives serves as an advisor to the State Council and the executive branch.

The flag of Equatorial Guinea consists of three horizontal bands of green (top), white, and red with a blue isosceles triangle on the staff side. In the center of the white band is the country's national emblem. The emblem has six yellow six-pointed stars above a gray shield. Under the shield are the words Unity, Peace, Justice.

Arts, Science, Education

Equatorial Guinea's educational system was nearly destroyed during the Macias dictatorship. The 1982 constitution stated that education must be the country's top priority. All children between the ages of six and 14 are entitled to receive eight years of education at government expense. Primary education begins at age six and lasts for six years. At the age of twelve, students enter another six year period of secondary education. Since 1979, Spain has provided teachers and financial assistance to its former colony.

In 1995, an estimated 79 percent of the population age 15 and over could read and write.

Commerce and Industry

Years of brutal dictatorship, international isolation, and mismanagement virtually destroyed Equatorial Guinea's economy. The country is

dependent on economic aid from other countries, especially Spain. Industry has grown in recent years, due primarily to the discovery of significant oil reserves. Equatorial Guinea has deposits of iron ore, manganese, uranium and titanium. However, most of these deposits lie undeveloped. American, French, and Spanish companies are engaged in oil exploration.

Equatorial Guinea's economy is heavily based on agriculture. Coffee and timber are harvested in Rio Muni, while Bioko has several profitable cocoa plantations. Most of the country's coffee, timber, and cocoa are exported to Spain, Italy, Germany, France, and the Netherlands. Although Equatorial Guinea produces cassava, yams, rice, bananas and palm nuts, foodstuffs must be imported to meet the country's needs. In addition to food, clothing, transport vehicles, machinery and petroleum products are imported from Spain, Italy, France, Cameroon, and the Netherlands.

Transportation

Bioko has a surfaced road that links Malabo, to the western seaport of Luba and the town of Batete. Malabo is also connected by a surfaced road to Bacake Grande in the east. In Rio Muni, a surfaced road links the seaport towns of Bata and Mbini. Another road connects Bata to the eastern town of Ebebiyin and continues into Gabon. Most other roads are in extremely poor condition and are not considered safe for travel. Few taxis are available, although Bioko has a bus service between the cities of Malabo, Luba, and Riaba.

An international airport is located at Malabo. Equatorial Guinea's national airline went out of business in 1990. Since April 1990, Air Afrique Affaires, a privately owned airline, has taken over the country's international and domestic flights indefinitely. Air Afrique Affaires operates a domestic flight between Bata and Malabo. Weekly flights

are available to Nigeria, Gabon, and Cameroon.

There is no rail transportation in Equatorial Guinea, although a weekly boat service between Bata and Malabo is available. The country's deep-water ports are located at Malabo, Luba, and Bata.

Communications

Equatorial Guinea has three radio stations, all of which are government-owned. Africa 2000 broadcasts sports and cultural programs in Spanish. Radio Ecuatorial Bata is a commercial station that broadcasts in Spanish and French. Radio Malabo broadcasts programs in Spanish, French, and local African languages. There is a small television station in Malabo, although service is extremely limited.

Two newspapers are published in Equatorial Guinea. *Poto Poto* is printed in Spanish and Fang. *Ebano* is published in Spanish. Both of these newspapers are available on a regular basis.

Telephone communications are very unreliable and of poor sound quality. The country has limited telex facilities in Malabo and Bata which also serve as an international telegram service. Telegraph rates are very costly.

Clothing and Services

Some fresh tropical fruits (mangoes, pineapple, bananas, papayas), vegetables (tomatoes, lettuce, beans, potatoes, garlic, carrots, greens, onions, cabbage, eggplant, squash), and fresh fish may be purchased in Malabo. Produce is seasonal and is not always available. Many kinds of Western foods are available, but expensive, in Douala, Cameroon, and may be brought back to Malabo. Food in Malabo is often twice as expensive as in either Douala or the U.S. There is little variety and virtu-

ally no selection of brands in Equatorial Guinea.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Equatorial Guinea experienced many years of international isolation, especially during the Macias dictatorship. Consequently, tourism is very undeveloped and most accommodations are rather primitive. Limited hotel space is available in Malabo and Bata. Reservations must be made before arriving in the country. Food is rarely available at the Bata Hotel and, in Malabo, only some of the rooms at the Apartotel Impala are air-conditioned. It is not unusual for electrical service to be interrupted. Therefore, a flashlight, candles and matches are recommended.

Visas must be obtained before entering the country. Two photographs must be submitted to authorities upon arrival. It is important for the traveler to bring extra photographs.

Medical facilities are primitive and there are no dentists or opticians in the country. Cholera and malaria vaccinations are essential while inoculations for typhoid and yellow fever are highly recommended. Malaria suppressants must be taken regularly and travelers should bring a supply of basic medications because Western consumer goods are in short supply. Mold and dampness may exacerbate allergies during the rainy season. Excessive dust in the air during the dry season can aggravate throat or respiratory ailments.

The water in Equatorial Guinea is not safe to drink. Travelers should filter and boil water before drinking, using it for cooking, or making ice. Many travelers bring their own bottled water. All vegetables must be peeled and placed in a disinfecting solution before eating.

Insects abound in Equatorial Guinea. The mosquito is ever present, and 90 percent of the population has malaria. In addition to mosquitoes, there are black flies, house flies, tsetse flies, and "no-seems" (small, almost invisible biting insects). Cockroaches and rodents frequently appear in houses. Small brownish-green lizards live in the houses and yards and are useful in eating flying insects. There is a fly which lays eggs in wet clothing. The eggs hatch and the worm burrows into a person's skin while the clothing is being worn. All clothing and linens must be thoroughly ironed or dried in dryers after washing.

Diseases endemic to Equatorial Guinea include malaria, measles, tuberculosis, and parasitic diseases. Walking barefoot is not wise as infections and worms are easily contracted. Rabies is present and there is a real danger of measles. American expatriates and travelers have maintained good health by drinking ample amounts of liquids, getting plenty of rest, and eating a well-balanced diet, as well as keeping immunizations up to date.

Western dress predominates. Some clothing is available locally, but quality varies and items sold in stores are not always new. Most American expatriates buy clothes on trips or from mail order catalogs. Dust in the dry season and mud in the rainy season necessitate washable clothing, as there are no dry cleaning facilities available. American men usually wear dress shirts and slacks. Long sleeves may be worn to prevent insect bites. Women need washable dresses, skirts, slacks, and blouses. Girls usually wear dresses. Boys wear shirts and shorts in the city. Long-sleeved shirts and pants are recommended for both boys and girls outside Malabo to prevent insect bites. Many children wear rubber thongs, which are readily available.

The Roman Catholic Church is predominant. In Malabo, the Baptist Church has Sunday services and

Sunday school. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church has worship in Spanish in Malabo. A Bahai mission is located in Malabo, and a Presbyterian mission on the continent.

The unit of currency is the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) franc.

The U.S. Embassy in Equatorial Guinea is located at Calle de Los Ministros, Apdo. 597, Malabo; telephone: 24-06.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Jan.1 | New Year's Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| May 25 | OAU Day |
| May/June | Corpus Christi* |
| June 5 | President Obiang's Birthday |
| Aug. 3 | Armed Forces Day |
| Aug. 15 | Constitution Day |
| Oct.12 | Independence Day |
| Nov. 17 | Feast of Santa Isabel |
| Dec. 8 | Immaculate Conception |
| Dec. 10 | Human rights Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |

*variable

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ERITREA

Major City:

Asmara

Other City:

Keren

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2000 for Eritrea. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Eritrea is Africa's newest country, having achieved its de facto independence in 1991 following a 30-year war with neighboring Ethiopia. Its origins are ancient, as evidenced by its many prehistoric archaeological sites and the ruins of Adulis, a port city believed to have been founded by the Greeks in 600 B.C.

From the 1880s to 1991, Eritrea was successively under Italian, British, and Ethiopian rule. The country was federated with Ethiopia in 1952. Over the next 10 years Ethiopia gradually eroded the institu-

tions that gave Eritrea a degree of autonomy, and finally, in 1962 abolished the federation altogether and made Eritrea an Ethiopian province.

These actions led to the three-decade war for independence, in which the Eritrean forces challenged one of Africa's largest armies. The war ended in 1991 when Eritrean forces captured Asmara and the socialist dictatorship of Haile Mariam Mengistu in Addis Ababa collapsed. In 1993, Eritreans overwhelmingly voted for independence in a UN-supervised referendum.

Under a transitional government headed by the former liberation movement, the EPLF, the Eritreans made an impressive start in rebuilding the economy, institutions and infrastructure in 1991. The EPLF formally ended its existence and became the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), Eritrea's only political party. The PFDJ drafted a constitution and issued proclamations pending parliamentary and presidential elections. Plans for a transition to a full democracy have been indefinitely delayed as a result of a border conflict that began in May 1998, which led to renewed fighting with Ethiopia. Tens of thousands of soldiers on both sides have been killed or

wounded, and hundreds of thousands of Eritreans have been internally displaced. In addition, 75,000 Eritreans have been forcibly expelled from Ethiopia. Finally, through an OAU-led mediation effort that included the participation of the U.S. and the E.U., a cessation of hostilities agreement was signed in June 2000. This was followed by the signing of a peace agreement in December 2000.

The 30-year war both helped form and continues to define the Eritrean character. They are a proud, resourceful and determined people, filled with a spirit of self-help and independence. During the independence struggle, fighters (about one-third of them women) taught villagers and one another to read and write, and formed cultural troupes to teach villages about the diverse cultural, religious and ethnic traditions to be found within Eritrea. Indeed, one of Eritrea's greatest achievements has been the creation of a cohesive and tolerant society from such diversity. Eritrea can also boast a government virtually free of corruption, and safe cities where citizens are not afraid to walk the streets at night. Despite their long ordeal, Eritreans have retained a sense of humor and are a remarkably friendly and welcoming people.

MAJOR CITY

Asmara

Clean, safe, unpolluted, a near-perfect climate, interesting architecture and friendly people—all describe Eritrea's capital of Asmara. It is located on a high rocky plateau two miles from a breathtaking escarpment.

The city has a small-town atmosphere where people walk anywhere day or night without fear of harassment. The downtown shopping district along the palm tree-lined main boulevard comes alive at night, when the inevitable cool evening breezes draw residents out for a stroll. There are many small cafes offering cappuccino, fruit juices, snacks, ice cream or beer. A series of traditional markets winds behind the main avenue offering foodstuffs, spices, handmade baskets, furniture, jewelry, religious artifacts and other items for sale.

Asmara escaped serious damage during the war but it suffered from very limited maintenance or expansion of needed infrastructure during the 30-year struggle. Thus, Asmara's charming architecture—essentially unique in Africa though badly deteriorated, survived intact. Asmara is a marvel of modern Italian architecture, reflecting Italy's long colonial and post-colonial presence in the country and in some areas, the city appears like a postcard from 50 years in the past. One particularly fine example is an art deco style gas station in the shape of an airplane.

Food

There is a plenitude of little corner stores in Asmara packed with everything from foodstuffs to batteries to bottled water, cigarettes and beer. In addition, there are large open-air covered markets for vegetables, grains and spices. There are also a number of very good bakeries in town, offering bread,

baguettes, rolls and pita bread, as well as pastries, including chocolate donuts. Homemade ice cream is available in a few restaurants but is not as rich as American ice cream. Brown and whole-grain breads can be ordered and purchased at the Intercontinental Hotel though the bread is extremely expensive by Eritrean standards.

Local fresh produce is inexpensive and easily obtained from corner stores and the downtown markets. Some of the produce is seasonal, however, and there are occasional absences of some items. Almost always available are: onions, potatoes, tomatoes, cabbage, hot peppers, lettuce, chard, garlic and parsley. More seasonal are green beans, eggplant, celery, artichokes, fennel, leeks, radishes, green peppers and cauliflower. Cucumbers are scarce, though the supply is improving. Corn, though seasonally available, is of poor quality. Herbs, other than parsley, are almost never seen on the market. Familiar spices are pretty much limited to chili powder or paste, dried coriander seeds, curry powder, and cumin. Dried ginger is readily available, but fresh ginger is rare.

Bananas, oranges and limes are available throughout the year, but other fresh fruits are seasonal, including tangerines, lemons, grapes, mangoes, papayas, watermelon, cantaloupe, peaches, apples, grapefruit, and various others native to the region, including a delicious cactus fruit high in oxalic acid. Fresh berries are almost never found on the market. Several times a year, one market imports grapes, pears, apples and kiwis. Locally made pasteurized milk, butter, yogurt and cheeses (parmesan, mozzarella) are of good quality and readily available but there can be seasonal shortages. Beef is inexpensive, lean and very good, as are pork, lamb and goat. A wide variety of fresh fish is brought up in refrigerated trucks from the coast several times a week and is available daily from a downtown market

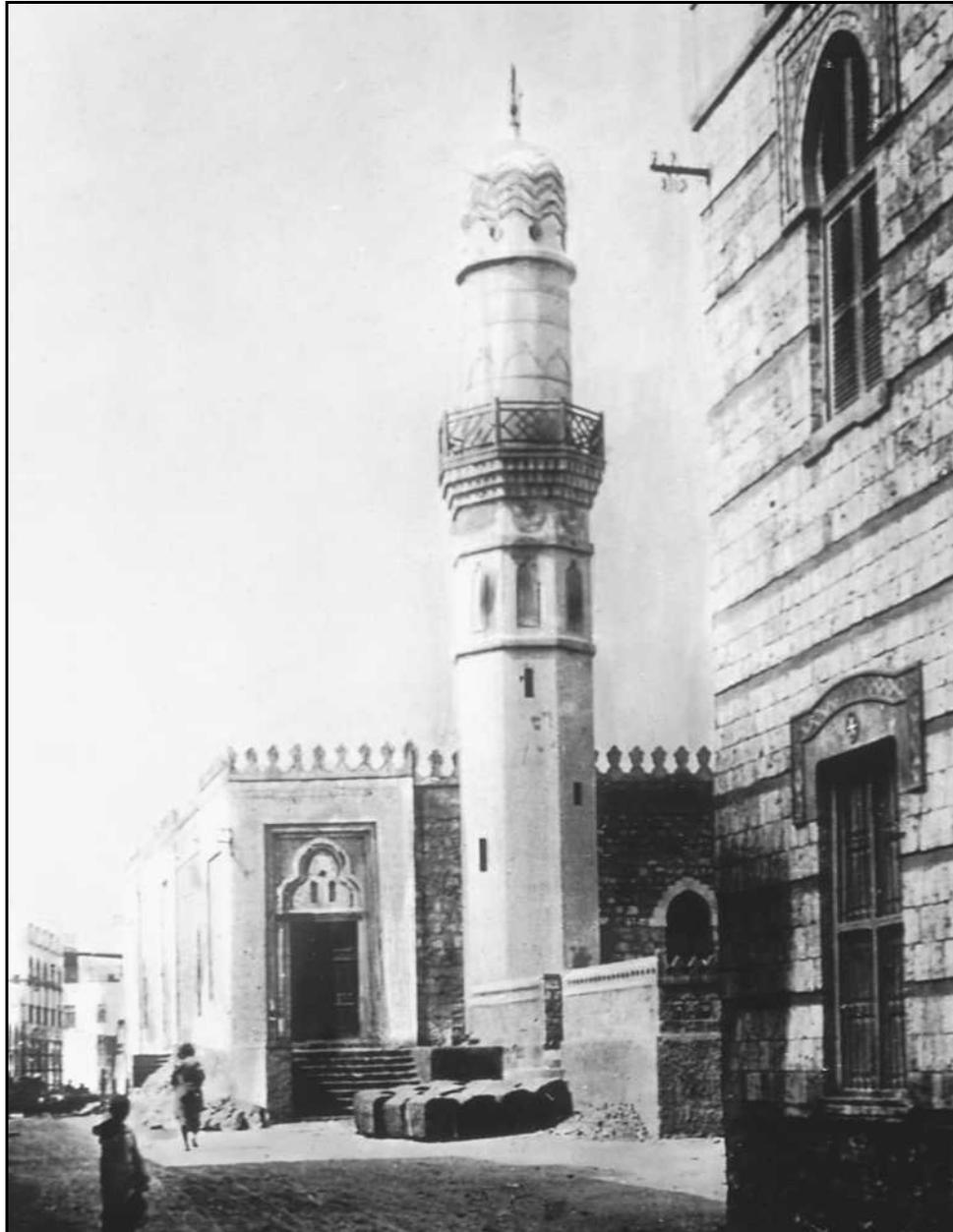
and directly from a facility run by the Ministry of Marine Resources. Locally grown chicken can always be found but is almost always tough. Imported frozen chicken is sold at several downtown stores.

Staples such as flour (white only), rice (several varieties including basmati), sugar (granulated only), salt/pepper, and vegetable and peanut oils are always on the shelves. So too are products reflecting Eritrea's long Italian colonial influence, including olive oil, balsamic vinegar, various prepared pastas, tomato sauce, ketchup, mayonnaise, canned tomatoes, peas, capers, anchovies, tuna, and sardines. Locally produced peanuts and cookies are good and inexpensive, and Italian-packaged cookies and candies are also available. Powdered milk and long-life milk are often found, but there can be shortages. A box of corn flakes, the only cereal presently sold here, is expensive.

Spending time browsing through the various small grocery stores can often be rewarded with surprises such as canned coconut milk, Thai green curry paste, or fresh chestnuts, but supplies of specialty items cannot be counted on.

Coffee beans, ground or whole, are plentiful, as is tea. A local factory produces Coke (classic only), Fanta and tonic water. The local brewery produces a good Western-style lager beer as well as an excellent bottled carbonated water. Plain bottled water is also available. Imported liquor and wine can be bought at a duty-free shop, and a number of stores sell good and relatively inexpensive South African wines. There are two home-brewed alcoholic beverages: meas, a wine made from honey, and suwa, a weak, slightly sour version of beer.

Paper products, cleaning and personal hygiene items are imported and of varying quality, not always available and usually very expensive.



Mosque in Asmara, Eritrea

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Clothing

The climate alone is worth a tour in Asmara. The city's temperature typically ranges from 55°F at night to 75 °F during the day, (a little hotter in the summer and a little cooler at night), and is usually extremely dry. During the day, the weather can feel quite hot in the sun and relatively cool in the shade. In this climate, most people opt for layered clothing. At night, jackets and warm sweaters are often needed. During the

July/August rainy season, rain tends to fall an hour or two a day, usually in the afternoons. Raincoats aren't really necessary, but umbrellas are useful.

Asmara is not considered a particularly formal city in terms of dress. Most invitations are marked "informal." Men usually wear suits or sports jackets at the office and for receptions and dinner, though more casual attire is also often seen.

Women wear dresses or pants for the office, but nicer dresses or pantsuits with heels and stockings are appropriate or more formal events.

For recreation, running errands or just walking around the town, jeans, T-shirts and jogging shoes are just fine. Swimsuits and shorts are needed for trips to the coast. Hats and plenty of sunscreen are recommended for protection against the

powerful sun anywhere in the country.

Children need a good supply of clothes for both warm and cool weather, including pants, long-sleeved shirts, sweaters, sweat-shirts, jackets, sturdy shoes, shorts, socks, warm pajamas, t-shirts, hats, etc.

Try to bring all the clothing necessary for a complete tour, recognizing that supplementary items can be ordered through catalogs. Clothing, fabric and tailors can be found in town, but all tend to be of poor quality. Some shops will custom-make sweaters, vests, shirts and suits, but quality is often a problem. Relatively inexpensive leather items, of varying quality, can be custom made, including shoes, purses, jackets, coats, pants, skirts and backpacks.

Supplies and Services

Most services in Asmara are quite basic, but include bicycle and car repair, quite good dry-cleaning and laundry, film developing, shoe repair and small mending jobs of all types. Hair salons and barbers are extremely basic, though the new Inter-Continental Hotel is planning to open a hair salon soon. In the meantime, "easy care" hairstyles are strongly recommended.

Domestic Help

Domestic help is available to assist with house cleaning, clothes washing and ironing, as well as a range of other duties that can include food shopping, errand running and cooking; these jobs are usually filled by Eritrean women. Most people also hire a full- or part-time gardener. Duties and working hours are negotiated individually with the employee. Salaries are not expensive, about \$90 to \$100 a month for full-time help.

Fine cuisine was not a priority during the 30-year war; cooks thus lack training and are unfamiliar with most spices-as a result, most cooks can produce only basic meals. Since

most domestic help speak and read some English, it would be helpful to bring simple cookbooks containing recipes and pictures of meals that you like.

Religious Activities

Churches found in Eritrea are Orthodox Christian, Moslem, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and Greek Orthodox. There is a very beautiful small synagogue maintained by the last Jewish family in Asmara, but there is no rabbi. Some churches offer weekly services in English.

Education

There is a small Asmara International Community School (AICS) offering instruction in English for grades K-7 and a half-day preschool.

There is also an Italian school for preschool through high school students. All instruction is in Italian though English courses are offered. Anyone interested in placing a child in the school should contact the school directly to determine what is necessary for placement, including documents and health records. The elementary school address is: Michelangelo Buonarotti, PO Box 5230, Asmara, Eritrea. Telephone: (291 1) 12-57-98. For the high school, write to Alessandro Volta and Guglielmo Marconi, PO Box 5554, Asmara, Eritrea. Telephone: 291 1 12 05 05.

Special Educational Opportunities

Other educational opportunities in Asmara are limited. It is the University of Asmara's policy not to admit foreigners at this time. The Alliance Française offers classes in French and Tigrinya. The Italian Embassy sponsors Italian classes, and private tutors in Tigrinya can be found.

Sports

Eritreans are quite enthusiastic cyclists and hold periodic bicycle races. The more adventurous challenge themselves on strenuous trips to nearby towns or the spectacular

120 km five-hour bike trip down the escarpment to the port of Massawa. Be sure to bring along extra tire tubes or repair kits.

Hiking in the countryside outside Asmara is a popular activity and a good way to get some exercise while seeing some very beautiful landscapes. One exceptional hike is a zig-zag dirt trail straight up a very tall mountain, on the top of which is a monastery (sorry, only men allowed). No matter where the hike, however, it is absolutely necessary to keep to well-established trails used by people and animals. Though Eritrea has made a start on demining, much of the countryside is still mined. Jogging is not a particularly popular sport with Eritreans, but male and female joggers can run anywhere in town without fear of harassment. Soccer is the most popular team sport. There are a few playgrounds with swings and slides.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The coral reefs around the 350 or so islands off the port of Massawa offer superb snorkeling and scuba diving. Many of the sites are totally unexplored and others haven't been seen for 30 years or more. Since there is only one basic hotel on one of the islands, most of these snorkeling/diving trips involve camping out for several days. Fishing is also excellent, including tuna, kingfish, jackfish, and grouper.

Travel by road is steadily improving, although there are still many unpaved roads. Exploring the countryside requires a four-wheel-drive vehicle, and in some areas it might be necessary to take along extra food, plenty of water, gasoline and spare parts. Given the many winding roads, anyone prone to motion sickness should take preventive medication. As with hiking, it is necessary to use common sense, especially in more remote areas. Guides who speak Tigrinya are useful, especially in finding obscure or remote sites. Any traveler should, at a minimum consult with local

inhabitants in advance on the conditions of the roads and about the potential existence of mines.

The port of Massawa, badly damaged by heavy fighting during the war, is rapidly being repaired. The old town's architecture reflects its Arab and Turkish influence. The city's hotels, both in town and on the coast north of town, are basic, but improvements are in the works. The beach, with very shallow water, can be a disappointment. Massawa's Salaam restaurant, in the old city, is extremely popular with Americans. Its specialties, in fact the only things on the menu, are fish and bread, which are cooked, Yemeni style, by throwing them into a hole in a very hot clay oven. The fish exterior is blackened but inside it is moist, succulent, and tasty. The bread, a cross between pita and pan, is equally good. All of this is eaten at rustic tables in the dirt street outside the restaurant. Assab, Eritrea's other port, is a 1-hour flight from Asmara or a difficult 2-day drive south of Massawa, although part of the road has been paved, almost to the ruins of the port of Adulis, believed to have been established by the Greeks in 600 BC. It later became the seaport of the ancient Axumite kingdom although today the sea is several kilometers distant. Though it is easy to see that this was once a major city, only a small portion of the site has been excavated.

Keren is a very beautiful 2-hour drive north of Asmara. It has long been a crossroads between the Christian highlands and the Moslem lowlands. There are pleasant outdoor cafes, and the local market is a good place to buy gold and silver jewelry at better prices than in Asmara.

North of Keren is the small town of Afabet, famous as the site of a battle that was one of the turning points of the war. Near here, an outnumbered Eritrean force in one battle captured 70 Ethiopian tanks and killed or captured thousands of Ethiopian

soldiers. The road along here is still littered with burned-out tanks, trucks and jeeps.

Further north still is the town of Nakfa, dear to all Eritreans as the redoubt for the EPLF in the bleakest years of the war. In the mountains around Nakfa are a hospital, schools and other buildings constructed deep inside mountains and many miles of deep trenches. Completely destroyed during the war, the town is being rebuilt, including a new hotel. In recognition of the area's importance to the struggle, the Eritrean currency is named the Nakfa.

Among other places of interest are Fil Fil, a mountainous, green, and forested area 2 hours northeast of Asmara, which offers a nice contrast to the dry landscapes of most of Eritrea; and Adi Keyih, about 2 hours southeast of Asmara, the site of a 2000-year-old Axumite dam, and an Axumite city dating from the 6th to the 9th century A.D.

The border town of Axum is a political and religious site that dates as far back as the first century A.D. Among its attractions are tall obelisks, one, at 76 feet, still standing; a stone throne; a reservoir carved in rock; an underground tomb; and an ancient Orthodox Church. Many Orthodox Christians believe Axum to be the final resting place of the Ark of the Covenant.

Entertainment

There are only two cinemas in Asmara, for the most part showing films several years old or more. For movie entertainment, most families rely on their VCR, making use of the videotape stores in town, two of which carry surprisingly up-to-date English-language selections. Other cultural activities are offered by the Alliance Française, the Italian Club and the British Council. The Alliance Française and the British Council also have an excellent collection of films and television shows on videotape for borrowing.

The restaurant scene has recently shown vast improvement. Just a few years ago, other than a good Chinese restaurant, the China Star, the only options were places with limited menus of Eritrean cuisine, simple grilled meats and fishes, and substandard versions of Italian dishes such as pizza or spaghetti. The Chinese restaurant remains open, but has been supplemented by restaurants serving everything from European to Middle Eastern food. The Inter-Continental Hotel offers a pastry/sandwich shop and two restaurants, including an excellent Italian restaurant, as well as an Irish pub. The Irish Pub and a couple of restaurants also offer disco music and dancing, but the places usually don't start jumping until around midnight. People also frequently entertain with dinners and parties at home.

Social Activities

The Eritrean arts scene is slowly rebuilding after the war. There are occasional exhibits of work by Eritrean artists, but most painting, perhaps understandably, has war-related themes. There are also quite good artisans, making pottery, basketry, and gold and silver jewelry. Eritrean traditional music, akin to Arabic music, is most often heard at weddings and ceremonial occasions. There are more modern musicians popular with young Eritreans, but concerts are rare. This music, as well as Western music, is heard in Asmara's discos.

OTHER CITY

The town of **KEREN** is the regional capital of the Anseba Region and one of the major agricultural centers of Eritrea, particularly for fruits and vegetables. Banana plantations are nearby and many dairy herds supply the town's cheese factory. In the town market, you can purchase fresh milk, butter and cream. There are also a wood market and, once a week, a livestock

market where sheep, goats, camels and donkeys are sold.

The majority of the 60,000 residents are Muslim, but the town also contains many examples of its Italian and Ethiopian heritage in the architecture of public buildings and churches. The name Keren means highland, which reflects the town's location on a plateau surrounded by mountains. Tigu, an Ethiopian fort, sits on a rise to the northeast of town. A British War Cemetery and the Italian Cemetery serve as a WWII memorial, since the town was the site of heavy fighting between the British and the Italians.

Near the town market is the shrine of St Maryam Dearit, an ancient baobab tree that locals believe has powers for fertility. Traditionally, women will brew coffee in the shade of the tree, and if a passing traveler accepts a cup, they will be blessed with children.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

About the size of Pennsylvania, Eritrea is a country of stark and dramatic landscapes from its 630-mile Red Sea coastline to its high craggy mountains to the desolate Danakil Depression. To the north and west is the Sudan, with Ethiopia and Djibouti to the south. The capital of Asmara, at 7,600 feet above sea level, is located on a high plateau in the center of the country. The descent from Asmara to the port of Massawa is one of the most spectacular drives in the world, taking nearly three hours over hairpin curves to cover the 65 miles to the coast. Off the coast are some 350 islands, most of them uninhabited and little explored. The coral reefs which surround many of the islands were left undisturbed by tourism and over-fishing during the long war, and are among the healthiest

in the world. The country's lowest point is minus 75 meters, near Dalul in the Danakil Depression; its highest is Mount Soira at 3,018 meters. Only about 12% of the land is arable.

The climate in the central highlands, including Asmara, is near perfection, usually in the 70s or 80s during the day, cooling off to the 50s at night. There is little humidity and it seldom rains except during the July/August rainy season when daily afternoon showers are the norm. Asmara receives about 21 inches of rain each year. April, May and June are the warmest months on the plateau, with the cooler season stretching from November to March.

Temperatures in the lowlands can be scorchingly hot, typically ranging from 105°F to 120°F, sometimes more, in August. Along the coast, including in the port cities of Massawa and Assab, high humidity often accompanies the heat. Winter highs here are around 90, with evening temperatures in the '70s.

The country has been sadly deforested by the war, and by the need for heating and cooking fuel, and feed for livestock. Some attempts have been made to reforest but with varying success. Almost any kind of flower seems to do well in the highlands, but much of the lowlands is limited to various acacias, scrub and cactus plants. Wildlife includes an impressive array of birds, including raptors and water birds, some of which are migrants and some of which are unique only to Eritrea and little documented. Wild animals include baboons, monkeys, ostriches, hyenas, and gazelles. The hope was that the end of the liberation struggle would see traditional wildlife return to the region, but the renewed fighting is a deterrent. There is the occasional report of a leopard sighting, and elephants have been sighted recently in the west of the country.

Population

Eritrea's population is estimated at close to 3,500,000, the numbers swollen recently with some 75,000 people expelled from Ethiopia following the renewal of hostilities. In addition, the UNHCR has registered 150,000 Eritrean refugees in Sudan for voluntary repatriation following the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries in January 2000. However, more than one million Eritreans were displaced as a result of the war with Ethiopia and of drought. Approximately 400,000 people live in the capital; the next largest cities are: Keren (75,000), Massawa (24,000), and Assab (21,000).

The people are composed of nine major tribal and ethnic groups: Tigrinya (50%), Tigre and Kunama (40%), Afar (4%), Saho (3%), and the remaining 3% are made up of Begia, Bilen, Nara, and Rashaida. Each has its own language, mode of dress and cultural traditions. About half the country is Moslem, living primarily in the lowlands. The other half, mostly highlanders, is Christian, primarily Orthodox Christian and Roman Catholic, although there are small Protestant communities.

The government's official working languages are Tigrinya and Arabic, though most officials speak English, and a great deal of diplomatic and commercial business is conducted in English. English is also the language of instruction in public schools from the 6th grade onward, including at the University of Asmara. Ge'ez, an ancestor of Tigrinya, Amharic, and Tigre, survives as the liturgical language of the Orthodox Church. Western dress predominates in the capital, especially for men and young people. Women can often be seen in the traditional dress of white cotton with a colorful border. The traditional dress for men, also white, is seldom used in Asmara except for ceremonial occasions.

The cuisine will be familiar to anyone who has eaten at an Ethiopian

or Eritrean restaurant. The staple is zigny, a highly spiced stew containing mutton, beef, goat, or sometimes chicken.

The stew is ladled into the center of a large flat fermented bread called injera. Diners then use their hands to break off pieces of the bread and scoop up bite-size pieces of the zigny. Italian dishes, particularly pastas and pizza, are also readily available. Many Orthodox Christians, as well as Moslems, do not eat pork. Orthodox Church members abstain from meat and animal products two days a week, as well as for long periods leading up to Christmas and Easter.

There are no family names in Eritrea. A child is given a "first" name, and then takes the name of his father as a "last" name. Women do not change their names after marriage, but they do change their title from Woizerit (Miss) to Woizero (Mrs.). Men are addressed as Ato (Mr.).

Although the Western calendar is used for business and official purposes, it co-exists with both the Moslem and traditional Orthodox calendars. The latter runs eight years behind the Western calendar and the year begins on September 11; it has twelve 30-day months, plus an extra "month" of 5 or 6 days. Days of the week are identical to Western usage.

Public Institutions

Eritrea began statehood in 1993 under a provisional government, which created the Constituent Assembly, charged with drafting a constitution and laws. After the successful referendum for independence in 1993, the Provisional Government gave way to the Government of the State of Eritrea. After ratification of the Constitution in 1997, the Constituent Assembly gave way to a National Assembly, with members either appointed or elected; it was established as one of three independent

branches of government and its initial tasks were to create an election code to be followed by Parliamentary and Presidential elections. However, due to the conflict with Ethiopia, elections have been postponed indefinitely, as has full implementation of the Constitution.

The legislative branch of the transitional government, called the National Assembly, is the highest legislative authority in Ethiopia. The National Assembly has met only sporadically since being created but, when fully established, it will be responsible for national policies, enactment of laws and their implementation, as well as approving the budget. It chose Isaias Afwerki as its President with 95% of the vote. The Assembly is a unicameral body, its 150 members include:

- 75 representatives appointed from the People's Front for Democracy and Justice. The PFDJ is the political party that succeeded the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which waged the successful struggle for independence;
- 60 elected members of the constituent assembly; and
- 15 people chosen from the Eritrean Diaspora.

The President serves as both chief of state and head of government under the transitional government. As such, he is head of both the National Assembly and the State Council, a collective executive authority akin to a Cabinet. The President is responsible for nominating people to head the various Ministries and Commissions and Agencies, which make up the Executive Branch, subject to the approval of the National Assembly. President Isaias is also Chairman of the PFDJ-the only political party recognized by the Government, though other interests groups do exist.

When the Constitution is fully implemented, the Judicial Branch will operate independently of both

the legislative and executive branches of government; there is already in place a court system extending from the village through the district, provincial and national levels. The justice system consists of a Supreme Court, 10 provincial courts and 29 district courts.

Arts, Science, and Education

The Eritrean education system, having suffered a severe decline during the war, was given a top priority by the new Eritrean Government. School attendance is compulsory and free through grade seven. At the primary and secondary school levels, 331 new schools were constructed between 1991 and 1998, and another 356 were rehabilitated. The number of teachers increased by 33%. Despite this achievement, as of 1997, only 29% of elementary-age children, 8% of junior high school, and 10% of high school students were attending school. The overall literacy rate is only about 30% for men and 15% for women.

University-level education began in Eritrea with the 1958 establishment of the Santa Famiglia, a small private Catholic school administered and largely staffed by Italian Sisters. In 1967, the school was renamed as the University of Asmara, but it remained privately funded and never resembled a national university. In 1990, Ethiopia moved the university (students, staff and materials) to Ethiopia.

Thus, at liberation, Eritrea had no university in any real sense of the word. The University of Asmara now enrolls about 4,350 students and is crucial to the economic development of the country. As such, its priorities are training to produce secondary school teachers, government and economic development workers, and academics to eventually fill the university's faculty needs. Another goal is expansion of the university to include advanced degree programs.

Commerce and Industry

Considerable remittances from Eritreans living abroad mask the fact that Eritrea is one of the world's poorest countries. Its economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture with nearly 80% of the population involved in farming and herding. Per capita income is \$240 a year (1999 estimate). The population growth rate is over three per cent.

At independence, Eritrea faced the problems of being a small, desperately poor African country with few natural resources; a workforce trained for little other than warfare and traditional agriculture; outmoded light industries; poor infrastructure, with roads, communications and whole towns destroyed by the war.

Eritrea began to tackle these problems with all the determination it had exhibited in winning its independence. Though the 1998 resumption of hostilities with Ethiopia forced Eritrea to put many of its plans on hold-and will create new ones-it had made an impressive start toward rebuilding. Roads, despite the heavy beating they took during the struggle, are now in better shape than in most other African countries and the railroad between Asmara and the Massawa port has been partially rebuilt. A major electric power generating project is underway but the site was bombed in May 2000, which will lead to a lengthy setback. Domestic and international telephone services have improved markedly, although the country still does not have cellular services. Internet service became available in November 2000. Eritrea's first international-class hotel, the Asmara Palace, opened in 1999 and is managed by the Inter-Continental chain.

To attract investors, a top priority, the government created one of the most liberal investment climates in Africa. The investment code pro-

vides a number of incentives for investors, including no taxes on exports and items brought in for re-export; a reduced tax rate over several years; and free movement of any amount of capital in and out of the country for both Eritrean and foreign investors.

Apart from infrastructure improvements, the government has privatized more than two-thirds of the 42 state-owned enterprises nationalized by the former Ethiopian Government, including a brewery and milk, soap, textile, furniture, cigarette, leather, oil, metal, machinery and candy factories. It has plans to modernize the textile, glass and leather industries, and is also in the process of developing a fisheries industry. Other potential opportunities for American businesses can be found in energy (oil, natural gas, and thermal), agriculture, food processing, construction, mining (including gold), telecommunications, tourism and general consumer goods. The American petroleum company, Anadarko, found offshore oil in 1999 but not in commercially recoverable quantities. At present, no energy companies are exploring for petroleum or gas.

Transportation

One of the delights of Asmara is that nothing is more than a 5- or 10-minute drive, or a 15- to 30-minute bike ride, from anything else. The city is small enough for most people to traverse the central area on foot in not much more than an hour.

Asmara traffic is light even in rush hour, but newcomers should be warned that Eritreans are inattentive drivers and pedestrians, paying little attention to traffic around them, and frequently walk or enter into traffic without a glance at what might be coming. Fortunately, the normal speed for Eritrean drivers in Asmara is only 15 to 20 mph, so serious accidents in the capital are rare. The road to Massawa is another matter. It is necessary to

pay close attention on the winding, steep descent because Eritrean truckers and other drivers often drive either in the middle of the road or, when swinging around curves, take the oncoming lane. One mistake risks a drop of a thousand feet or more in the upper parts of the road, and there are few guard-rails.

For trips out of town, travelers can rent cars, with or without drivers, at about the same prices as in the U.S.

Cars are scarce at present and very expensive. Also, no vehicle more than 10 years old may be imported into Eritrea. A standard economy car is adequate for Asmara and main paved roads. Any real exploration of the countryside, however, requires a four-wheel-drive with good clearance. Air-conditioning is not needed in Asmara, but is important for lowland travel. European and Japanese cars prevail; repair services exist, but the right spare parts cannot always be found. Diesel fuel and regular gasoline are available, but there is no high-octane or unleaded gasoline in the country.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

The quality and service are generally good, but calls to and from Eritrea are among the most expensive in the world (currently about \$3.00 a minute). Residential call-back service is also readily available. Fax machines are in some places in town. Several companies offer e-mail only services for personal home use and the monthly fee is expensive by U.S. standards. Web access is due in August 2000.

Mail

International mail takes 2 to 3 weeks. The local post office, unlike in many third world countries, is reliable, though any private packages must be cleared through customs.

Radio and TV

Eritrea has one television station that broadcasts a half-hour of English news nightly and an occasional film in English, but most programs are in Tigrinya and Arabic. Additional television programming is available by satellite, including CNN, two movie channels with fairly recent offerings, two BBC channels, one with news the other with sitcoms and specials, cartoon channels, MTV style programming, the Discovery, Hallmark and Travel channels, several sports channels and one channel offering nothing but cooking programs. This TV service also has programming in Chinese, Italian, Portuguese and Greek as well as international radio stations (VOA, BBC 1 and 2, RFI and very wide range of non-commercial music stations). Subscription to the satellite service is expensive by American standards, and it is necessary to purchase a satellite dish locally.

Both local and satellite TV operate on the European PAL system; videotapes available locally are made for the same system. To enjoy programming and videotapes available in Ethiopia, as well as American videotapes, it is absolutely necessary to have a multi-system TVNCR that can handle both PAL and the U.S. NTSC systems. In purchasing the equipment, make certain that it uses the same system as found in Eritrea.

There are two local radio stations, one AM and one FM. The VOA and the BBC broadcast in English to Eritrea but the quality of reception can vary greatly.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

There are ten Eritrean newspapers, including one, The Eritrean Profile, in English. Some Western magazines, including Time, Newsweek, and The Economist, are available locally. Very few books in English are available.

The Eritrean media consists of one government-owned television station, three official newspapers, one magazine, and two radio stations. There are seven independent newspapers. Freedom of the press is guaranteed under the Constitution, which has been ratified but not implemented. Though there is no official censorship, government reaction to some criticism by the media has at times been harsh, including the jailing of reporters and editors. As a result, the independent media exercise a form of self-censorship.

Health and Medicine

The first medical challenge for newcomers is acclimatization to Asmara's 7,400 feet elevation. Since the air is thinner at that height, some people may initially experience shortness of breath, fatigue, headaches and difficulty sleeping. The dry climate can cause dehydration, irritate the eyes of contact lens wearers, and exacerbate respiratory diseases and allergies. Given the altitude and Eritrea's proximity to the equator, it is necessary to take extra precautions against sun damage.

The most common illnesses found in Eritrea are upper respiratory and gastrointestinal, malaria and measles. Communicable diseases of concern include tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and meningitis.

Mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever are not a problem in the highlands, but are found in the lowlands. Malaria suppressants are thus not necessary in Asmara and other highland areas, but are recommended for the lowlands. Insect repellents, while rarely needed in Asmara, are essential for the lowlands, particularly on the coast.

All water for consumption should be boiled and filtered. In a rare case of a long power interruption, keep in mind that the boiling temperature

of water is lower at higher altitudes. Local mineral water is safe. All fruits and vegetables must be peeled, cooked or disinfected by soaking in a solution of bleach (available locally) and water.

Medical, dental, diagnostic, and hospital facilities in Eritrea do not meet Western standards. They are, in general, overcrowded, have a limited stock of medicines, and are poorly maintained; limited laboratory tests and x-ray services are available. A new clinic has opened that is better equipped than most, but patients requiring medical assistance other than basic services are evacuated to London or the U.S. There is one western-standard dental facility, but others are not recommended for routine use.

The supply of prescription and non-prescription medicines in local pharmacies is limited and unreliable. Bring all needed prescription and non-prescription medicines and supplies for both routine and chronic medical conditions. This includes items such as aspirins, bandages, adult and baby acetaminophen, vitamins, cough syrups, and any other medicines needed for routine home-treatable conditions. Other useful items recommended are: a thermometer, mosquito repellent, Dramamine against motion sickness on winding roads, tampons, sun block, hand and body creams, and contact lens supplies, as well as an extra pair of glasses and the prescriptions for both.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

At present, no American carriers serve Asmara directly. Transfers to a foreign carrier for direct service to Asmara are available at London, Rome, Frankfurt, and Cairo at the time of this writing. It is not necessary to transit Addis Ababa.

A passport and visa, which must be obtained in advance, are required. There is an airport departure tax, and residents of Eritrea generally must obtain an exit visa from Eritrean Immigration in advance of their departure. Entry information (and information on the departure tax) may be obtained from the Embassy of Eritrea, 1708 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009; telephone (202) 319-1991; fax (202) 319-1304. Overseas, inquiries may be made at the nearest Eritrean embassy or consulate.

Persons arriving in Eritrea from a yellow-fever endemic area must have proof of a current yellow fever vaccine.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Asmara and to obtain updated information on travel and security in Eritrea. The U.S. Embassy address is: Franklin Roosevelt Street, P.O. Box 211 Asmara, telephone (291-1)12-00-04; fax (291-1)12-75-84.

Pets

There are no quarantine restrictions, but all pets must have an up-to-date health certificate, including evidence of a rabies shot for warm-blooded pets, especially dogs and cats. Tick fever and intestinal parasites have been reported as problems for pets here. There are many diseases among the local chickens, a fact that could pose a problem for pet birds. Only the most basic veterinarian services (for dogs and cats, not birds) are available in Asmara, so before coming to the country, have your pet examined and given all of its needed shots and vaccinations. Bring all pet supplies, including food and medicine, with you. A rabies vaccine is available. Make sure before you leave for Eritrea that you have the necessary paperwork to bring pets, particularly parrots and other birds protected by the CITES treaty, back with you to the United States. For more information on the CITES treaty, contact

the Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Firearms and Ammunition

The importation of personal firearms is forbidden by the Eritrean Government. The Eritrean Government also prohibits the possession of personal firearms in the country.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The Eritrean currency is the nakfa, which is available in denominations of 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, and 1 bills. The current exchange rate is approximately US\$1=nakfa 10. Credit cards are rarely accepted in Eritrea except by airlines, the new Intercontinental Hotel, and a few car-hire companies. Foreigners must pay for their airline tickets and hotel bills in U.S. currency (dollar bills, travelers checks, or credit cards). Major hotels, banks, and the airport will exchange dollars for local currency.

Local time is Greenwich Mean Time plus 3 hours. Eritrea is thus 7 hours ahead of Washington, D.C. during U.S. daylight savings months, and 8 hours ahead for the rest of the year. Eritrea does not adopt daylight savings. The metric system of weights and measures is used.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Jan. 7 | Christmas (Orthodox) |
| Jan. 19 | Timket (Epiphany/ Orthodox) |
| Mar. 8 | Women's Day |
| Apr./May | Good Friday* |
| Apr./May | Easter* |
| May 24 | Liberation Day |
| June 20 | Martyrs' Day |
| Sep. 1 | Start of the Armed Struggle |
| | Id al Adha* |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| *variable | |

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country.

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

ETHIOPIA

Major City:

Addis Ababa

Other Cities:

Asmara, Axum, Dire Dawa, Gondar, Harar, Jima, Mekele, Nazret

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2001 for Ethiopia. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

An assignment to Ethiopia offers an opportunity to live and work in a country with a rich and diverse culture and a heritage and history of independence among the longest and proudest on the African continent.

The seventeen years of revolution under the cruel, dictatorial Mengistu regime ended in 1991. Since then the Transitional Government has been working toward the creation of a democratically-based government and a free market economy. Much progress remains to be made, infrastructures created, and habits changed. Western donors, including the United States, are encouraging the Transitional

Government through assistance programs directed toward food security, democracy and governance, and extensive privatization.

Ethiopia is a very poor country which suffers from recurring droughts and famines. The international community attempts to assist the government to alleviate and, increasingly, to prevent these natural and human disasters. The U.S. remains one of the largest donors in this effort.

MAJOR CITY

Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa, or "new flower", with an estimated population of over 3 million, spreads over a large hilly area in the mountains of the central highlands. The climate is temperate and pleasant most of the year. This high mountain settlement, a relatively new city, became Ethiopia's capital in 1890.

Its architecture is a confusion of older buildings in the Italian style, modern offices and apartments, Western-style villas, and mud-walled, tin-roofed dwellings. There are slum areas scattered about the

city, as there are attractive and well-groomed villas.

Only a few of the main streets have names that are generally known or used. Street signs are rare, and although businesses and residences have house numbers, these appear to be in random order and difficult to locate. The main streets are paved, but many side streets are rocky and, in the rainy season, very muddy. All streets suffer from neglect and large pot holes. Traffic is impaired not only by road conditions, but also by unruly drivers, animals and pedestrians walking on the roadway, and very poor street lighting. Road accident rates in Addis Ababa are very high, fatalities frequent, and medical care very poor.

Addis Ababa is often called the "Capital of Africa" because the Organization of African Unity (OAU) makes the city its headquarters. In addition, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA) was established here in 1958, and many international conferences are held in its very impressive Africa Hall.

Food

Vegetables, such as potatoes, onions, garlic, leeks, carrots, cauliflower, zucchini, tomatoes, cucumbers, leaf lettuce, spinach, beets,

artichokes, and avocados are abundant all year on the local economy, though the quality varies with the season. Fresh fruits, such as bananas, oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruits, papayas, melons, mangoes, pineapples, plums, and strawberries are usually good and plentiful. A variety of meats (beef, lamb, veal, fish, pork, fish, and chicken) is available, but the quality is uneven. The variety and availability of locally-available food has been improving over the past several years.

Fresh milk and dairy products are sold locally, but the milk must be boiled before use. Full-fat powdered milk is available at local shops. Bread can be purchased locally. European-style grocery stores are opening throughout Addis Ababa, with an increasingly wide variety of products, mostly imported from Italy. Availability is quite good and prices are very high.

A cookbook with recipes for high altitude cooking is useful, and several are included in the Recommended Reading.

Clothing

Addis Ababa has some reliable local dressmakers, but fabric quality is not to U.S. standards. Local tailors are available, but the workmanship tends to be poor.

You will need two or three pairs of sturdy walking shoes since sidewalks are few, and roadways are general unpared. "Shoesaver" or a similar water repellent helps to protect shoes during the rainy season. The secret of dealing with the often wide-range of daily temperatures is clothes layering.

Men: Spring- and fall-weight woolen business suits, sport coats, and slacks will fulfill your needs in Addis Ababa. Summer suits are also comfortable during daytime much of the year. Jackets, sweaters, and raincoats are advisable. Sun hats and warm weather clothes are needed if you plan to spend time outdoors during the dry season or to travel in lower, warmer areas.

Women: Light fall or spring wool suits and dresses combined with a limited number of wool skirts and sweaters will provide a basic wardrobe. Cotton or silk can be worn midday. Layered dressing such as sweaters or vests over blouses or dresses are often worn since homes and offices are cool. Both wool and cotton slacks can be worn here. Shorts are acceptable for tennis or jogging. A light daytime jacket and wool shawls are useful on occasion. A coat, jacket, or shawl is always needed at night. Raincoats, umbrellas, and rainboots are essential.

Children: Children need a good supply of pants, long-sleeved shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts, light jackets, sturdy shoes, socks, raincoats, rainboots, warm pajamas, and bathrobes; include warm clothing. Bring cotton sunhats or caps as they are not available and sunburn is frequent at this altitude. Jeans are acceptable for school and particularly suitable for play clothes since weather permits outdoor play much of the year. Shorts and T-shirts are worn during warm weather.

Supplies and Services

While it is becoming easier to find many of the desired supplies in Addis Ababa, the quality is uneven and the prices very high. Some European products are appearing in the newer grocery stores.

Tailors are adequate for minor repairs and fittings. Seamstresses can reproduce a dress from a picture, pattern, or sketch to your measurements; however, the result may not be exactly what you want.

Men's and women's shoe repair is adequate and inexpensive. Dry cleaning and laundry service is satisfactory. Beauty shop prices are reasonable; however, the quality of service is not always good. Many barbershops are clean, and haircutting techniques are acceptable.

Education

Children's Education: The International Community School (ICS—formerly the American Community School) opened in Fall 1966. It

became the International Community School in May 1980. Classes are offered from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. ICS offers the International Baccalaureate Program (IB) and the Advanced Placement Program (AP). Enrollment was 320 students in the spring 2000, including Ethiopian and third-country nationals from some 50 different countries.

Bingham Academy is a nondenominational missionary-sponsored American school, which admits international students who can pass an English proficiency test. Bingham operates an American curriculum from kindergarten through grade 8.

The Sandford English Community School, which follows a British curriculum, offers instruction in English, and has begun to offer the IB program. Other national groups—German, Italian, French, and Swedish—also maintain good schools.

None of the schools have cafeterias, so children must bring their own lunches.

Several nursery schools in Addis Ababa accept children from age 3.

Special Educational Opportunities

Classes at Addis Ababa University are taught in English. Various cultural centers offers courses in French, Italian, German, Russian, and other languages.

Recreation and Social Life

Among the most difficult adjustments to Addis Ababa is its isolation, high altitude, lack of amenities, and socio-cultural complexity. You must often rely on your own resources to find necessary stimuli for a full and satisfying tour.

Sports

Weekend picnics, horseback riding, camping, hunting, and fishing are possible. Volleyball, softball, and basketball are popular sports activities in Addis Ababa.



AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

Downtown Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Riding enthusiasts who prefer Western saddles should bring their own, since only English saddles are available here. A riding horse can be purchased and boarded. Horses can only be leased on an hourly basis from stables.

The Hilton Hotel has a sports club with a naturally heated outdoor pool, tennis courts, miniature golf, and a sauna. The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) Zebu Club has tennis courts, squash courts, swimming pool, restaurant, and bar. Some fees may apply.

The five-star Sheraton Addis opened in 1998. It has all the amenities that a five-star hotel has to offer. There are five restaurants and a 24-hour business center. Its Health Club has a swimming pool, tennis and squash courts, steam bath, and sauna. Annual membership fees are expensive and vary

based on facilities used. Daily fees are available.

A private, small 6-hole golf course is operated on the British Embassy compound. The season runs from October to June, and you have to apply in advance for membership. Bring clubs, balls and tees. There also is a public course used by many expatriate players.

Addis Ababa also has two bowling alleys. Local equipment is satisfactory.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Gardening is popular because results are almost immediate, and the growing season is year round. Flower and vegetable seeds are available on the local market although sometimes past their expiration date.

Overland travel in Ethiopia is difficult, due to the poor condition of roads and the questionable quality of many of the rest stops. In addition, roadside banditry occurs with some regularity in various parts of the country, and sensible precautions need to be taken.

The Grand Hotel (or Ras Hora) in Debre Zeit, 30 miles southeast of Addis Ababa, is perched on a hill overlooking a lovely crater lake. It has several in-door dining areas with European cooking. Its Sunday afternoon buffets are popular and prices are moderate. Campsites can be rented for a small fee. Some people water ski and swim in the lake, but this is not recommended as the bilharzia snail has been found in the water.

The Adama Ras Hotel in Nazareth, about 2 hours from Addis Ababa, has a swimming pool and is a good place to spend a weekend. A Sunday

buffet emphasizes Italian specialties.

Sodere, about 2-hours from Addis Ababa, has hot mineral springs. Two swimming pools (one olympic size), a small restaurant, bungalows, and camping facilities make Sodere a pleasant weekend resort or day trip.

A 4-hour drive northwest of Addis Ababa takes you to the Blue Nile Gorge and to some of the most spectacular scenery in Ethiopia. Debre Libanos, a historic monastery, is located on the rim of a tributary canyon along the route. Nearby is a 400-year-old Portuguese bridge, where a spectacular view of the canyon can be seen, as well as baboons and monkeys.

The Ras Hotel at Ambo (2-hour drive) is 78 miles west of Addis Ababa on a good road that passes through beautiful countryside and the Menagesha Forest Preserve. It has a large outdoor pool filled by a warm mineral-water spring. Camping sites are available for a modest fee near the pool.

Ghion, also called Welisso, is a small resort town 71 miles (2-hour drive) southwest of Addis Ababa. The Ras Hotel at Ghion has water from hot mineral springs piped into large sunken baths in the hotel rooms. In addition, hot indoor and outdoor swimming pools are filled by warm mineral springs.

The Awash Game Park, about 140 miles from Addis Ababa, is another interesting point to visit. It offers an excellent opportunity for lucky camera buffs to photograph game of the Awash River valley. Overnight trailer accommodations are available in the heart of the park near the Awash River Falls. Fees are high and conditions are poor. However, the camping enthusiast can enjoy roughing it at a campsite for only a few dollars a night. White-water rafting trips, organized by expatriate guides, are offered from July to September on the Awash river. Cost for such weekend outings is about \$150 per person.

Favorite spots for Ethiopians and foreigners alike are the chain of lakes in the Great Rift Valley. Lake Awassa is a 4-hour drive from Addis Ababa. It abounds with fish (catfish and tilapia) and is an excellent spot for relaxation. Three motel-type hotels with cafes are located here. Lake Chamo at Arba Minch offers the thrill of fishing for Blue Nile perch and watching crocodiles move about. The fish is outstanding for eating and weighs up to 200 pounds. Excellent camping is offered on virtually all of the lakes.

A favorite weekend spots is Lake Langano (the only bilharzia-free lake for swimming), which is a 3-hour drive from Addis Ababa. Fishing for catfish and tilapia, using light tackle and baited small hooks instead of artificial bait, is excellent. Two hotels with restaurants are also found at Lake Langano for those who prefer not to camp. Nearby is a game reserve where ostriches and other bird life is abundant.

If you are interested in ancient civilizations, you should visit the towns of the "historic route", comprised of Gonder, Bahir Dar, Axum, and Lalibela. Gonder was the seat of government in the 16th and 17th centuries and has several interesting castles. Near Bahir Dar, on the Blue Nile river, is located the spectacular Tis-Esat falls. Lalibela is the site of the fabulous below ground monolithic stone churches hewn out of solid stone during the 12th and 13th centuries.

Dire Dawa and Harar are two interesting cities east of Addis Ababa and may be reached by car (10 hours), rail (10 hours), or air (35 minutes). Harar, a walled city, is the birthplace of the former Emperor and the site of the Harar Military Academy. It is considered by many to be the fourth most holy city in Islam. Road travel in this area can be hazardous.

Entertainment

Americans patronize several restaurants and the dining rooms of main hotels. Foreign cuisine

includes Chinese, Italian, Greek, Indian, Middle Eastern, French, and Armenian. A number of restaurants serve Ethiopian food. The number, variety and quality of restaurants has increased markedly over the past year or two, yet usual precautions must be exercised to avoid intestinal difficulties.

Several embassies have cultural centers offering a variety of programs, from music and dance to art exhibitions and films.

The ethnological and archaeological museums are interesting. Various special interest groups are active, including drama and music groups and a wildlife club.

Social Activities

Rotary and Lions have chapters in Addis Ababa. The International Women's Club is a social and charitable organization for foreign and Ethiopian women. It is not limited to the diplomatic community, but provides contact with the foreign business community as well.

Many churches have their own denominational clubs, and numerous opportunities exist for extracurricular activities.

OTHER CITIES

AXUM (or Aksum) is a small city in the northern highlands, and capital of the old Axumite Kingdom which, before and during the early part of the Christian era, extended over parts of present-day Sudan and Ethiopia. Mysterious stelae are all that remain of Axum's days of glory. The city's cathedral, the Church of St. Mary of Zion, is the repository of many of the crowns of Ethiopian emperors. Legend says that the Ark of the Covenant was brought to this spot from Jerusalem (after the fall of the city in 586 B.C.) by a descendant of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Today, Axum is a tourist town noted for its antiquities. Tall granite obelisks, 126 in all, stand or lie broken in the central square. One measuring 110 feet,



Courtesy of United Nations

Ethiopian marketplace in Harar, Ethiopia

now fallen, is said to be the tallest obelisk ever built. A museum in town has a rich display of crosses, jewels, vestments, and ceremonial swords.

DIRE DAWA, with a population over 150,000, is a commercial center second in importance to the capital. Located east of Addis Ababa, the city is a traditional caravan center situated at the intersection of roads leading to Addis Ababa, Harar, and the Republic of Djibouti. Soil in the

area is extremely poor, thus food must be shipped in. The city has textile and cement factories, and coffee- and meat-canning plants. Caves decorated with prehistoric drawings are located near Dire Dawa.

Dire Dawa is really two towns: new and old. New Dire Dawa is a wide-avenued, tree-lined settlement with its jacarandas and flamboyance. Here there are numerous small marketplaces, busy with vendors in

colorful dress with their spices, fruits, baskets, and silverware laid out before them. Old Dire Dawa is a place of narrow, meandering streets and square buildings which is the site of the traditional Afetissa market. Well-stocked with a variety of goods, Afetissa is a melting pot for all the peoples of the region.

The city population is composed mainly of Somalis, Oromos, Afars, and Arabs.

GONDAR, in northwestern Ethiopia, was the seat of government in the 16th and 17th centuries. The ruins of its castles and royal buildings show evidence of Portuguese and Arabian influence. Gondar is inhabited by Christians, Muslims, Falashas (Ethiopian Jews). The city's economy is based on subsistence agriculture, although textiles, jewelry, leatherwork, and copperware are produced here. Gondar (including Azeso) is a city of about 166,000 (1994), and is capital of the Begemdir and Simen province, which is home to 2.2 million people.

HARAR, a medieval walled city, is the gateway to the Ogaden Desert and the birthplace of the former emperor Haile Selassie. The modern citizens of Harar live almost entirely within the walls that have encircled this city for more than 300 years, maintaining their own language, customs, and crafts. Harar is famed for its basket weaving and the work of its silversmiths who craft beautiful anklets, necklaces, arm bands, silver chains, bangles, and earrings out of the precious metal. The city is also known for the excellent coffee grown in the surrounding mountains.

Harar has many ancient monuments dominated by the 16th century Grand Mosque with elegant twin towers and slender minaret. Other points of interest include the palace of the city's 1890s governor, Ras Makonnen; stained glass windows by Ethiopia's greatest living artist, Afewerk Tekle, in the Harar Military Academy; the city's cathedral Medkane Alem ("Redeemer of the World"), which houses a gallery with traditional religious art works; the tomb of Abu Said, an early Muslim ruler; and the colorful Shoa Gate Market. One of the city's most unique attractions is its Hyena Men, who make their living by collecting garbage and bones which they feed to the wild hyenas that live in the surrounding hills. Answering to a name, they dart forward to snatch their supper from the hands of the Hyena Men. There's a small charge for those who wish to see this spectacle. The city's

population is composed of Hareri, Amharas, Oromos, and Somalis. Harar's 1986 population was approximately 68,000.

JIMA (also spelled Jimma and Gimma) is the capital and largest town of Kefa province, 220 miles (353 kilometers) southwest of Addis Ababa. It is in a heavily-wooded area known for coffee production. The name of the province may be the origin of the term coffee. Jima is a regional commercial zone with an agricultural school and nearby airport. Potassium and sodium nitrates are mined to the northeast. It has a population of over 120,000 (1994).

In the north-central area is **MEKELE** (also spelled Makalle), capital of Tigre province. It has a population of about 115,000 (1994). The city is noted for the ancient castle of Emperor Yohannes IV; a similar building has been converted to a hotel. Expeditions to area rock churches are arranged from Mekele. Mekele is the principal center of Ethiopia's inland salt trade. Newer industries include the production of incense and resin.

Situated 62 miles southeast of Addis Ababa, **NAZRET** is a growing agricultural and commercial center. It has a rapidly expanding population of 150,000 (1994). Rail lines and roads converge on the town, making it an excellent transport hub. Near Nazret, a huge sugar plantation and factory provide jobs. One of Ethiopia's chief exporters of oil cakes, oil seeds, and pulses has its headquarters in Nazret. Hot springs are also in the vicinity.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Ethiopia, part of the Horn of Africa, borders Eritrea, Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, and Djibouti and has an area of 1,127,127 square kilometers,

slightly less than twice the size of Texas. Only 12 percent of the total land area is arable land, with about 85 percent of the people dependent on agriculture or animal husbandry for subsistence.

The terrain consists of high plateau, mountains, and dry lowland plains. Ethiopia has some of the world's most rugged and beautiful scenery. Changes in foliage and terrain offer striking differences and are readily apparent when travelling in any direction from Addis Ababa. Fertile farmland, high mountains with crater lakes, deep canyons and abysses, low-lying savannas, and desert are some of the many aspects of Ethiopia's topography.

The climate is temperate to cool in the highlands and hot in the lowlands. Addis Ababa's altitude is above 8,000 feet. So three weeks or more are required to acclimate. Addis Ababa has two primary seasons: a dry season from October to February, and for the rest of the year, a rainy season, divided into "small rains" and "big rains." The small rains, February through April, are generally intermittent showers. The big rains, June through September or longer, usually bring daily precipitation. The big rains are rarely continuous, and sunny mornings or afternoons can be expected on many days. Average annual rainfall in Addis Ababa is 50 inches (while by comparison, Washington DC has 41 inches).

Daytime temperatures are fairly constant throughout the year. The dry season has bright sunny days with moderate to cool temperatures; nights are chilly. The average daily temperature in Addis Ababa is 62.9°F. Daytime temperatures are rarely over 80°F. Sharp drops in temperature occur in late afternoon, sometimes making outside entertainment uncomfortable after 5 pm. Night temperatures drop to the low forties from November to January, and are warmer in the period from February to May.

Population

Ethiopia's population of about 61 million is growing by more than 2% annually. Per capita income is roughly \$120 a year, one of the world's lowest. Major ethnic groups include Oromo (40%), Amhara (20%), Tigrayan (12%), and Sidama (9%). Other groups include Shankella, Gurage, Welaita, Somali, and Afar.

The official language is Amharic. English is spoken by the educated elite and trades people, and some older people also speak Italian. Other languages spoken are Tigrigna, Oromiffa, Afara, Somali, Arabic, and French.

The eye-catching dress of the Amhara men, which, nowadays is seen only on festive occasions, consists of jodhpur-type trousers worn with a white cotton "shamma" (toga) thrown over the shoulders. Western style suits are worn for business. Women wear a loose, flowing shamma over a long, white, full-skirted dress, usually with colorful embroidered borders on both the dress and shamma.

The main food of the highland people is a spicy dish called "wot," which is eaten with "injera," a thin, large, flat, spongy bread, made from a grass-like grain called "teff," and having a somewhat sour taste. (Teff is a range grass known in the U.S. as lovegrass.) Wot is a highly spiced stew prepared with meat, fish, poultry, lentils, chickpeas, vegetables, or a combination, and is eaten by hand spooning with pieces of injera. The local beverages include "tedj" (mead) made from a honey base, and "tella" (beer). Both are intoxicating. Ethiopian coffee, an intense brew, is served as a drink of hospitality and after every meal.

Ethiopian custom is to name persons to emphasize their individuality. Family names and groups are identified by their surnames through only one generation. A child receives a given name from its parents and adopts the first name of the father as a second or surname.

When a woman marries, she does not change her name to that of her husband. Her title changes from "Woizerit" (Miss) to "Woizero" (Mrs.). Persons are universally addressed by their first name rather than their surname, with "Ato," (Mr.) Woizero or Woizerit preceding the name.

The Ethiopian calendar varies from the Gregorian in that it has 12 months of 30 days and a 13th month of 5 days (or 6 in leap year). The new year begins on Meskerem 1 (September 11). The Ethiopian 24-hour day begins at sunrise (6 a.m.). Therefore, 7 a.m. by the Western standard is called 1 o'clock. However, business is usually conducted by European time and calendar.

Major religions are: Ethiopian Orthodox 45%, Muslim 45%, and the remainder divided among animists, Protestants, and Roman Catholics. Many Ethiopians are deeply religious and observe fasting and feasts throughout the year, but Easter is by far the most important holiday for the Orthodox. The gayest and most spectacular festivals are Timket or Epiphany (in January) and Meskel (in September), the latter commemorating the finding of the True Cross by St. Helena.

Christianity came to Ethiopia in the fourth century. The established Ethiopian Orthodox Church, formerly linked administratively to the Egyptian Coptic Church headquartered in Alexandria, became autonomous in 1948. The Orthodox faith, traditionally associated with the Ethiopian (Abyssinian) culture of the highlands, was, until the overthrow of the Emperor, the official state religion. Ethiopia is now a secular state.

Islam first came to Ethiopia around 622 in Aksum in the far north of the country, when the Prophet Mohammed's disciples sought refuge. An Islamic military conquest of most areas of Ethiopia occurred in the mid-16th century, and it was only under Menelik II that religious freedom was restored in the late 19th century.

Public Institutions

Under its Constitution, adopted in 1994, Ethiopia has a parliamentary form of government, headed by a Prime Minister. The bicameral parliament, comprised of the 545-member House of Peoples Representatives (elected) and the 11-member House of Federation (appointed by the regional state councils), is made up largely of members of the ruling political coalition, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Some opposition and private candidates were elected in May 2000. The EPRDF includes a large number of primarily ethnically based component parties, the most influential of which by far is the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), led by a politburo of which the Prime Minister and his most trusted advisers are members. Ethiopia's government is structured as a federalist system, ethnically based. The 1994 Constitution redrew regional borders along ethnic lines, to the extent possible, and on paper devolved significant authority to regional governments. Ethnic federalism remains an experiment to date, but the regions do have some autonomy in areas of governance.

The EPRDF swept to power in 1991 by overthrowing the totalitarian Communist regime, known as the Derg, of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. The Derg, which seized power in 1974 from Emperor Haile Selassie, was marked by brutality, especially during the "Red Terror" of the late 1970s, and massive militarization largely funded by the Soviet Union and Cuba. The Derg's strength was undermined by droughts and famine in the mid-1980s, but its collapse was hastened by several internal insurgent groups, including the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which sought Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia, and the TPLE. As the struggle against the Derg continued, the TPLF allied itself with other ethnically based insurgent groups, forming the EPRDF.



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Building in Ethiopia

Following the fall of the Derg, the EPRDF, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF—the Oromo are Ethiopia's largest ethnic group) and others formed a transitional government, which governed until national elections in 1995. During that period, the OLF left the government, and members of some other political groupings were expelled. Eritreans, including many resident in Ethiopia, voted in favor of independence in a 1993 referendum, and Eritrea became a sovereign state. The May 1995 elections were boycotted by most groups in opposition to the EPRDF, and were marred by allegations of fraud and misconduct; nonetheless, they were found to be generally free and fair by international observers. General elections were held again in May 2000 and opposition parties scored great success.

Following his overthrow in 1991, Derg dictator Mengistu went into exile in Zimbabwe, where he remains. Some 2,500 other Derg officials also took refuge outside Ethiopia. The current government established a Special Prosecutor's Office (SPO) in 1991, to investigate and try cases of Derg extrajudicial killing, torture, detention without charge and other forms of brutality. As of the end of 1999, charges had been brought against over 5,000 persons, about half of whom were in detention.

Ethiopia has diplomatic relations with more than 90 countries, some 75 of which maintain missions in Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian capital is the home of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Numerous other international organizations are also represented here.

Arts, Science, and Education

One of the goals of Ethiopia's transitional government was to broaden access to education. Results of these efforts are yet to show obvious results, but overall there has been a significant increase of budgetary allocations in the educational system throughout the country.

The government, many donor countries and organizations have committed enormous resources to upgrading educational standards in Ethiopia. USAID has a major program to improve the quality and equity of primary schooling as the system expands. Efforts are underway to accommodate demand for schooling at all levels. Despite the overwhelming problems educational opportunities are expanding, but unfortunately not enough to keep abreast of population growth.

The Peace Corps began an active teacher-training program in fall 1995, but withdrew from the country in 1999.

Expansion efforts have been targeted at sectors of the population traditionally deprived of access to education, primarily girls, the rural and less sedentary populations. Current policy aims at universal primary education, although it will take decades to achieve this. As of 1999, more than 5.8 million children attended primary (grades 1-8) school. Instruction for primary students is in the local or regional language, but changes to English at grade 7. Participation rates for primary schools have dramatically increased since 1994, from 24% to 45.8%. Government policies strongly favor female participation in primary education, but girls lag boys in attendance significantly in many areas of the country. Junior and secondary schooling share many problems with primary, but the largest present concern is with issues of access, quality, and relevance of education.

The Ethiopian Government has encouraged community participation in the expansion of education. The Ministry of Education faces monumental problems in trying to provide education for all Ethiopians, particularly given severe budgetary constraints and its efforts to install a decentralized system of education. Expansion needs to accelerate, and the challenge will be to ensure that quality is not to be sacrificed for quantity.

Opportunity for higher education also has expanded in Ethiopia, but entrance into institutions has become extremely competitive. The number of high school graduates far exceeds the number of places available in the institutes of higher learning, which now include six public universities, 11 specialized colleges, and a number of teacher training colleges and institutes, offering 2-, 3-, and 4-year programs. The Addis Ababa University celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2000.

Many students go abroad each year to study in the West and India.

The Ethiopian artistic community is small but active. Many artists derive their inspiration from the ancient Ethiopian Christian paintings that decorate churches and monasteries. A substantial effort is underway to collect and preserve valuable paintings and manuscripts gathered from Ethiopian Orthodox churches. The Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University has a recently renovated museum that includes a wide-ranging collection of Ethiopian church paintings and manuscripts. Ethiopia is also famous for its unique crosses, some of which are quite old. The National Museum has an interesting archeological collection, including the famous fossilized "Lucy," the oldest primate skeleton; and also a collection of imperial objects taken from the various palaces following the revolution.

Ethiopia has a rich musical heritage; encompassing a wide variety of styles derived from the country's many ethnic groups. Ethiopians are very proud of their traditional music and dance, and most theaters have regular cultural shows. Popular musicians and singers also perform in small bars throughout Addis Ababa and have an enthusiastic following among young and old. Western classical music is not especially popular among Ethiopians, and is generally performed only for foreign audiences, yet is part of the basic curriculum at the country's major music school.

Commerce and Industry

After the downfall of the Marxist Derg regime in 1991, Ethiopia began moving away from central planning for the economy and implementing open market policies. The government passed legislation to allow private banking and insurance companies, established incentives to attract foreign investment, and reduced bureaucratic hurdles

and delays in registering businesses. The government also has opened up the power and telecommunications sectors to permit foreign investment. The exchange rate is determined by a weekly auction. Over the 12 months ending in May 2000, the value of the birr fell from 7.65 to the dollar to 8.20 to the dollar.

The macroeconomic picture for Ethiopia in mid-2000 after eight years of steady growth is uncertain because of border hostilities with Eritrea and drought. Business has slowed enormously since May 1998 and inflation exceeds 10%. A significant amount of government expenditure goes to support the military, reducing the amount of funds available for other projects.

Ethiopia's infrastructure is one of the most underdeveloped in all Africa, which has hampered economic growth. However, this situation is beginning to change. The World Bank is providing \$350 million to upgrade Ethiopia's road network as part of the government's Road Sector Improvement program. Ethiopia's lone railway, stretching from Addis Ababa to the port of Djibouti, is also undergoing renovation. Ethiopia is committed to increasing the number of telephone lines by 700,000 over the next decade and has awarded contracts for the development of cellular telephone services. The national air carrier, Ethiopian Airlines, provides quality service to 37 domestic and 42 international destinations throughout Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and North America utilizing primarily Boeing aircraft.

Agriculture is Ethiopia's most promising sector, contributing half of the country's GNP, more than 80% of its exports, and three-fourths of the country's employment. The country has a strong potential for self-sufficiency and even export development in grains, livestock, vegetables and fruits. This sector, however, is plagued by periodic drought, soil degradation caused by overgrazing, deforestation, and high population density,

and a poor road network that makes it difficult for farmers to get their goods to market. The major export crop is coffee, which generates over 60% of Ethiopia's foreign exchange earnings. Other traditional agricultural exports are hides and skins, textiles, fruits and vegetables, flowers, honey and beeswax, pulses, oilseeds and "khat," a leafy shrub with mild narcotic qualities when chewed.

Gold, marble, limestone and tantalum are mined in Ethiopia. Other resources with potential for commercial development include potash, natural gas, iron ore, coal, and possibly oil and geothermal energy. Ethiopia has vast hydroelectric potential that remains untapped. At present, however, Ethiopia is totally dependent on imports of oil for its manufacturing industries, vehicles and other petroleum needs. New hydroelectric projects are expected to triple the country's power generation by 2005. A landlocked country, Ethiopia uses the port of Djibouti for international trade.

Transportation

Local

Taxi and bus service is inadequate and considered dangerous due to the high frequency of accidents, many of them serious or fatal.

Regional

Ethiopian Airlines connects with the major cities in the country and along with other regional airlines, serves Nairobi, Djibouti, and other African cities regularly.

International

International flights are currently available from Addis Ababa to Europe on Ethiopian Airlines (Rome, Athens, Frankfurt, London), and Lufthansa (Frankfurt). In addition, flights are available to a variety of locations in Africa and the Middle East, as well as Bombay, Bangkok, Beijing and the U.S.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Although telephone service is affected by the heavy rains, it is dependable most of the time. Long-distance telephone calls to the U.S. are via satellite and can be dialed directly. The cost is about \$3 per minute and reception is usually good. It is less expensive to place a collect call from Addis Ababa to the U.S.; the least expensive method is direct dial from the U.S.

Internet service is poor and limited, but there are plans to expand service providers beyond the current state monopoly sometime in the future. Currently, those wanting internet service must spend months on a waiting list.

Radio and TV

A short wave radio is useful in Ethiopia, and reception is fair for the Voice of America and BBC.

The Voice of Ethiopia Radio, which broadcasts on AM, FM, and short-wave stations, carries daily 1-hour broadcasts in English. Programming is good and includes news and various magazine-style shows.

Ethiopian Television broadcasts 4 hours daily, including a 1 hour news program in English. Telecasts are in the 625 PAL format, which is used throughout most of Europe and Africa. Programming is about 50 percent in local languages, the remainder being films and documentaries. An increasing amount of programming is being received from the U.S. and the West, but the majority is locally produced.

Well-stocked video stores have opened in Addis Ababa, and cassettes are generally VHS or PAL; bring a VCR, preferably a multisystem multivoltage one.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Personal subscriptions to the *International Herald Tribune* and overseas editions of *Time* and *Newsweek* can be ordered, and occasionally may be purchased locally. The Tri-

bune arrives regularly, usually 10 to 12 days later than its publication date. Delivery of U.S. magazines generally takes about 2 weeks.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Have all routine and necessary dental work done before arrival. Orthodontia, root canal treatments, prostheses, etc., are not available, and local procedures are not advisable. Prescription glasses are rarely available. Acute eye conditions can be treated, but chronic diseases should be taken care of before arrival. If you need continued medication, bring a supply.

Community Health

Common diseases in Ethiopia include malaria, trachoma, tuberculosis, hepatitis, schistosomiasis, venereal diseases (including HIV/AIDS), influenza and common colds, parasitic and bacillary dysentery, and eye, ear, and skin infections. However, the Addis Ababa area is free of malaria-bearing mosquitoes. Domestic animals face a serious problem of tick fever for dogs and distemper for cats.

Preventive Measures

The 8,300-foot altitude in Addis Ababa can cause dizziness, insomnia, fatigue, and shortness of breath. The symptoms usually subside after a few weeks.

When traveling to lower altitudes, take malaria suppressants weekly to improve prophylaxis. Note: Too many people think that these pills are 100 percent effective—they are not. Even if taken, they need to be supplemented by mosquito netting, insecticides, repellents, etc.

Incidence of infectious hepatitis among Americans has been small, but it is widespread in the local community. Alternatives such as vaccination for hepatitis A & B can be obtained.

To minimize the risk of amoebic and bacillary dysentery, you must

demand scrupulous cleanliness and proper food care, hard to do when eating out. Domestic help who handle food should have periodic stool examinations. In restaurants, order well-cooked food and avoid salads, milk products, and ice cubes. Always order bottled water.

Tap water is unsafe and must be boiled and filtered before drinking. Powdered or canned milk is recommended over fresh milk or milk products, although milk can be boiled and filtered as well. Long-life sterilized milk is often available in local stores.

Fruits and vegetables must be cooked or peeled before eating. Leafy vegetables must be treated by soaking with bleach or an equivalent to kill bacteria. All local meats must be cooked thoroughly to avoid tapeworm.

The danger of severe sunburn cannot be overlooked. The high altitude of Addis and most surrounding areas make exposure to the sun more dangerous than at lower altitudes. Use of sun screen and sun hats is strongly recommended.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

The most direct air route from the U.S. to Addis Ababa is on U.S. flag carriers to Frankfurt, London, or Rome, connecting with Ethiopian Airlines and Lufthansa.

A passport and a valid Ethiopian visa are required to enter or transit Ethiopia. Due to animosity stemming from the recent border conflict with Eritrea, U.S. citizens of Eritrean origin who travel to Ethiopia may experience delays in the processing of their visa applications because all such applications must be cleared through the main Ethiopian immigration office in Addis Ababa. Laptop computers must be declared upon arrival and departure. Tape recorders require special

customs permits. Individuals intending prolonged stays should check, prior to travel, with the Ethiopian Embassy, 3506 International Dr., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008; telephone (202) 364-1200; fax (202) 686-9857; web site <http://www.ethiopianembassy.org>. Inquiries overseas may be made at the nearest Ethiopian embassy or consulate.

Current yellow fever immunizations are needed for entry into Ethiopia and must be recorded on the vaccination certificates with the vaccination date, signature of the medical officer administering the vaccination, and an official seal. The record for yellow fever inoculations must also have the name of the serum manufacturer and the batch number. Yellow fever shots are not valid until 10 days after date of initial vaccination.

Quarantine authorities in Ethiopia are exacting in these matters, and people have been subjected to long delays and embarrassment when certificates have not been filled out. Polio (oral), tetanus-diphtheria, and typhoid immunizations are strongly recommended.

Tick fever and intestinal parasites are a special problem with pets, and rabies is common in Ethiopia. Bring a good supply of flea and tick collars and shampoos. African tick fever has killed several American-owned dogs. Rabies and puppy vaccines are available only sporadically. There are American and European veterinarians working in Addis Ababa.

Ethiopian law strictly prohibits the photographing of military installations, police/military personnel, industrial facilities, government buildings and infrastructure (roads, bridges, dams, airfields, etc.). Such sites are rarely clearly marked. Travel guides, police, and Ethiopian officials can advise if a particular site may be photographed. Photographing prohibited sites may result in the confiscation of film and camera.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy and to

obtain updated information on travel and security in Ethiopia. The U.S. Embassy is located at Entoto Avenue, P.O. Box 1014, in Addis Ababa, tel. [251] (1) 550-666, extension 316/336; emergency after-hours tel. [251] (1) 552-558; consular fax [251] (1) 551-094; web site: <http://www.telecom.net.et/~usemb-et>.

Pets

Authorization from the Ministry of Agriculture is required in advance of the arrival of pets. A certificate of good health showing valid rabies vaccination and freedom from communicable diseases is required when bringing pets into Ethiopia. No quarantine period is imposed provided these health certificates are in order.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

The present official currency unit is the Ethiopian birr. There are 100 cents to the birr, with coins of 50, 25, 10, 5 and 1 cent. Bills are in the denominations of birr 100, 50, 10, 5, and 1.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

Visitors must declare foreign currency upon arrival and may be required to present this declaration when applying for an exit visa. Official and black market exchange rates are nearly the same. Penalties for exchanging money on the black market range from fines to imprisonment. Credit cards are not accepted at most hotels, restaurants, shops, or other local facilities, although they are accepted at the Hilton and Sheraton Hotels in Addis Ababa. Foreigners are generally required to pay for hotel and car rental in foreign currency.

Disaster Preparedness

There is a high risk of earthquakes in Ethiopia. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov/>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Jan. 7 | Christmas (Coptic) |
| Jan. 19 | Timkety (Epiphany) |
| Mar. 2 | Victory of Adwa |
| Apr/May | Good Friday* |
| Apr/May | Easter* |
| May 1 | May Day |
| Apr/May | Patriot's Victory Day* |
| May 28 | Downfall of the Dergue |
| Sept. 11 | Coptic New Year |
| Sept. 27 | True Cross Day Id al-Adha* Ramadan* Id al-Fitr* Mawlid an Nabi* |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

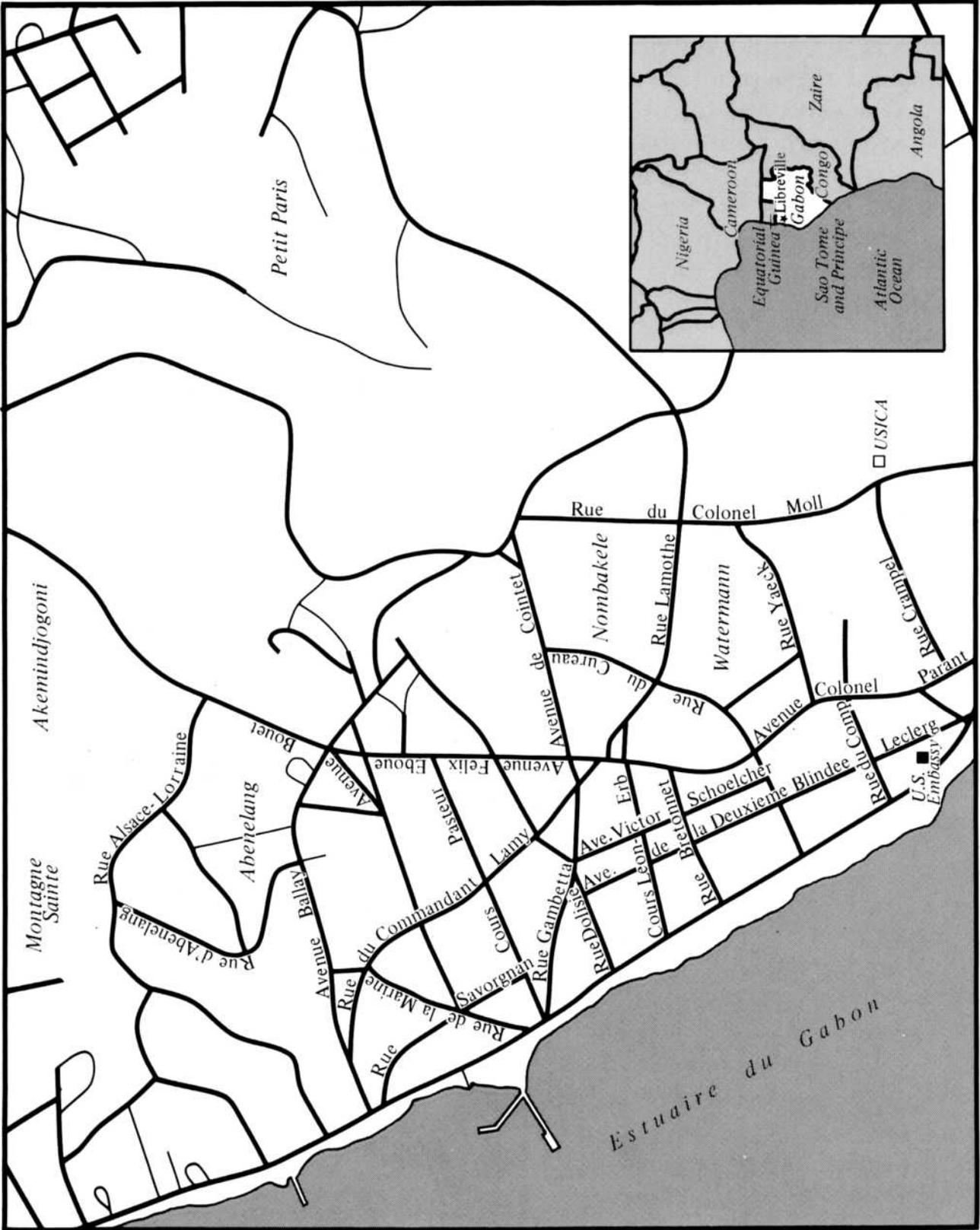
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Libreville, Gabon

GABON

Gabonese Republic

Major City:

Libreville

Other Cities:

Franceville, Lambaréné, Mouanda, Oyem, Port-Gentil, Tchibanga

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated August 1992. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

GABON, the first part of French Equatorial Africa to be settled in the middle of the 19th century, has enjoyed a remarkably stable relationship with its former colonial power. From 1968 to 1990, Gabon was a one-party state dominated by the Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG). In February 1990, amid widespread social, political, and economic discontent, the Gabonese president declared that the PDG's monopoly of power would be dissolved, a new constitution written, and all opposition parties legalized. The first multiparty elections took place in 1993.

Gabon became a republic within the French Community in 1958, and

two years later achieved full independence. Léon M'Ba, who formed Gabon's first political party (the Mouvement Mixte Gabonais) in 1946, became the country's first president. M'Ba was overthrown by a military coup in 1964, but was restored by French troops. M'Ba died in 1967. He was replaced by his vice-president, now known as El Hadj Omar Bongo in 1967. Bongo remains in power to date. Gabon's major strides in economic development, principally stimulated by vast oil resources, have made it a country of increasing economic importance in Central Africa.

MAJOR CITY

Libreville

Libreville, the capital, is an attractive, modern city, which has been transformed in the past decade from a sleepy town reminiscent of the colonial era into a metropolis of about 419,000. Included in this number is a predominantly French expatriate community.

The entire city has undergone extensive modernization. For years, dozens of huge cranes have shared the skyline with newly completed high-rise office and apartment

structures. The downtown core of Libreville is surrounded by residential districts where modern apartment buildings and houses are erected next to African huts with palm-leaf roofs. One side of the city is bounded by broad expanses of palm-lined, sandy beaches which are excellent for swimming or sunning; on the other side, new construction continues to push back the dense equatorial rain forest that covers nearly 75 percent of Gabon's land area. The high annual rainfall and ample sunshine encourage the growth of lush tropical vegetation, creating a charming overall impression.

For visitors, the city offers several luxury hotels—the Okoumé Palace Inter-Continental, Rapontchombo-Novotel, Dowe-Novotel, Sheraton, Monts de Cristal, and the Gamba. Libreville is one of the most expensive cities in the world, with scant accommodations available in all but the luxury class. However, due to overbuilding, hotel rates have dropped slightly in recent years.

For its permanent or expatriate residents, it boasts one of Africa's largest supermarkets and a number of interesting small shops and markets. Because nearly all goods are imported, usually from Europe, prices are extremely high. However, almost everything is available

locally to those willing to pay the price.

Education

The American International School, in residential Quartier Louis, was opened in 1975, and offers a full curriculum from kindergarten through grade eight. A curriculum similar to American schools is offered with English as the language of instruction. French is taught as a foreign language.

Several public and parochial schools in Libreville provide instruction (in French) through the equivalent level of high school. The curriculum is satisfactory and includes athletics; however, teaching standards, particularly in the upper grades, are low and classrooms tend to be seriously overcrowded.

In the city of Port-Gentil, the American School of Port-Gentil was opened in 1985. Sponsored by the Amoco Gabon Exploration Company, the school is located in a large, refurbished villa near the city's airport. The curriculum from kindergarten through eighth grade is similar to American schools; however, classes are taught in French. Sports such as tennis, soccer, swimming, and softball are offered. Art, music, drama, computer instruction, yearbook, and the school newspaper are popular extracurricular activities.

Recreation

The ocean provides the city's main recreation. At the edge of town are long, palm-lined beaches where swimming and sun bathing are possible year-round. Many fishing and water-skiing enthusiasts maintain motorboats in the area. The deeper waters offshore abound in many types of game fish—tarpon, barracuda, sailfish, marlin, sea bass, and occasional sharks. Protected waters closer to the coast allow for skin diving. Sailing and wind surfing are extremely popular.

The largest of Libreville's sports clubs is the Mindoube Club, which offers tennis, riding, a swimming pool, and a small bar and restau-

rant for its members. There are five lighted tennis courts, and stables where horses may be boarded or rented. Membership is easily arranged, but fees are relatively high.

The Golf Club de l'Estuaire offers a challenging 18-hole course. The fairways and sand greens are moderately well maintained, but the rough is dense during the rainy season.

Several other sports and hobbies are represented by clubs in Libreville. An *aéroclub* offers flying instruction and the opportunity for licensed pilots to use light aircraft, at rates well below those charged by charter operators. There also is a club for parachutists, and several for the martial arts. Bridge, chess, and philately groups welcome new members.

Governmental controls on firearms and hunting privileges have made sport hunting increasingly difficult, to the point where outings might be arranged only through personal intercession with a few expatriates or Gabonese who still have access to preserves.

Touring in Gabon is a popular form of recreation. The internationally renowned hospital founded by the late Dr. Albert Schweitzer, 160 miles from the capital in the town of Lambaréné, offers a pleasant weekend excursion. It can be reached by air, or by a four to five-hour drive through an attractive forested landscape. New roads are now providing shorter alternate routes. With suitable advance notice, adequate accommodations (including meals) can be obtained at Sofitel Ogooué Palace, a small hotel in town. The hospital staff extends a warm welcome to visitors and provides guided tours of the facilities, including both old and new hospital buildings and a small museum devoted to Dr. Schweitzer's life and work. Either the hospital staff or the hotel can also arrange a trip by motorized *pirogue* (dugout canoe) on the Ogooué River and into a series of adjacent lakes. Such a trip, which can last from one

hour to an entire day, offers an opportunity to see hippopotami, crocodiles, monkeys, and colorful birds.

All parts of Gabon can be reached by air, but plane fares are expensive. Travel by road continues to be made easier with the building of new arteries, although many places still can be reached only by four-wheel-drive vehicles during the rainy season. The Transgabon Railway, begun in 1974 and the largest civil engineering project in Black Africa not financed by international aid, has opened new passenger-rail possibilities that were previously unavailable.

Most provincial capitals now have adequate hotel facilities, and several private companies in the interior will offer hospitality to visitors if given prior notice. This increased availability of accommodations, combined with an active program of road construction, is making travel by car more practicable than ever before, but such trips will continue to require a pioneering spirit for several years to come. For those willing to make the effort, however, the country is extremely attractive and varied. Highlights include extensive mining operations in the southeast; open savanna country in the southwest (with herds of buffalo and, occasionally, elephant); mountain ranges stretching across the central part of the country; agricultural areas in the north; and miles and miles of unbroken forest nearly everywhere in Gabon.

Entertainment

Entertainment outside the home is limited, although possibilities have increased as the city has grown. A number of good, but usually expensive, restaurants offer Gabonese, French, Italian, Vietnamese, and North African specialties. Several expensive nightclubs offer dancing to recorded and live music.

Movies are available at the relatively new Komo cinema and Bowlingstore, which is comparable to a first-run theater in the U.S. All films are in French and often are of



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Street in Lambarene, Gabon

mediocre quality; films of American or British origin are dubbed. The U.S. Army and Air Force Motion Picture Service (AAFMPs), West African circuit, provides movies for government personnel and their families and guests. There are frequent film showings at the French Cultural Center.

Only occasionally is live theater or musical entertainment found in Libreville. Special shows or visiting entertainers appear on an irregular basis at the Komo or one of the hotels, and the French Cultural Center sponsors a number of lectures and theatrical presentations. The U.S. Information Service (USIS) Cultural Center has a library which lends books and records.

The American community in Libreville consists of embassy personnel, Peace Corps volunteers, missionaries, business people, and their families. The American Business

Association is composed of diplomatic officers and people involved with U.S. commercial enterprises in Gabon.

There are many foreign embassies here, including the U.S. Embassy in the heart of town, overlooking the sea. The number of diplomatic missions is constantly increasing. Social interaction between the expatriate business and professional community and Gabonese government officials and private individuals is part of the life of the international community.

OTHER CITIES

FRANCEVILLE, in Gabon's southeastern corner, lies on a tributary of the Ogooué River. It is an active trading center in the midst of a mining region. Gold is mined southwest of the town and coffee is one of the

area's main cash crops. Franceville has a population of over 75,000.

Albert Schweitzer founded his world-famous mission hospital in **LAMBARÉNÉ** in 1926. Expanded and modernized, it continues today. The town is on the Ogooué River, about 100 miles southeast of Libreville. Because the town is on an island, access is limited. The hospital, on the north bank, can be reached by boat or, in dry season, by foot. Lambaréné is a lumbering and trading center and is the home of a large palm oil factory. Palm oil products and lumber are usually exported down the Ogooué River to Port-Gentil, 100 miles to the west. Lambaréné has an estimated population of over 50,000.

In the southeast, **MOUANDA** (also spelled Moanda) attracts workers to its sophisticated manganese mining operations. A U.S.-French consortium has built schools, two hospitals, roads, and airfields in

Mouanda and the surrounding area. The consortium has also constructed facilities for the training of chemists and draftsmen. Mouanda has an estimated population of 45,500.

OYEM is a provincial capital 175 miles northeast of Libreville. Cash crops, such as coffee and cocoa, are grown on surrounding farms, and the city is also a major agricultural transport point to the Cameroonian ports of Kribi and Douala. Rubber and potatoes are also cultivated here. Oyem's population is roughly 89,600.

PORT-GENTIL, with its estimated population of 164,000, is on the delta of the Ogooué River, about 100 miles southwest of Libreville. The discovery of offshore oil deposits in 1956 stimulated Port-Gentil's commercial and industrial growth. It is considered the industrial capital of Gabon, since it is the center of the petroleum and plywood industries and the country's busiest port. Port-Gentil is also the site of a construction company, a chemical plant, a brewery, and processing plants for fish, rice, palm oil, and whale oil.

TCHIBANGA is a small town located near the Nyanga River in southwestern Gabon. With a population of approximately 54,000, Tchibanga is Gabon's major rice producing center. Cassava and peanuts are also grown here. A lumber industry and marble processing plant are also important. Recently discovered iron-ore deposits near Tchibanga raise hopes for a lucrative mining operation in the future.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Gabon straddles the equator on the west coast of Central Africa and borders on Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of Cameroon on the north, and the Republic of the Congo on

the east and south. Spreading across an approximate 102,300 square miles, it is roughly the size of Colorado and considerably larger than either the United Kingdom or the Federal Republic of Germany.

Heavy equatorial rain forests comprise nearly 75 percent of Gabon, with savanna areas in the southeastern and southwestern sections of the country covering an additional 15 percent. The remaining area is composed of swamps and water bodies, towns, villages, and roads. The Ogooué, the largest river in West Africa between the Niger and the Congo, drains most of Gabon. Winding in a broad arc from southeastern Gabon to the country's Atlantic coast, the Ogooué cuts through three major geographical regions: the coastal lowlands, the plateau region, and the mountains.

The lowlands lie along the Atlantic Ocean and extend up into the river valleys which slice through the broad interior plateau. They are lined with beaches and lagoons fringed with mangrove swamps; the forest extends from the banks of the broad, slow-moving rivers and covers most of the lowland areas. Inland, the terrain mounts to the plateau, and then to the mountains which rise as high as 5,000 feet. The highest point in Gabon is Mt. Iboundji (5,167 ft.). The land has considerable variety and the interior is often beautiful with its mountains, rolling hills, forests, and scattered grassland clearings.

Gabon's climate is typically equatorial—hot and humid during most of the year. Temperatures range from 65°F to 77°F in the dry season, and from 86°F to 93°F during the rainy season. There are four distinguishable seasons, although they vary somewhat each year: the long, dry period from late May until mid-September; the short, rainy season from mid-September until mid-December; the short, dry period from then through January; and the long, rainy interval from February until late May. Rainfall at Libreville is about 100 inches a year (the U.S. average is approximately 40

inches), with heaviest amounts falling in October, November, March, April, and May. Humidity is always high, between 80 and 87 percent. Because of seasonal ocean currents and a high cloud cover, the long, dry season is the coolest time of the year.

Population

Gabon has an estimated population of 1.2 million. Gabon has one of the smallest populations in Africa; the density (an average of four persons per square mile) is also the lowest of any on the continent. The people are concentrated along the rivers and roads, while large areas of the interior lie empty. During much of the past century, there was an actual decline in population because of disease and related factors, but increased medical care and social services have halted this trend. However, population growth is still slow. As a consequence, economic development is hampered by a labor shortage.

Almost all Gabonese are members of the Bantu language group. The more than 40 tribes have separate languages or dialects and different cultures. The largest tribe is the Fang. The other major groups are the Bapounou, Eschira, M'Bete, Bandjabi, Bakota, and Myene. The remainder of the population is divided among more than 30 other tribes, including some 2,000 Pygmies. The official language of Gabon is French. Since English is rarely spoken here, it is essential to have a working knowledge of French. Fang is the most widely used popular language. Bapounou, Myene, and other Bantu dialects are also spoken.

55 to 75 percent of Gabon's population are Christians, mainly adherents of the Roman Catholic Church. The remainder of the population practice animist beliefs or are Moslems.

Outside the major towns and cities, the people are grouped in small or moderate-size villages and live in square, wooden, or mud wattle houses surrounded by small plots of

manioc and stands of banana trees. European-style dress is worn by both Gabonese men and women throughout the country.

History

Pygmies are believed to have inhabited the Gabon estuary in early times, but it was the Mpongwe who occupied both banks when the Portuguese, the first explorers in that region, arrived in 1470. Many place names are Portuguese in origin: Cape Lopez, Cape Estérias, and even Gabon itself, derived from *gabo*, meaning a sailor's hooded cloak, similar to the shape of the estuary. The Portuguese, however, never established any permanent settlements. Dutch, French, and other ships continued to visit the coast, but no attempt to penetrate the country was made until the 19th century.

Although the Congress of Vienna outlawed the slave trade in 1815, for many years afterward local chiefs continued to gather slaves from the interior and sell them to British, Dutch, French, and Portuguese traders on the coast. The coast of Gabon came under French protection after 1839, when the French naval captain Bouet Willaumez concluded a treaty of friendship and protection with King Rapontchombo (Denis), one of several African chiefs commanding both sides of the estuary. In the next few years, most of the other chiefs accepted similar treaties with the French.

Comodore Matthew Calbraith Perry, commanding the American West Africa Squadron, first entered the estuary in 1843. In 1846, the French captured the slave ship *Eliza*, and most of the Congolese aboard perished before they could be hospitalized in Dakar. Fifty-two who survived were freed and sent to Gabon in 1849, and there they received from the French, plots of land on both sides of what is today called rue du Gouverneur Ballay. This village, named Libreville by the French, later became the capital of the Gabonese Republic.

The first American missionaries arrived in 1842. Their initial post was at Baraka in the Glass area, but their work later extended up the Como and the Ogooué to Lambaréné and beyond. At Bakara, the Americans began the first Western-type school in Equatorial Africa. Between 1890 and 1913, the American missionaries were replaced by others from the Paris Mission Society and, in 1961, this Protestant effort emerged as the independent Gabon Evangelical Church. In 1934, another group of American missionaries established work in southern Gabon, where they still labor in cooperation with that church.

A Monseigneur Barron of Philadelphia was sent by the Vatican in 1843 to explore the possibilities of a Roman Catholic mission in the estuary. The following year, Monseigneur Jean Remy Bessieux, a Frenchman, began the pioneer work for the Holy Heart of Mary order, which later became attached to the Fathers of the Holy Spirit. The Roman Catholic Church in Gabon has also come under the direction of African leaders.

During the 19th century, English and American trade dominated the estuary, especially from commercial centers such as Glass. Nevertheless, from 1845 on, the estuary was firmly under French control, and it was during this period that Gabon was gradually explored. Between 1855 and 1865, Paul du Chaillu explored the mountains in central Gabon which now bear his name.

American missionaries, du Chaillu, and French naval captains were the first Westerners to come into contact with the Gabonese of the interior regions. The Ogooué River was initially explored in 1854, when two American missionaries (whose surnames were Walker and Preston) ascended about half the distance to Lambaréné. Savorgnan de Brazza made the most thorough explorations between 1875 and 1883. Between 1888 and 1910, Crampel, Cureau, and Cottés explored the Woleu N'Tem region of northern Gabon. The famed Dr. Albert Sch-

weitzer arrived in Lambaréné, opening his jungle hospital in 1923 on the banks of the Ogooué, only a few hundred yards from the former trading house of the renowned merchant, Trader Horn.

In the late 1880s, when Africa was partitioned, Gabon fell under French rule, and, in 1886, its administrative history developed. Gabon was first a part of the French Congo administered from Dakar. It became a distinct administrative region in 1903 and, in 1910, was organized as Gabon, one of the territories of French Equatorial Africa, along with the Middle Congo, Ubangichari, and Chad. The federation of these four territories was dissolved in 1959 when Gabon refused political union, and the next year they became the four independent states of Gabon, Congo (Brazzaville), Central African Republic, and Chad. These states, together with Cameroon, have cooperated in several regional organizations. In 1966, they formed the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC) to harmonize tariffs and to coordinate economic development. Chad resigned from the group in 1968.

Government

Gabon's constitution calls for the election by universal suffrage of a president to a seven-year term. The president appoints a prime minister, who serves as head of government, and a Council of Ministers.

Legislative policy is conducted by the National Assembly. This unicameral body consists of 120 members serving five-year terms. A new constitution approved in July 1996 provided for the creation of a 91-member Senate. El Hadj Omar Bongo first became president in 1967, and has been reelected every election since. In 1999, he appointed Jean-Francois Ntoutoume-Emane as prime minister.

Gabon has a judiciary system comprised of a Supreme Court, a High Court of Justice, a Court of Appeal, a Superior Council of Magistracy

headed by the president, and a number of lesser courts. All Supreme Court justices are appointed by the president.

Administratively, the country is divided into nine provinces headed by governors, and further subdivided into 36 prefectures. Both governors and prefects are appointed by the president. The cities of Libreville and Port-Gentil are governed by elected mayors and Municipal Councils.

The flag of Gabon consists of green, yellow, and blue horizontal bands.

Arts, Science, Education

Gabon's intellectual, technological, and artistic life closely follows French development, although the beginnings of a resurgence in bringing a Gabonese perspective to these areas is seen. The National University, *Université Omar Bongo* (founded in 1970 and renamed eight years later), offers the *licence* to students in faculties of letters and humanities, sciences, economics and law, and engineering. Other post-secondary institutions include l'École Normale Supérieure, l'École Nationale des Eaux et Forêts, l'École des Cadres Ruraux, l'École Nationale d'Administration, Centre Universitaire des Sciences de la Santé, and l'École Normale d'Enseignement Technique. In addition, l'École Nationale d'Art et de Manufacture offers secondary-school level training in various arts and crafts. The *Université des Sciences et des Techniques de Masuku* was opened in 1987. Many students go to France for university and technical training. The Gabonese government launched an adult literacy campaign in recent years.

Traditional Gabonese art (mainly Fang, Bakota, and Bapounou) is among the finest in Africa. Gabonese craftsmen produce excellent wood and stone carvings, weapons, musical instruments, and tools.

Fang masks are especially popular among tourists. Most Gabonese art can be purchased from stalls, shops, and street vendors in Libreville and other large towns or at the Centre Artisanal near Libreville's Léon M'Ba Airport.

Until recently, Gabonese cultural traditions have been dwarfed by a decidedly European orientation on the part of the Gabonese elite. But in 1974, the first National Cultural Festival was organized in an attempt to preserve and encourage the development of Gabonese folklore.

Commerce and Industry

Gabon, with its abundant natural resources and small population, is one of the wealthiest nations in Africa, with a per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that is four times greater than that of most Sub-Saharan nations. The country is rich in oil. Nearly 40 oil companies operate in Gabon, and oil accounts for 50% of GDP. The offshore oil fields at Oguendo, Gamba, Mandji, and Lucina are the main producing areas. In January 1989, production began at the billion barrel Rabi-Kounga field in west-central Gabon, an area that promises to boost Gabon's petroleum output by 50 percent.

Gabon has been plagued in recent years by a burgeoning national debt and falling world oil prices. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) implemented a number of austerity programs that have stabilized Gabon's economy.

Mining is another of Gabon's economic resources. The country has rich supplies of manganese ore and uranium. Most of these minerals are exported to Western Europe. Other mineral resources include lead, iron ore, diamonds, gold, phosphates, barite, copper, and zinc. Gabon's mineral output will likely increase with the scheduled completion of the Transgabon Railway.

60 percent of Gabon's population is involved in subsistence agriculture. However, it contributed only a meager ten percent to GDP in 1988. As a result, Gabon must import 70 percent of its food requirements.

Gabon's manufacturing sector is very small and is plagued by high production costs and a shortage of skilled workers. Primary industries include wood processing, foodstuff production, chemicals, ship repair, textiles, and metalworking.

Traditionally, France has been Gabon's major trading partner. However, in recent years, Gabon has pursued stronger economic ties with Japan, Canada, the United States, and Western Europe.

The address of the Gabonese *Chambre de Commerce, d'Agriculture, d'Industrie, et des Mines du Gabon* is B.P. 2234, Libreville; telephone: 72-20-64; telex: 5554.

Transportation

In addition to daily service between Libreville and Paris, provided by UTA (Union de Transport Aériens, a French carrier) and Air Gabon, Libreville is connected directly to such other European cities as Brussels, Madrid, Geneva, Rome, Zurich, London, and Frankfurt. Service to capitals in central and West Africa is provided by Air Gabon and regional airlines (Air Afrique, Air Zaire, Nigerian Airways, and Cameroon Airways), and by stops on flights to and from Europe. Flights are available to such nearby points as Douala (Cameroon), Lagos (Nigeria), and Kinshasa (Zaire). The international airport at Libreville, Léon M'Ba, is seven miles from the city proper.

No passenger ships call at Libreville, but accommodations can, at times, be arranged on cargo vessels traveling north or south along the coast. This requires advance booking and considerable flexibility in travel.

The national airline (Air Gabon) or air charter companies are the carriers most used for travel within Gabon; rates in either case are high. Passenger train service is available on the Transgabon Railway, which covers 403 miles between Libreville and Franceville. Service is good and accommodations, especially in first-class, are quite comfortable.

Taxis abound, but are unsatisfactory as a means of transportation; drivers pick up anyone going in their general direction, and the result is often an extensive, crowded tour of the city before one's destination is reached. Taxi drivers seldom know the names of streets. Passengers should be prepared to give directions in terms of well-known landmarks (embassies, hotels, etc.) Tipping taxi drivers is not customary.

A private car is a necessity for an extended stay. Local licenses normally are issued without tests upon presentation of a valid license from another country. Third-party liability insurance is mandatory and must be obtained locally. Collision insurance is extremely expensive in Gabon, making it advisable to purchase from U.S. companies if possible.

Although Gabon has roughly 4,800 miles of roadway, less than 400 miles are paved. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are highly recommended, especially during the rainy seasons when most roads are virtually impassable.

There is a predominance of Volkswagens, French-made cars (Renault and Peugeot), Fiats, Hondas, and Toyotas, assuring these of the most complete servicing facilities. Parts supply and the quality of service are, however, erratic for all makes of vehicles. American cars are not sold in Gabon. Thus, parts and service for American models is generally unavailable.

Communications

Gabon has one of the most advanced telecommunications systems in Africa. Local and long-distance telephone service is available 24 hours a day. Long-distance service from Libreville and other large towns is excellent, but expensive. Telegraph connections usually can be made to most parts of the world during normal working hours and until noon on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. Fax service is available in the business center of the Hotel Okoumé Palace-Intercontinental and in other major hotels. There is regular air and sea mail service between Libreville and the U.S., with air transit time averaging about five to seven days. Whenever possible, post office box numbers rather than street addresses should be used when sending letters to Gabon.

The national radio network, La Voix de la Rénovation, and a provincial network broadcast 24 hours a day in French and local languages. Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and other services can be received on a multi-band shortwave radio; equipment is expensive locally.

Gabon's state-controlled television service is Radio diffusion-Télévision Gabonaise. It broadcasts approximately five or six hours a day and only in French. Daily news programs cover local and international events, and full-length films are shown frequently. Two color channels are in operation, but no foreign transmission is provided. American-made sets are not compatible with Gabonese television.

L'Union, a multi-page printed newspaper, is published daily with a modicum of international news. *Time*, *Newsweek*, and a few other English-language magazines are available at local bookstores, which also are well stocked with French newspapers, such as *Le Monde*, and periodicals.

The International Herald Tribune and *Le Monde* can be obtained by subscription, arriving within one to five days after publication.

Health

Libreville offers generally satisfactory medical facilities for ordinary problems (except nursing care). In addition to a large public hospital, there are several private clinics staffed by expatriate (largely French) physicians. In all, these various facilities include among their medical personnel a number of specialists (in such areas as obstetrics/gynecology and pediatrics) as well as general practitioners, and can cope with a wide variety of routine medical problems.

Several dentists are in practice in Libreville. Their work is of good quality, but expensive.

The level of community sanitation in Libreville is low compared to that in the U.S., but an effort is being made to raise standards as the city develops. Garbage, for example, is picked up six times weekly throughout the city, and there are periodic cleanup campaigns. Snakes are commonly seen in the city, and a local pest-control service provides effective treatment against occasional rodents. Insects are an irritating problem and can never be completely eliminated, but screening and judicious use of insecticides is helpful.

Gabon has most of the diseases common to tropical Africa: malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, and sleeping sickness. Bilharzia, caused by water snails, is endemic here. Avoid bathing in ponds, slow-moving streams, or lakes. It is important to be inoculated against yellow fever, tetanus, cholera, smallpox, typhoid, and polio prior to arrival. Malaria suppressants should also be taken—two to three weeks before arrival, and regularly thereafter.

While Gabon has somewhat lower rates for AIDS (SIDA in French) than other African countries, it is

definitely a major problem, especially among prostitutes. In West and Central Africa, AIDS is primarily a heterosexual disease. Extreme precautions should be taken to ensure one's safety.

The climate itself has a tiring effect, making adequate rest and intake of fluids essential. Respiratory, intestinal, or dermatological ailments are often aggravated by the hot, humid climate and lack of specialized medical attention. In order to prevent skin worms, all laundry dried outdoors should be pressed on both sides with a very hot iron.

Although local French technicians and other residents contend that the water supply is safe, Americans often boil and filter their water as an additional safety precaution. Raw fruits should be peeled before eating, and raw vegetables should be treated with a chlorine solution. Cook all meat well. Fresh milk should be avoided in favor of powdered or canned evaporated milk.

Clothing and Services

Lightweight cotton or linen clothing is worn year round but, occasionally, a sweater or light jacket is useful for evenings during the dry season. Clothing sold locally is of mediocre quality and extremely expensive. Homemade articles afford a considerable savings over ready-made, but the patterns available in Libreville are printed in French, and differ from American-type patterns in design and format (e.g., there are no seam allowances). A few Gabonese and West African tailors make interesting shifts and shirts from native cloth, including some with machine-made embroidery; the shirts are suitable for casual wear for men, while the women's shifts are often appropriate for more formal evening occasions.

As a rule, extended-stay requirements for men include five or six washable summer suits (including one or two in dark colors for special

occasions), a tuxedo with black jacket (to conform to local practice), and a supply of slacks and sports shirts. Women find that long dresses, caftans, or dressy pants outfits are popular for most evening events; loose fitting dresses and shifts are worn during the day. Both men and women should avoid wearing shorts or sleeveless shirts and tops when travelling in the countryside. Shirtsleeves for men and summer dresses for women are fine for informal gatherings.

Dry cleaning facilities are limited and expensive, making washable clothes the most practical choice. Hats are not worn except as protection from the sun. Whites and tennis shoes are standard for the courts.

Shoe sizes and quality are limited, and prices are high. Swimming attire should include three or four swim suits for each member of the family. An ample supply of underwear is needed, as frequent laundering tends to disintegrate both fabric and elastic.

Lightweight raincoats are useful during the heavy rains, but some people find them unbearable in the heat and humidity, and prefer umbrellas. Tennis shoes and thongs sometimes are substituted for boots for the same reason.

Basic supplies and medicines are available, but many items must be ordered from abroad and often take two months to arrive. Some products, such as hypoallergenic cosmetics, either are not carried locally, or are of questionable quality and exorbitantly priced. Prescription eyeglasses are usually unavailable. Bring extra pairs of eyeglasses and contact lenses.

Domestic Help

Although household help is desirable, well-trained domestics are difficult to find. Most are, at best, moderately skilled, and are expensive in comparison with services rendered. Domestics who will

assume multiple responsibilities are rare, so it is necessary to hire a separate person for cleaning, cooking, gardening, laundry, etc. Most servants do not live in. Servants should have regular medical examinations, as there is a wide incidence of disease.

Local law requires that insurance be carried on domestics. Medical treatment is provided by the Gabonese Government through the social security program, as is a basic list of medications.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| Mar/12 | Renovation Day |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| May/June | Whitsunday" |
| | Pentecost* |
| May/June | Whitmonday* |
| Aug. 15 | Assumption Day |
| Aug. 17 | Independence Day |
| Nov.1 | All Saints' Day |
| Dec. 2 | Christmas Day |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Id al-Adha* |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |

*Variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Gabon can be reached by daily air service from Paris, and by frequent flights from other cities in Europe.

A valid passport and an entry visa are required for travel to Gabon. Entry visas can be obtained from the Gabonese Embassy in Washington. All persons entering Gabon are also required to have yellow fever shots.

Health regulations for animals are not enforced, and no quarantine is

imposed. However, visitors are advised to follow formal regulations. Be prepared to present a veterinarian's certificate of health indicating that the animal has been inoculated against rabies (not less than three weeks nor more than six months prior to arrival) or has been in a rabies-free area for the past two months. Gabon itself is not a rabies-free area and the climate makes life uncomfortable for most pets.

Gabonese law permits only the entry of rifles, shotguns (nonautomatic), and 100 rounds of ammunition. Pistols are not permitted. Prior customs approval is required. All weapons are inspected and registered by the Gabonese government.

Several Roman Catholic churches, and two Protestant churches of l'Église Evangélique du Gabon (akin to French Protestant or U.S. Presbyterian) are in the capital city. One of these Protestant churches was built by American missionaries in 1848. All services are in French.

The time in Gabon is Greenwich Mean Time plus one.

Gabon forms a monetary union with other members of the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC). The common currency is the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) *franc*, issued by a central institution, Banque des États de l'Afrique Centrale.

Seven commercial banks with international affiliations maintain offices in Gabon: Banque Internationale pour le Gabon (BIPG), a subsidiary of Banque Internationale pour l'Afrique Occidentale (BIAO); Union Gabonaise de Banque (UGB), an affiliate of Crédit Lyonnais; Pay-Bas Gabon (Paribas); Banque Internationale pour le Commerce et l'Industrie du Gabon (BICIG); Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI); Barclay's and Citibank.

The metric system of weights and measures is used in Gabon.

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

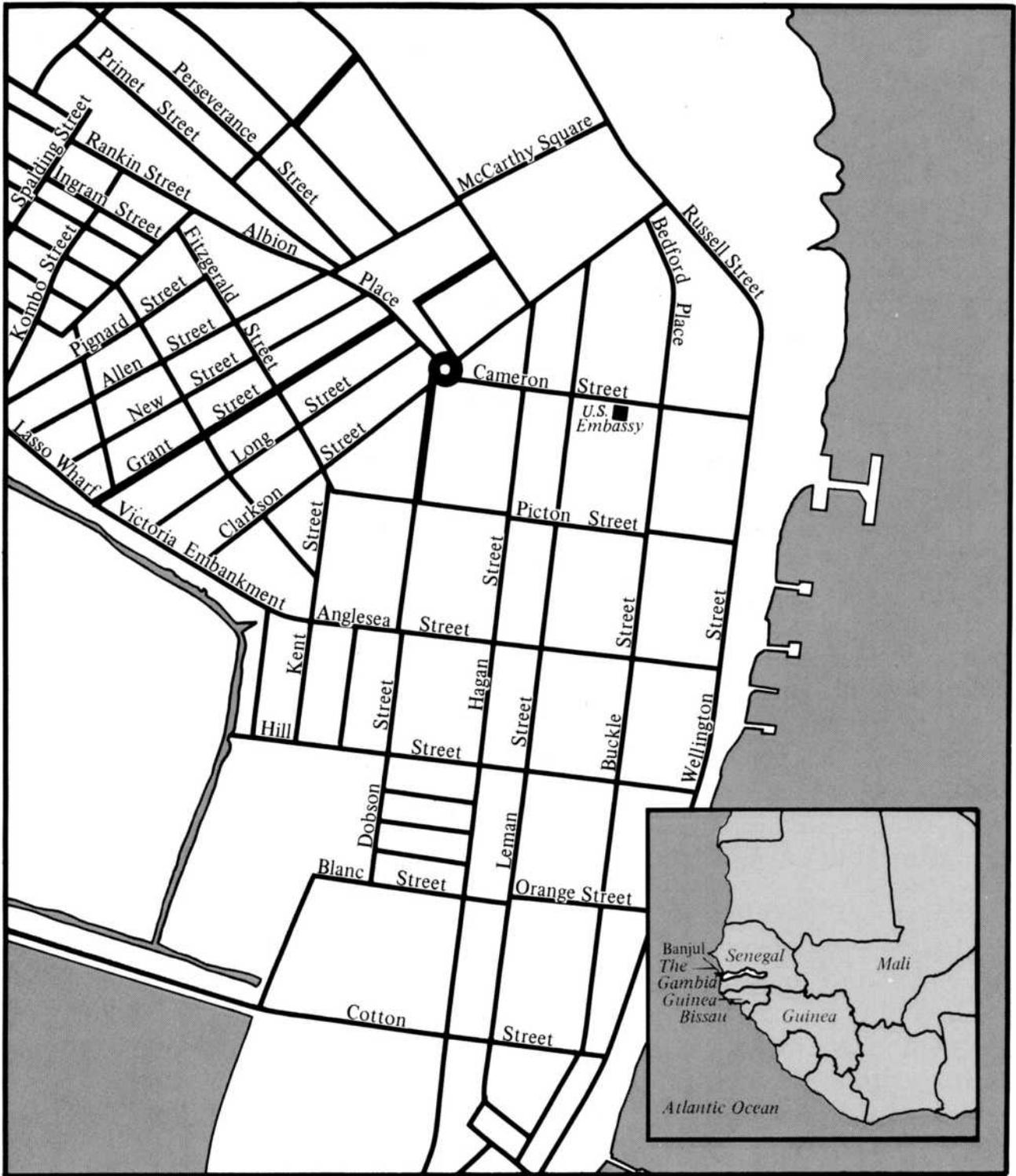
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Banjul, Gambia

THE GAMBIA

Republic of The Gambia

Major City:

Banjul

Other City:

Juffureh, Tanji

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated March 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

THE GAMBIA is part of the Sahel region of Africa which, in 1588, became Great Britain's first possession on that continent. It had once belonged to the Empire of Ghana and the Kingdom of the Songhais. When Portuguese navigators arrived at the mouth of the Gambia River in 1455, this little enclave on the bulge of Africa's western region was an integral part of the Kingdom of Mali, the medieval empire acclaimed as a seat of culture and learning.

During the ensuing centuries of exploration and settlement, Great Britain and France struggled for supremacy in the region until British claims were recognized in 1783.

The Gambia was twice placed under the government of Sierra Leone in the 19th century, and finally a boundary agreement was reached in 1889, when the little country became a British crown colony. The Gambia gained independence February 18, 1965, and has been a republic since 1970.

MAJOR CITY

Banjul

Banjul, the capital city and main trading center of The Gambia, is situated on the Island of St. Mary near the mouth of the Gambia River. The British had established a garrison here early in the 19th century in an effort to abolish the slave trade, and the small, sandy strip of land, called Banjul, was renamed Bathurst (Banjul) after a colonial administrator. The original name was restored to the city in 1973.

Banjul has an estimated population of 186,000 (2000 est.). Included are Gambians, some Americans, several hundred Europeans, Middle Easterners, and other Africans. The Lebanese and Mauritians are often shopkeepers and up-river traders. Relations among the ethnic groups are harmonious.

A sizable number of Gambians commute daily to Banjul from the growing urban center of Serrekunda.

Education

Most children in kindergarten through eighth grade attend the Banjul American Embassy School (BAES) founded in 1984. The school is open to English-speaking students of all nationalities. A U.S. curriculum is followed with French taught as a foreign language. Social studies include the social and cultural history of Gambia, supplemented by local field trips. Extracurricular activities such as field trips, yearbook, and sports are offered.

The Marina International School is located on the outskirts of Banjul. Its curriculum is similar to that of British primary schools. This school is rarely attended by American students. French-speaking education is available from the Ecole Francais. Both the Ecole Francais and the BAES offer pre-kindergarten programs which have been used by Americans.

American children above grade eight usually attend high school in the U.S. or in Europe. There is, however, an American School run by the Methodist missionaries in Dakar, and Ziguinchor has a boarding



Courtesy of Kenneth Estell

Tree-lined street in Banjul, The Gambia

school for English-speaking students.

Recreation

Recreation in this capital city revolves around the ocean, the beaches, the river, and the home. Attractive beaches line the entire Gambian coast. It should be noted, however, that the surf is rough and dangerous in places, and no one should swim alone. Care should also be taken on beaches to guard against theft or personal assault.

Surf fishing is popular and, in season, it is possible to make catches of many varieties. The quantity and quality of fish are excellent. Local fishermen use nets cast from the shore or set from large *pirogues* (dugout canoes). Fishing tackle and gear can be purchased in Banjul, but are expensive.

The water near Banjul is too cloudy for skin diving and spearfishing, but suitable places can be found down the coast. An experienced local fisherman should be hired as a guide to point out where the currents are strongest.

Privately owned dinghies and *pirogues* may be rented. A boat club here sponsors monthly sailboat races, and small sail- and power-

boats are occasionally for sale. Two larger sailing yachts in the area offer opportunities for longer cruises up-river and in ocean tributaries.

The Gambia is a bird-watcher's paradise where more than 400 species can be sighted. The Gambia Ornithological Society is active in sponsoring walks, lectures, and slide presentations for its members, who pay a small membership fee. Those interested in gardening will find that flowers, tropical trees, and a variety of vegetables will grow with some effort and care in The Gambia.

Abuko Nature Reserve, about 15 miles from Banjul, is a small fenced-in park where the visitor may walk through dense bush and open veld country. Monkeys, small antelope, reptiles, and birds can be seen in their native habitat. A few hyenas, a lion, and some chimpanzees are kept in natural enclosures in a zoo "orphanage" at the center of the area. The best time for seeing animals is early morning or late afternoon.

Hunting is popular, and game includes wild boar, guinea fowl, duck, pigeon, and sand grouse. Hunting is not permitted everywhere, so make arrangements to

hunt with someone who is familiar with legal hunting areas.

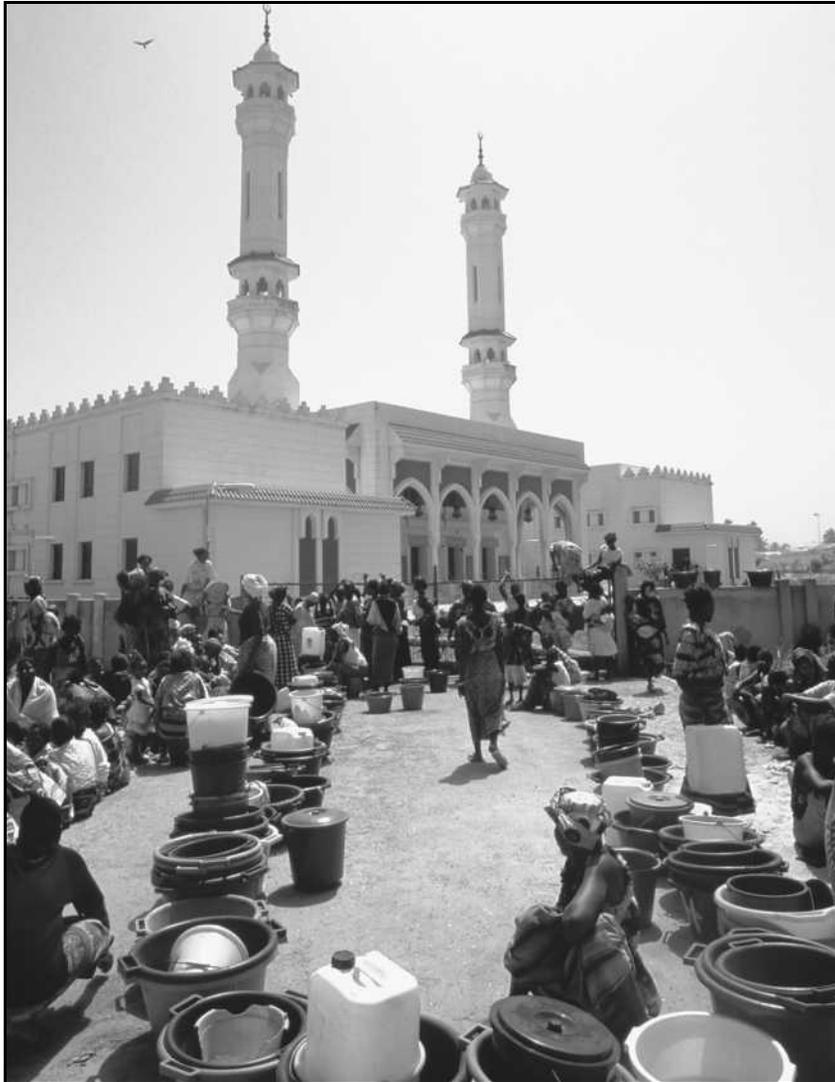
Near the U.S. ambassador's residence at Fajara, a private international club with open membership is in operation. It maintains a golf course, a swimming pool, two tennis courts, squash and badminton courts, and facilities for Ping-Pong and snookers (a form of pool). There are also a bar and restaurant. A number of Gambians, including the president, play golf frequently. Several other tennis courts are to be found in Banjul and Bakau.

Hotels in the Banjul area charge a small fee for nonresident use of their swimming pools.

The Gambia has several interesting historical sites, including two former colonial forts. Fort Bullen at Barra, across the river from Banjul, was built in 1826 to guard what was then Bathurst from possible invasion; the fort on James Island, about 20 miles up-river, dates back to 1651. After changing hands many times between the French and British, the James Island fort served for 125 years as the seat of British influence in the region. Juffreh, a hamlet near the fishing village of Albreda across from James Island, was made famous as the ancestral home of the late Alex Haley, author of *Roots*, a book which symbolizes the African ancestry of black Americans.

Scattered along the north bank of the river are the "stone circles," believed to be ceremonial sites dating back as far as 100 years B.C. The circles, which appear to contain sacrificial burials, consist of 10 to 24 cylinder-shaped megaliths cut from laterite of varying heights. About 20 of these sites are found between Kaur and Georgetown; the most interesting are at Wassau and Ker Batch.

Other notable historical sites include the Kataba Fort, a stronghold for local chiefs during the 19th-century Muslim holy wars, and the obelisk near Karantaba on the north bank, erected in honor of



Mosque in Banjul, The Gambia

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the great West African explorer, Mungo Park. It is claimed that he began his memorable journeys at this point in search of the Niger River.

Other possible excursions in The Gambia are visits to the Gunjar and Tanji fishing villages along the southern coast; Tendaba Camp half-way up-river, where there are bungalows, a swimming pool, a few caged animals, and a restaurant on the river; Georgetown and Basse, larger towns and former important river trading centers; Kartong, the southernmost town along the coast, with its crocodile pools; and Berending (several miles east of Barra on

the north bank) and Katchikally in Bakau.

Excursions in Senegal

Dakar, the capital of Senegal, is roughly 190 miles from Banjul—a five-hour drive. It offers modern theaters (French films), good French food, museums, art galleries, a university, and other metropolitan services. Ziguinchor, the capital of the Casamance region in southern Senegal, is approximately 95 miles south of Banjul, and can be reached by car in three hours. It is a former Portuguese settlement on the Casamance River, and has a good crafts market and several good French restaurants. *Pirogues* may

be rented for bird-watching along the river.

It is also possible to make several interesting excursions from Ziguinchor, including trips to Cap Skirring on the coast; Basse-Casamance Park; and the old Jola impluvium houses, which provided for the collection of rainwater through the roof directly into atrium receptacles. Other places to visit in Senegal are Djoudi Bird Refuge in the northern part of the country; St. Louis—former French West African capital on an island at the mouth of the Senegal River; Kafountine, Misirah, and Toubacoutta, all coastal tourist spots providing accommodations and French cuisine; Kaolack's municipal market; Touba, the religious capital of one of Senegal's leading Muslim sects, and the site of the largest mosque in sub-Saharan Africa; a tapestry museum at Thies; and Niokolo Koba Park in eastern Senegal, which has a number of lions, elephants, hippos, antelope, and other small animals.

Entertainment

Entertainment in The Gambia is limited. In Banjul, the Fajara Club offers sports facilities, a bar/restaurant, library services, and social activities for both adults and children. This open-membership club is mainly patronized by resident expatriates and senior government officials. The American Mission Cooperative Association organizes group activities at Easter, the Fourth of July, and Christmas, and also shows weekly films for staff members and guests at the American Embassy. Other active groups include the Caledonian Society (Scottish dancing); the Ornithological Society; the Tuesday Group, an international women's club; and the Banjul Music Society, which presents two major performances a year. The Alliance Francaise offers French classes and screens weekly French films.

Banjul has an indoor cinema which occasionally shows American films. Open-air theaters are located in the capital and in the towns of Bakau, Serrakunda, Lamin, Brikama, and

other places up-river. These cinemas feature mainly Indian, Kung-Fu, and Arabic films.

Major hotels have dance floors or discos, the most popular being those at the Senegambia and Novotel. The Tropicana Night Club has a more local flavor. During the tourist season, hotels stage Gambian cultural shows including dancing. The African Experience produces an excellent show twice weekly during the season. The evening consists of a series of local dances with authentic Gambian cuisine served between dances.

Several formal dinner dances are organized by various groups during the year. Occasionally, visiting foreign performers appear in The Gambia; most performances take place at the Independence Stadium. Local artists also perform at the Stadium, and from December to April, soccer games are staged there on weekends. The Gambia's National Museum features exhibits in arts and crafts, history, and ethnography. It is located on Independence Drive in Banjul.

The American community in The Gambia consists of U.S. Government personnel and contract employees, Peace Corps volunteers, and others not directly connected to official staffs. Social life is relaxed and informal and revolves around small dinner and cocktail parties, picnics, beach parties, and occasional events sponsored by the American Mission Cooperative Association.

International organizations represented in The Gambia include the United Nations Development Program, the European Community, World Health Organization, Food and Agricultural Organization, and World Food Program. In addition, over a dozen countries are represented by honorary consuls. Most other diplomats officially accredited to The Gambia are resident in Dakar.

OTHER CITIES

JUFFUREH, a small village 20 miles from Banjul, was the home of Kunta Kinte, claimed to be late author Alex Haley's great, great-grandfather. Haley's best-seller, *Roots*, is based on Kunta Kinte's life.

The small village of **TANJI**, on the Atlantic Coast, is a must see for those interested in Gambian culture. The Tanji Village Museum is a small open-air museum built as a model village of Gambian homes as they existed about a hundred years ago. Visitors can go inside a number of huts to see exhibits on village history and artifacts of village life. The museum's garden contains plants such as Wolof, Mandinka, Serer and Jola, which have medicinal use. The gardens are part of the ongoing research of the museum into the uses of plants in medicine, textile dyes and in traditional beliefs. Nature trails around the museum and the village are offered with guided or self-guided tours. The museum also often offers presentations of traditional music, dance and rituals. An artisan area displays traditional handicrafts and a small restaurant serves a sampling of traditional foods.

Visitors may want to stay at the Paradise Inn Lodge, located on the banks of the Tanji River. Mountain bikes and kayaks can be rented as well as jeeps for those looking for a safari. The inn offers workshops and presentations on drum and dance, African cooking and batik making, and boasts of a beautiful tropical garden.

About 2 miles north of the village is the Tanji Bird Reserve. Truly a bird watchers paradise, the area contains dunes, lagoons, dry woodland, coastal scrub, mangrove patches and the reefs and islets of Bijol Island. Nearly 300 species of bird have been sighted here, both indigenous species and European migrants.

Creek fishing on the Tanji River is a relaxing way to spend an afternoon, as is a visit to the unspoiled Tanji beaches.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Situated on the western coast of Africa, between the equator and the Tropic of Cancer, the Republic of The Gambia forms a long, narrow strip on either side of the Gambia River. Except for the seacoast, it is surrounded by the Republic of Senegal and extends inland for 200 miles (320 kilometers). The country is 30 miles (48 kilometers) wide along the coast, narrowing to 15 miles (24 kilometers) at its eastern border. From sea level, interior elevations rise to 112 feet.

The Gambia River rises in the Fouta Jallon (Djallon) mountains of Guinea and empties into the Atlantic Ocean. Twelve miles wide at the mouth, near Cape St. Mary, it narrows to three miles at Banjul, The Gambia's capital city. It is fringed with mangrove swamps for the first 170 miles inland, followed by open savanna and, in places, by red ironstone cliffs. The river is tidal throughout most of the country, and the intrusion of salt water ranges from 90 miles in the wet season to nearly 160 miles in the dry period. Ships up to 3,000 tons, with a maximum draft of 17 feet, are able to navigate 150 miles up-river to the trading port of Kaur. Banjul has a well-equipped port with two berths, spacious anchorages, large customs clearing warehouses, and a 25-ton capacity crane. Smaller fishing and pleasure boats are anchored in Oyster Creek, two miles from Banjul.

The Gambia is vulnerable to periodic drought because it is part of the arid Sahel zone between the Sahara desert and the coastal rain forest. Its vegetation is comprised of savanna woodlands, grass, and

shrubs which grow in low-nutrient soils. Palm trees are found in the coastal area and along the riverbanks, and baobab and kapok trees are common throughout the country. The subtropical climate has a rainy season from June to October, and a dry transitional period from October to December. The dry season then begins, and extends through May. The onset and end of the rains are marked by high temperatures and humidity, whereas the dry season is noted for the dust-laden *harmattan*, winds which blow in from the central Sahara. Temperatures range from a low of 48°F (9°C) in January to a high of 110°F (43°C) in October. Rainfall ranges from an annual mean of 48 inches in the west to 34 inches up-river.

Because of the humid climate and the salt air along the coast, metal rusts rapidly. Books and leather goods often mildew or are attacked by silverfish and other insects, especially in the rainy season. Houses near the sea are affected by the corrosive salt air and spray. Termites abound year round in soils and woodwork. During the dry season, the winds blow in a fine dust which quickly gathers everywhere. However, the moderate temperatures during this interval of sunny days and cool nights give The Gambia one of West Africa's more pleasant climates, particularly in the narrow coastal region.

Population

The Gambia's estimated population is 1.4 million people. About 80 percent live in rural areas outside the urban communities of Bakau, Serrekunda, and the capital city of Banjul. Population density for the country is about 120 persons per square kilometer, making The Gambia one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. Of the major ethnic groups, Mandinkas predominate with 42 percent of the population, followed by Fula (18%) and Wolof (16%). Other substantial ethnic groups include Jola (10%), Serahuli (9%), Serer (2%), Manjago (2%), and Aku (1%). Just over one

percent of the population comes from other African countries with non-Africans accounting for fewer than one percent (mostly Europeans and Lebanese). Although each ethnic group has its own particular traditions, language, and background, the people of The Gambia share many cultural patterns due to historical connections, the small size of the country, generations of intermarriage, and the unifying force of Islam. Gambians also share much of their cultural heritage with the people of Senegal and other West African countries.

English is the official language in schools and government, but local tongues are widely spoken. While Wolof is commonly used in the urban areas, Mandinka predominates in rural sections. Other local languages are often heard.

The population growth rate is estimated at 3.14 percent. The birth rate is 42 per thousand, and life expectancy is about 54 years. Approximately 90 percent of the population is Muslim, with nine percent Christian and, to a lesser extent, followers of traditional animist beliefs and practices. Freedom of religion is recognized, and religious institutions are autonomous.

Government

A member of the British Commonwealth, The Gambia became independent in 1965. A new constitution, adopted in 1970, established a democratic system of government based on universal adult suffrage, a multi-party electoral system, and respect for basic human and political rights. Three independent branches were established: executive, legislative, and judicial, with presidential and parliamentary elections every five years.

The executive branch is headed by a president, who is elected for a five-year term. The president then appoints a vice president and a cabinet from members of parliament. The judiciary consists of a supreme court, court of appeals, and various

subordinate courts. The legal system is based on a composite of English common law, Koranic law, and customary law.

The 1970 constitution was suspended after a military junta in 1994, but presidential elections were held two years later and a new 53-member National Assembly was formed, with four members appointed by the president and the rest elected. At the time Yahya Alphonse Jamus Jebulai Jammeh was elected president. He was reelected in 2001.

For administrative purposes, The Gambia is divided into five divisions, each headed by a regional commissioner (i.e., Western, North Bank, Lower River, MacCarthy Island, and Upper River divisions). Further divisions are the districts, which are headed by chiefs who are elected by village heads. The district chiefs retain traditional power of customary law. Local government consists of six rural councils and two urban councils which have their own treasuries but are responsible to the Ministry of Local Government and Lands.

The Gambian flag consists of red and green horizontal bands and a central white, blue, and white horizontal stripe symbolizing a river flowing through fertile land at sunset.

Arts, Science, Education

The government of The Gambia is encouraging a revival of its artistic and cultural traditions. It sponsors the Gambia National Troupe, a musical and theatrical company which performs extensively in the Banjul area. Members of the troupe have traveled widely in Europe, the former Soviet Union, and in other African countries. An annual cultural festival of traditional Mandinka music and dance was inaugurated in 1983 at Georgetown. The Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, and Culture also sponsors performances of traditional dance,

as well as instruction in the music of the *griot*. More than just a musician, the *griot* in Gambian society embodies much of the country's national heritage through the historical narratives and family genealogies that *griot* families have passed on for generations. The songs of both *kora* and *balafon* musicians trace the history of the region and its founding families back to the 13th century. While the *kora* is a stringed instrument, the *balafon* is much like a xylophone. Individual and ensemble performances with these instruments may be heard in Banjul and surrounding areas at hotels and public functions. Several good recordings of this music, and also of traditional drumming, are available.

Local handicrafts, tie-dyeing, batik, wood carving, and the making of gold and silver jewelry are expanding as a result of increasing tourism. The Gambia National Museum features exhibits on traditional arts and crafts, and on history and ethnography. It also has a tape collection of oral histories of the region and videotapes on aspects of Gambian culture.

Scientific research is underway in several fields important to tropical and developing countries. Medical study of tropical diseases has been conducted by the British Medical Research Council since 1947; and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) has actively sponsored a major research program of agricultural research and diversification.

The Gambia's education and training policies continue to focus on primary education, literacy, and qualitative improvements in curriculum and teacher instruction. A National Vocational Training Directorate, established in 1979, coordinates the country's technical training. Its current priorities are to upgrade the skills of those already employed. The Gambia Technical Training Institute opened in 1983, and a Management Development Institute for instruction in mid-level management and accounting proce-

dures opened in 1984. The country has no university, but one may be established from the Schools of Education and Agriculture at Yundum.

The Gambia's literacy rate is very low. Only 48 percent of adults age 15 and over can read and write.

Commerce and Industry

The Gambia, with a per capita income of \$1100 in 2001, is one of the world's poorest countries. It is confronted with the deep-rooted problems of a high population density, limited land space, a serious rate of infant mortality, high illiteracy, a dearth of natural resources, a single-crop economy, and periodic drought. The country depends heavily on agriculture, with groundnuts accounting for the majority of export earnings. Fish, cotton lint, and palm kernels are also exported. Millet, sorghum, and rice are the staple food crops. Because emphasis is on groundnut cultivation, production has been diverted from staple crops, and food must be imported. Other imports include raw materials, fuel, machinery, and transport equipment. The country is currently pursuing policies to diversify its economy and become self-sufficient. Current emphasis is on increasing cotton, rice, livestock, and fish production and irrigating swamp areas along the River Gambia. The Gambia receives financial and technical assistance from a number of international donor agencies.

The Gambia's industrial sector is very small. Groundnut oil milling is the major source of industrial activity, although the tourist and fishing industries are growing in importance. There has been substantial investment in shrimp farming and the poultry industry. The Banjul suburb of Kanifing is developing an industrial park which already includes such industries as a brewery and soft-drink factory, shoe manufacturing, cement and brick production, lime juice production, a metalworking factory, a soap and plastics works, and several other

smaller enterprises. The Gambia Produce Marketing Board, a parastatal agency, controls groundnut exports, while a number of large trading houses dominate the import sector.

Because of a rapidly expanding tourist industry, additional hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops are being built in the Fajara beach area. The tourist season is from October to May. The 1991–1992 tourist season attracted nearly 113,000 tourists, but tourism declined significantly in 1999 and 2000. Most of the tourists are Scandinavian, German, British, and French. A number of American tourists have been drawn to The Gambia, largely in response to *Roots*, the story built around Alex Haley's homeland.

The address of The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry is P.O. Box 33, Banjul.

Transportation

Banjul is 25 minutes by air from Dakar's Yoff airport, where numerous international connections can be made. Twice-daily service to Dakar is available via Gambia Air Shuttle and other carriers fly there several times during the week. British Airways has nonstop service between London and Banjul twice weekly and, during the tourist season, various charter flights arrive from Europe. Also during the tourist season, there are weekly flights to the Canary Islands.

Banjul International Airport at Yundum is 17 miles from the capital. The runway is one of the finest in West Africa. The airport is limited in marginal weather due to a lack of instrument landing aids.

Occasionally, passenger accommodations can be booked to Banjul on cargo ships sailing from European ports. Cruise ships call at Banjul on their way to other West African ports from the Canary Islands.

In Banjul, taxis are available at designated taxi parks and hotels. Like taxis in other areas of Africa south

of the Sahara, however, the vehicles are often run down and in short supply during the tourist season. Fares go up during the tourist season. An exact fare should be agreed on in advance between driver and passenger.

Gambians drive on the right side of the road. The country's major asphalt road runs from Banjul along the south bank of the river to Basse. The north bank road from Barra to Georgetown is a wide laterite all-weather surface. Feeder roads linking remote settlements with these two main roads have been developed throughout the country. During the rains, though, many of the secondary surfaces become impassable.

The Trans-Gambia Highway linking Dakar with Ziguinchor in the Casamance area of southern Senegal crosses the north- and south-bank roads at Farafenni, where a ferry service operates. The crossing normally takes 25 minutes, but frequent delays of up to an hour or more are encountered. Other ferries operate at Basse, Bansang, Georgetown, Kaur, Kuntaur, Kerevan, and Barra. The Barra/Banjul crossing is the most dependable, and takes about 30 minutes. The first ferry is scheduled to leave Banjul every day after 8 a.m., but does not operate when the tide is low.

A privately owned car, preferably a compact, is essential for any extended stay in The Gambia. Vehicles with high road clearance are the most practical. Nissans, Toyotas, Renaults, Suzukis, Peugeotts, and Mercedes can be bought in Banjul. American cars are risky choices, as repair facilities and spare parts are virtually unobtainable. Expatriates who decide to ship an American car to The Gambia should have an ample supply of spare parts on hand. Gasoline and oil can be purchased locally, but it is more expensive than in the U.S.

Although a valid U.S. or international driver's license will be temporarily recognized in The Gambia, a local license is required if residency

is planned. Local third-party liability car insurance is mandatory as well.

Communications

The Gambia telecommunications company (GAMTEL) installed a new digital switching telephone system in November 1986. Service on this system has been very reliable, and calls to Banjul and its surrounding area can be made with the least amount of difficulty. Calls up-country are more problematic because of the old microwave equipment and frequent power outages occurring in these areas.

Direct international dialing (including to the U.S.) is available for a small deposit fee. International calls cannot be made from a telephone without this capacity. Subscribers who have not paid the deposit have to make international calls at the GAMTEL booth in Banjul. Although international calls are expensive, monthly service charges and local calls are quite reasonable. Subscribers can obtain monthly printouts of all calls for a small fee. Telegrams and telexes can be sent from GAMTEL headquarters in Banjul. Telex charges are reasonable.

Mail service is adequate, but slow. International delivery from the U.S. takes a week to 15 days; surface mail, several months. All mail should be carefully imprinted in capital letters.

The Gambia is served by a few radio stations. Radio Gambia, a government broadcasting service, operates daily with over 100 hours of broadcasts a week in seven languages, including English. Its coverage is countrywide, although reception is poor in the eastern section. Radio Syd, a privately owned commercial station, broadcasts entertainment programs—mostly music—for 140 hours a week. It also simulcasts Radio Gambia's news programs. Radio Syd's signal reaches primarily the Western Division, but can be heard up to Mansakonko. Radio One is an FM music station.

A good shortwave radio is required to receive the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Voice of America (VOA), and other international transmissions.

The Gambia has one government owned TV station and, with a good antenna, television programs can be received from Senegal. Videotape recorders are growing in popularity in the international community; an informal exchange service is available, but U.S. and European systems differ from one another. Most Americans use VHS format cassettes. A multi-system television and VCR are recommended.

Banjul has several newspapers that comment on local affairs. *The Gambia Weekly* (formerly *Gambia News Bulletin*), is published three times a week by the Ministry of Information. *The Gambia Onward* is published three times weekly. *The Nation* and *The Gambian Times*, which is published by the People's Progressive Party, appear fortnightly. All are published in English.

British papers can be purchased occasionally in Banjul, but supply is irregular. *The International Herald Tribune* also comes by air, but is irregular and often a week old upon arrival. *Time*, *Newsweek*, and European and African magazines also are available locally, usually with some delay.

Several bookstores in the capital carry paperbacks, stationery supplies, and children's books, but the supply is severely limited and would not meet the needs of a family. The Gambia National Library has a limited selection of books and periodicals and the Fajara Club maintains a small lending library. The U.S. Embassy has a small reading room with American periodicals, reference materials, and school catalogues; it also shows CBS weekly newscasts on videotape. Only a few technical journals are available in Banjul.

Health

Health facilities in The Gambia do not meet U.S. standards. The government runs two hospitals (the Royal Victoria in Banjul and a smaller hospital in Bansang) and operates a network of health centers and dispensaries throughout the country. The expatriate community makes use of private hospital clinics including the Westfield Clinic and the British Medical Research Council in Fajara. Fully qualified doctors, trained in the U.K., are on staff at each of these clinics, but they are not always immediately available. In addition, the American community has access to several private physicians. Obstetric cases and medical evacuations are sent to Europe or the U.S.

Several dentists have private practices in Banjul, but they are not equipped to do major dental work.

Amoebic dysentery and many gastro-intestinal parasitic infections are common in The Gambia. Malaria, hepatitis, meningitis, and rabies are endemic. Other diseases such as tuberculosis, schistosomiasis, and upper respiratory infections (influenza) are common. Skin infections such as athlete's foot, heat rash, and boils can be problems, especially in the rainy season.

Personal hygiene is extremely important under tropical conditions. The Gambia's water supply is one of the cleanest in West Africa, yet its bacterial content differs significantly from U.S. water supplies. Filtering and boiling is necessary, at least until the body becomes acclimated to the new conditions. Vegetables should be soaked or washed in an iodine or chlorine solution, and local meats should be frozen for ten days before being cooked, or otherwise cooked until well done. A good supply of bottled water is needed for field trips.

Malarial suppressants *must* be taken regularly, and repellents and mosquito nets should be used as needed. It is advisable to attend to small cuts or infections immedi-

ately. Rabies is endemic, and all contact with stray animals should be avoided. Antirabies vaccine is available in case of an accident.

Clothing and Services

Informal lightweight clothing is the standard for office attire and for most social occasions. Men find that heavier suits, long-sleeved shirts, and sweaters are needed in the cooler weather during the winter months.

Loose cotton dresses are recommended as daily wear for women. Either long or short dresses are suitable for dinner and cocktail parties. Slacks and jeans are worn in urban areas, but shorts are not appropriate in public. Sandals, open shoes, and pumps are worn but it is wise to remember that high heels are difficult to wear on the sandy roads of The Gambia, and that the few walks that are cemented are very rough. Wear-and-tear on shoes is excessive.

Children rarely dress up here. Frequent changes and washing in the hot and humid season cause a great deal of wear and tear on their clothing; an extra supply should be kept on hand, as well as extra pairs of shoes.

Adults and children alike need casual clothing (cotton is recommended over synthetic fabrics), beach wear, sportswear, and sturdy shoes. Warmer clothing is needed for trips to cooler climates. Clothes mildew rapidly in the humid climate, and should be kept in closets with mildew preventative.

Gambians are very dress conscious and quite fashionable. Men and women wear beautiful caftans and long flowing gowns. A number of good tailors in Banjul work with a variety of imported cloth and colorful tie-dyes and batiks. The wide range of competence among dressmakers and tailors makes careful selection necessary. Prolonged delays should be expected.

Dry cleaning service is not recommended; laundry is done at home. Shoe repairs can be done in the Banjul market with varying degrees of success. There are several good hair stylists for men and women.

British-made household articles can be repaired after a fashion, but American equipment rarely can be adequately serviced. Stereo and videotape equipment can be repaired in Dakar.

Several shops in Banjul offer a small selection of toilet articles and cosmetics, mostly French and English brands, but all are expensive.

Domestic Help

The Gambian Government has issued guidelines regarding wages, work hours, vacations, salary increases, and termination of services but, in many instances, these are left to negotiation. Domestic workers are now eligible for enrollment in the national social security system.

As a rule, men fill cook, houseboy, gardener, and driver positions; women care for children and do housework and laundry. In addition, it is customary for guards to be employed around the clock to deter theft and vandalism. English- and French-speaking servants of varying ability are available but, because most can neither read nor understand English well, considerable care is required to ensure that instructions are understood. Employers are not obliged to provide meals or uniforms.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Persons traveling from the U.S. to Banjul may transit via London or Dakar, Senegal. British Airways has two nonstop flights a week to Banjul from London. Air Afrique flies from New York to Dakar. Also, there are numerous connections to

Dakar from Europe. Twice-daily shuttle flights by the Gambia Air Shuttle connect Dakar and Banjul.

A visa is required for entry, as is a current international immunization card. (A Senegalese visa is not needed for U.S. citizens needed if transit is through Senegal.) Cholera is spot-checked as visitors enter The Gambia, particularly if they are in transit from known endemic locations. The U.S. Government advises inoculations against typhus-typhoid, polio, and hepatitis, as well as yellow fever and cholera.

No quarantine is imposed for the importation of pets. However, since rabies is hyperendemic in the country, vaccination is a stringent requirement, not only for the protection of pets, but also for that of the humans around them. Rabies shots should be renewed annually. Airlines will provide shipping details.

Weapons and a limited amount of ammunition may be imported. The Gambian Government requires a carrying permit as well as an annually renewable game license for hunting. Registration should be made with U.S. Customs before departure.

The Gambia is predominantly a Muslim country. Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol. Orthodox believers observe prayer periods five times each day. Calls to prayer can be heard from mosques, sometimes on loudspeakers. While men usually will be seen in mosques and at special prayer grounds, women generally pray in the privacy of

their homes. Friday is a special day, when Muslim men dress in their best clothes and gather in mosques for afternoon prayer; this is also the day when beggars congregate nearby to receive alms.

Besides several mosques, Banjul and surrounding communities have Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic churches, but no synagogues. The American Church of Christ, Seventh-Day Adventists, Baha'i, American Baptist, and the Worldwide Evangelical Crusade have small missions in The Gambia. Complete religious freedom exists, with no overt animosity between religious groups.

The Gambia's time is Greenwich Mean Time.

The currency is the *dalasi*, which is divided into 100 *bututs*.

Imperial weights and measures are in common use. Most shopkeepers and traders are familiar with the metric system, to which the country is gradually converting. Road distances are marked in kilometers.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan.1 New Year's Day
 Feb. 18 Independence Day
 Mar.
 (2nd Mon) Commonwealth Day*
 Mar/Apr Good Friday*
 Mar/Apr Easter*
 Mar/Apr Easter Monday*

May 1 Labor Day
 June/July Roots Festival*
 Aug. 15 Assumption
 Dec. 25 Christmas
 Ashura*
 Mawlid an Nabi*
 Ramadan*
 Id al-Fitr*
 Id al-Adah*
 *Variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Gailey, Harry A. *Historical Dictionary of the Gambia*. 2nd ed. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987.

Gamble, David P. *The Gambia*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Press, 1988.

Insight Guide: Gambia-Senegal. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1990.

Sallah, Tijan M. *Kora Land*. Washington, DC: Three Continents Press, 1988.

Tomkinson, Michael. *Michael Tomkinson's Gambia*. Cincinnati, OH: Seven Hills Book Distributors, 1991.

Wilkins, Frances. *Gambia. Let's Visit Places & Peoples of the World Series*. New York: Chelsea House, 1988.

GHANA

Republic of Ghana

Major City:

Accra

Other Cities:

Bolgatanga, Cape Coast, Ho, Kumasi, Obuasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale, Tema

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2001 for Ghana. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

On March 6, 1957, the former Gold Coast—a British colony—became the Republic of Ghana and the first African state south of the Sahara to win its independence. At the time, Ghana was economically strong and was believed to have a bright future under the leadership of its founding father and first president, Kwame Nkrumah. However, chronic political instability and financial mismanagement during the 1960s and 1970s left the country with a crumbling infrastructure and a largely bankrupt economy.

Over the past 10 years, Ghana has experienced something of a renaissance. Under a vigorous reform program, the economy has grown

rapidly, the infrastructure is being repaired, the markets are full, and Accra once again has the appearance of a bustling coastal city.

Ghanaians are warm, hospitable, and polite, and have a strong traditional culture that they enjoy sharing with foreigners. Through shared history and a natural affinity, they are especially open to Americans.

Americans assigned here will enjoy the professional challenge of working in a developing country with a future. Those who make the effort will learn that a tour in Ghana is also a special opportunity to “discover” and experience an African culture and society.

MAJOR CITY

Accra

With a population of 3.8 million, Accra is Ghana's capital and largest city. It has developed into the Greater Accra/Tema area and embraces several towns along the coast. Accra is Ghana's major commercial, education and transportation center. Formerly a fishing village, it became the capital of the Gold Coast in 1877 and remained

the capital after Ghana's independence in 1957.

Some 3,000 Americans live in Ghana, including U.S. Government employees, business people, retirees, and missionaries and their families.

Food

Most people rely on the local market for their fresh produce, seafood, poultry and eggs, meat, and a few other staples. Familiar American brands are scarce, but with some patience comparable items can be found for substitution. With some exceptions (such as some vegetables), prices are generally higher than U.S. prices. Common vegetables are cabbage, carrot, cucumber, eggplant, garlic, green pepper, lettuce, okra, onion, potato, squash, string beans, and tomatoes. Plantain, yams, potatoes, and several varieties of starchy tubers are on the market year round. Some excellent fruits are available year round or seasonally: avocado, banana, grapefruit, lemon, mango, orange, papaya, pineapple, and watermelon.

Certain seeds are available locally (e.g., cabbage, eggplant, okra, onion, hot pepper, and tomato), and some imported American seeds do well in Accra (e.g., lettuce, field peas, tomatoes, watermelon, lima beans, green

peppers, and herbs such as basil, dill, parsley, thyme, and rosemary).

Local beer is good, and popular drinks such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, and Sprite are available locally.

Clothing

Lightweight summer clothing is appropriate year round. Bring a good supply for all family members; underwear, clothes, and shoes wear out quickly and good quality clothing is unavailable in Ghana. Cottons and cotton blends are recommended; fabrics that must be drycleaned are not. For the occasional cool evening, a light jacket, sweater, or shawl will suffice. An umbrella is essential during the rainy seasons. A few people find light raincoats useful, but they are not necessary. Swimsuits are a must and sun hats are useful. Local tailors and dressmakers can make everyday clothes reasonably well and at good prices. Western-style fabric selections are fair, but African-style prints are plentiful. Many Americans shop by mail order.

Wearing any military apparel, such as camouflage jackets or trousers, or any clothing or items which may appear military in nature, is strictly prohibited

Men: In the office and at informal events, men wear business suits, "safari suits," or short-sleeved dress shirts. All types of shoes and sandals are worn. Hats are rarely worn except at the beach, on the golf course, and on the baseball field.

A lightweight dinner jacket (for white or black tie) and trousers with cummerbund are the only formal evening clothes required for officers.

Women: In the office and at most social events, women wear dresses, blouses and skirts, or lightweight suits. At informal evening functions, women sometimes wear dresses or skirts, or tunics over slacks, though short dresses are acceptable. All sleeve lengths are acceptable. For other women, one or two dressy gowns will suffice. Most women prefer low, open footwear.

Stockings are worn by few American women in Accra and are not considered necessary even at formal functions.

Supplies and Services

Some items are harder to get here and should be brought. These include hobby supplies, sports equipment, beach and camping gear (ice chests and barbecue grills are particularly useful), shower curtains, dehumidifiers, anti-mildew preparations, lightweight blankets for air-conditioned bedrooms, baby supplies (diapers, clothing, food, and medications), toys, school supplies, and special-sized batteries, such as camera batteries.

Local tailoring and dressmaking are reasonably priced, but the quality of workmanship varies. Drycleaning is available at moderate to high prices, but outlets are inconvenient and results may not be satisfactory, except for one hotel, where results are excellent but prices are double those in Washington, D.C. Shoe repair facilities are inadequate. Film and developing and printing facilities are available in Accra. Barber and beauty shop prices are less than those in the U.S. and facilities are adequate. A full range of beauty treatments (i.e., pedicure, manicure, massage, sauna, etc.) is available at reasonable prices.

Some stereos, radios, TVs and computers can be repaired locally. However, spare parts are scarce and expensive. Parts are generally ordered from abroad. Computer supplies are available, but quality varies and prices are high.

The availability of a range of books is increasing. However, costs are high. The book shop at the University of Ghana at Legon (just outside Accra) has an extensive selection of pocketbooks, especially African fiction, at prices equivalent to or lower than those in the U.S. The British Council has a library that anyone can join. Some people join one or more book clubs in the U.S. or order through the Internet. Because the mail system is slow, do not join a club that requires you to give

prompt notice if you do not want its selection.

Religious Activities

Christians have no difficulty finding places of worship here. Churches in Accra include Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Christian Science, Baptist, Presbyterian, Seventh-Day Adventist, Assembly of God, and Lutheran. No synagogue is available. Mosques are numerous.

Domestic Help

Domestic help is readily available. Many expatriates employ at least one servant. Those with representational responsibilities or children usually employ two or more. Those living in houses may also hire a gardener.

The following types of domestics are available: cook/steward or housemaid (performs all household duties), cooks, stewards, nannies, gardeners, guards and drivers. The salary range is \$75-\$90 per month for a 5- or 6-day week, less for part-time work. Unfurnished servants' quarters are located in the homes. Employers usually provide at least one or two uniforms per tour, and many pay medical expenses. A bonus of 1 month's salary is normally given at Christmas. A "dash" (tip) is usually paid on special occasions and for extra duty.

Education

The Lincoln Community School is a Department of State-supported school. The Director is American, and all teachers are certified to teach in the U.S. Roughly 20% of the students are American, less than 25% are Ghanaians, and more than half are citizens of other countries. Classes are offered from kindergarten through grade 12, 8:30 am - 2:30 pm.

The curriculum matches U.S. standard public elementary, junior high, and high schools using American textbooks and teaching materials. The school is housed in a 13-year-old facility with classrooms surrounding a central library, which has 8,000 volumes. There is a new open-air multipurpose building



Crowded marketplace in Accra, Ghana

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

with a basketball court and stage. Playground space includes two grassy play areas and a large field. There is no cafeteria facility so lunch boxes or small coolers and water bottles are necessary; however, a lunch is offered each day, prepared through a local restaurant. Each classroom has a refrigerator to keep students' lunches cool. Extracurricular activities include PM Academy, offered through the school each marking period. Students sign up for various activities offered that term. Additionally, basketball, soccer, and taekwondo are available.

The Ghana International School (GIS) offers a British curriculum from the nursery level (3 years) through grade 12 and beyond, for

those interested in studying for the British "A"-level exams. GIS offers an extensive extracurricular after-school program for the upper form (high school). Activities include a computer club, aerobics, swimming, a yearbook, a school newspaper, drama club, wilderness club, and art club. Libraries are small. Graduates from GIS have achieved good SAT scores and have been accepted at competitive American universities.

Sports

Ghanaians like sports and play most of the above. Commercial recreational facilities around Accra include an 18-hole golf course at Achimota (on the outskirts of town); a 9-hole course at Tema (30-minute drive from Accra); several tennis

courts and a polo club. Horses can be boarded at the Accra Polo Club and at Burma Camp.

Many lovely beaches can be found around the city and along the coast, but the undertow can be dangerous. It is not wise to swim alone. Boating and sailing are practical only at Ada, a 90-minute drive east of Accra, at the mouth of the Volta River. Swimming in any freshwater area is unsafe due to the presence of schistosomiasis (bilharzia), a serious parasitic disease.

Bush fowl are hunted a few kilometers from Accra. Bigger game, such as antelope and bush buck, are found in the northern region 500 kilometers away and in neighboring Burkina Faso. Hunting licenses

must be purchased each year for the season (December to August). Surf and boat fishing are possible along the coast and Ada. No license is required for fishing.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Places of interest in Accra include Independence Square, which is used for ceremonial events; the National Museum, which houses a collection of Ghanaian and African cultural and historical artifacts; and the Makola Market, where hundreds of merchants carry on traditional commerce. Accra also has a small zoo and several parks, but they are in poor shape.

Several enjoyable day trips can be made in the Accra area. The beaches are popular, as is the 19th-century botanical garden in the Aburi hills, a 40-minute drive from Accra. Just 110 kilometers northeast of Accra is Akosombo Dam on the Volta River. Tours of the dam can be easily arranged. The many colonial forts and castles along the coast are not to be missed. One of the best is Elmina Castle, 2 hours west of Accra, where guided tours are held daily.

Trips farther afield are possible, but require some planning because roads are rough and tourist facilities are limited and usually of poor quality. Pack food, water, and sanitary supplies, and take a good first-aid kit, a spare tire, and even emergency spare parts for your car. You may also want to take sheets and towels.

Kumasi, capital of the Ashanti region, is a 3-1/2-hour drive northwest of Accra. It is the site of the National Cultural Center, where artisans make traditional Ghanaian cloth, woodcarvings, and brass weights. On Saturdays, the Center schedules music and dance performances.

Ho, about 3 hours from Accra in the Volta region, has a large market. Not far from Ho are the Wli Falls.

The adventurous may want to travel farther afield. Tourist facilities are less than satisfactory outside the main cities, but you will see a different way of life and find that Ghanaians are friendly and hospitable. Overland travel is rough and slow. It is possible to go to a few larger towns (Kumasi, Cape Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi, and Tamale) and rent a car with driver once you arrive.

Lome, the capital of neighboring Togo, is a 2-1/2-hour drive from Accra. It has good hotels and restaurants, and is popular for weekend trips. Côte d'Ivoire's capital city, Abidjan, is an 8-hour drive from Accra. Abidjan has good facilities and shops.

Photography buffs will find a wealth of interesting subject matter here. Ghanaians are generally happy to have their pictures taken, but ask permission first. You are not allowed to take any photographs of government buildings or castles. Be cautious when taking photographs in Accra.

Entertainment

Americans rarely go to local movie theaters. (They are rundown and tend to show kung fu adventures, B-grade Indian love stories, and 1-2-year old American movies.) The Marine House shows movies once or twice a month. Public Affairs and the British and German cultural centers occasionally show films. VHS tapes can also be rented from local video centers. (Bring multisystem [PAL/NTSC], multispeed equipment—see Radio and TV).

Music, drama, and dance performances are scheduled frequently by the Cultural Center, the University of Ghana, several other Ghanaian organizations, and a few foreign missions. Several popular clubs feature traditional music or dance groups as well as Western-style bands.

Restaurants are numerous in and around the Accra area. You will find a variety of Chinese, Lebanese, Italian, French, Thai, Vietnamese,

Korean, Indian, German, Mexican, and Ghanaian restaurants to choose from. Prices range from moderate to expensive. Several hotels and restaurants have casinos.

Food servers in the casual drinking bars or "chop bars" (which serve Ghanaian dishes) don't expect tips, but they appreciate them. Some restaurants add a service charge of 15% to the bill, which most Ghanaians consider an adequate tip. Few published sources of general information exist, so most people rely heavily on word-of-mouth for news on everything from where to shop to where to stay when traveling outside Accra.

Many traditional festivals are held during the year with colorful parades, dancing, and drumming. The festivals sometimes are built around a "durbar" in which the paramount chief sits in state to receive his chiefs, distinguished guests, and the homage of his people. Visitors are welcome on these occasions. Picture taking is welcome, but request permission first.

Social Activities

Accra is an informal city where friendships are formed easily. A good deal of casual entertaining is done within the American community as well as among Ghanaians, and people of other nationalities. Dinner parties are common. Other activities include cocktail parties, luncheons, beach picnics, and dart leagues.

The North American Women's Association of Accra is open to American and Canadian women and women married to Americans and Canadians. The Ghana International Women's Club is open to all nationalities, but membership is limited. Both clubs hold monthly meetings and sponsor social, cultural, and fund raising activities throughout the year.



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Street in Kumasi, Ghana

OTHER CITIES

BOLGATANGA is located in extreme northern Ghana. It is a town where agriculture and livestock raising are the chief occupations. The town is noted for its colorful basketry.

Several forts surrounding the city of **CAPE COAST** are stark reminders of colonial domination by the English and Dutch. Noted for a castle dating to the 1600s, the city, 75 miles southwest of Accra, is the heart of Ghana's educational system. Excellent secondary schools and a university are in Cape Coast. Several industries are located in Cape Coast. These include the production of soap, textiles, tobacco products, sugar, bricks and tiles, cocoa products, chemicals, and salt.

Located in southeastern Ghana, **HO** is a major commercial center. It is connected to Ghana's southern ports by the modern Volta Bridge. Cottons, cocoa, and palm oil are produced here. It lies on a main road from the coast leading northeastward to Togo.

KUMASI is a commercial center and market city about 115 miles northwest of Accra. The "Garden City of West Africa" is carefully planned, boasting one of the biggest central markets in West Africa. Originally the capital of the Ashanti Kingdom, Kumasi was taken by the British in 1874. It is now a highly developed modern city, with paved streets, parks, gardens, a modern hospital, schools, and colleges. Handicrafts, such as traditional *kente* cloth, are significant sources of income. The approximately 450,000 people (1995 est.) who live

in Kumasi enjoy a museum, zoo, and a regional library.

OBUASI is a major mining center. The Obuasi gold mine is one of the world's richest gold mines in terms of yield per ton of ore. Some cocoa production also takes place on land surrounding the city. The population is estimated at 70,000.

SEKONDI-TAKORADI, 110 miles southwest of Accra, is a seaport formed from the merger of two cities in 1963. It became a main Gold Coast port after the British assumed control in the 1870s. It is well connected to other regions in Ghana by rail, road, and air. The city also has light industrial, agricultural, and fishing enterprises. The population has climbed to approximately 200,000.

In the north-central part of the country, **TAMALE** serves as the

regional capital and educational center. Many training institutes, colleges, and secondary schools implement the government's mass literacy campaigns. Tamale is currently undergoing sanitation and road improvements; industry is being developed. The city is a focus for agricultural trade and has cotton-milling and shea nuts enterprises. The city has a population of about 151,000.

TEMA, located 20 miles east of Accra, represents one of Africa's most ambitious development projects. With the largest man-made harbor on the continent, the city is a bustling port and industrial center. Tema's population of about 250,000 is divided between the planned "New Town" of the 1960s and the Ashiaman shantytowns containing large slums.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Ghana is situated on West Africa's Gulf of Guinea, and its capital, Accra, is 4 degrees north of the Equator. Ghana covers 238,540 square kilometers and is about the size of Oregon. Half of the country lies less than 152 meters above sea level and the highest point is 883 meters. The 537-kilometer coastline is mostly a low, sandy shore backed by a narrow coastal plain with scrub brush, and intersected by rivers and streams, navigable only by canoe. A tropical rain forest belt, broken by heavily forested hills and many streams and rivers, extends northward from the shore near the border with Côte d'Ivoire. This area, traditionally known as Ashanti, but now divided into several administrative regions, produces most of Ghana's cocoa, minerals, and timber. North of this belt the country varies from 91 to 396 meters above sea level and is covered by low bush, savanna, and grassy plains.

Ghana is bordered on the west by Côte d'Ivoire, on the north by Burkina Faso, and on the east by Togo. A major feature of the country's geography is the Volta Lake,

the world's largest man-made lake (8,900 square kilometers), which extends from the Akosombo Dam (completed in 1966) in southeastern Ghana to the town of Yapei, 520 kilometers to the north. The dam generates electricity for all of Ghana as well as some exports to neighboring countries. The lake also serves as an inland waterway and is a potentially valuable resource for irrigation and fish farming.

Ghana's climate is tropical with temperatures between 21°C and 32°C (70°F and 90°F). Rainy seasons extend from April to July (heavy rains) and from September to November (light rains). Annual rainfall exceeds 200 centimeters on the coast, decreasing inland. Accra's annual rainfall averages about 76 centimeters, low for coastal West Africa. The southern part of the country is humid most of the year, but the north can be very dry.

It is coolest from May until October. In December the harmattan, a dry dusty wind from the Sahara, covers the country, and lasts through February. The desert wind reduces humidity, and early mornings and nights are relatively cool. Visibility during the harmattan can be poor, as the air is filled with fine dust.

Population

Ghana's population numbers 18.8 million (est. 1999), with an annual growth rate of over 2.05%. Accra is the largest city with some 3.8 million inhabitants. Other major cities include Kumasi (1.3 million est.), Tema (250,000 est.), Sekondi/Takoradi (200,000 est.), and Tamale (105,000).

The majority of Ghanaians belong to one of four broad ethnic groups: Akan (44%), Mole-Dagbani (16%), Ewe (13%), and Ga-Adangbe (8%). Subgroups exist within each of these, along with many other smaller ethnic groups. A large number of Ghana's inhabitants have roots in neighboring countries or are citizens of those countries. A few communities of foreigners come from outside West Africa, including

Lebanese, Syrian, Indian, and Chinese. English is the official language, but about 100 other languages and dialects are common. Most urban Ghanaians speak some English, and many Ghanaians speak Twi (an Akan language), an unofficial second language. Ga is also widely spoken in Accra.

All religious beliefs are accepted in Ghana. Approximately 24% of the population are Christians, and Christian holidays are celebrated nationally. Roughly 38% are traditional animists and 30% are Muslims. People in the south have been influenced by Western education and Christianity, and those in the north by Islam, but members of the three major religious groups are found throughout the country.

Even where Christianity and Islam have the greatest influence, traditional social structures and customs remain important. Ethnic identification and kinship, traced paternally among some peoples and maternally among others, are the basic building blocks of Ghanaian society. However, their impact has been reduced by internal migrations, contact with Western cultures, and urbanization. Since independence, the authority of traditional rulers has declined, but local and regional chiefs continue to play an extremely important role in day-to-day life, especially in rural areas. Traditional annual festivals are popular, and basic rituals—such as naming ceremonies for newborns, customary marriage and divorce rites, and elaborate funerals—are still performed.

The existence of many different ethnic traditions makes generalizing about Ghanaian cultural values and practices difficult. However, most Ghanaians consider their responsibilities to their extended families a guiding principle in their lives. This can create a heavy burden for those who have good, salaried jobs in the cities. Education is universally recognized as the key to economic and social advancement. Even the poorest families do all they can to educate their children and prosper-

ous relatives often “adopt” young relatives, housing them and paying their school fees. Polygamy is rare among the educated elite, but is still practiced in much of the country, even by Christians. Economic pressures and official policies are discouraging it.

Public Institutions

Europeans first came into contact with the area known today as Ghana when Portuguese and Dutch merchants and slave traders landed on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea in the late 15th century. The British took control of the area, then called the Gold Coast, in the early 1800s. When the Gold Coast became the first sub-Saharan African colony to gain its independence in 1957, the name was changed to Ghana, after an ancient African empire (700-1200 B.C.E.) along the Niger River.

Under Kwame Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party (CPP), which had led the country to independence, Ghana began as a parliamentary democracy, but gradually evolved into a single party, socialist state. Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966 in a military coup, and the National Liberation Council ruled by decree until 1969, when a new constitution took effect and K.A. Busia was elected as President of the Second Republic. The Busia government compiled a reasonably good record in the human rights field but failed to solve Ghana's mounting economic problems. The government was overthrown in January 1972 by a military coup led by Army Colonel I.K. Acheampong.

Under Acheampong's National Redemption Council, the economy continued to decline and corruption flourished. Efforts to establish a nonparty “Union Government” created a backlash, which led to a takeover by Lt. General Frederick Akuffo on July 5, 1978. Akuffo moved to restore constitutional rule, naming a constituent assembly and restoring political rights and activity. However, his regime failed to reduce corruption or improve the economy. On June 4, 1979, Flight

Lt. Jerry John Rawlings led a group of junior officers and enlisted men, called the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), in a successful coup against the Akuffo government.

The AFRC executed eight senior military officers, including several former heads of state, for corruption and abuse of power. The Council established “People's Courts” and other tribunals, where dozens of former government officials and others were sentenced to long prison terms and their property confiscated. It also permitted the previously scheduled presidential and parliamentary elections to take place in June and July of 1979. The People's National Party (PNP), the new name for Nkrumah's CPP, won both the Presidency and 71 of the 140 seats in parliament. A new constitution took effect in September 1979, and Dr. Hilla Limann became President. The Limann government had little success in solving Ghana's economic problems or in reducing corruption. It came to an early end when Flight Lt. Rawlings led a second coup on December 31, 1981, and established the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC).

At the outset, the PNDC took a radical direction, banning all political activities, confiscating property, placing the country under curfew for 2 years and imprisoning or even executing citizens for political or economic crimes. Gradually, the PNDC took a more pragmatic line, both economically and politically, although some of the radical rhetoric remains. Since 1983, Ghana has been implementing a successful IMF-sponsored Economic Recovery Program (ERP). Annual economic growth has averaged 5-6% since the inception of the plan, with the exception of 1990, when bad rains resulted in a growth of only 3%. In 1989, with the election of nonpartisan District Assemblies, the PNDC began a slow process of returning Ghana to constitutional rule.

In 1992, the voters in a nationwide referendum accepted a new constitution, and elections for President

and Parliament late that same year ushered in Ghana's Fourth Republic. Jerry John Rawlings was elected President with nearly two-thirds of the vote, and was reelected in 1996. The major opposition party boycotted the 1992 Parliamentary elections, but took part in 1996; the present Parliament is made up of roughly two-thirds ruling party members and one-third opposition members. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held in December 2000.

Arts, Science, and Education

Ghana has a long tradition of formal education, dating back to the “Castle Schools” of the early 17th century. During the colonial period schools were established by both the British Government and missionary groups. The government at all levels has traditionally provided tuition. However, parents find themselves paying fees for a wide range of services, depending on the level of school. These can include annual fees for services and activities such as the use of textbooks, sports, arts and culture, electricity and water, and board and lodging. A student loan scheme has been introduced at Ghanaian universities and other institutions for tertiary education under which students are able to finance a substantial portion of the cost of tertiary education. Such loans are repaid when the students have graduated and are employed. Meals and some other on-campus services have been commercialized. University-level user fees for accommodations, electricity and water were started in 1997. The degree to which students should contribute to their own university education continues to be a very lively debate. Graduates from Ghana's universities and other institutions of higher education are required to complete a period of National Service ranging from 1 to 2 years.

A reform program was initiated in 1987 to help reduce the educational system's emphasis on academic sub-

jects and university preparation. Under the reform program, the pre-university schooling period has been shortened from a maximum 17 years to 12 years (6 years primary, 3 years junior secondary, and 3 years senior secondary, vocational and technical). The reform program has introduced vocational and technical education at the junior secondary school level and seeks to make basic education more widely available.

In 1996, the government launched a major initiative in Basic Education (grades 1-9) called FCUBE (Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education). Donor assistance to this effort has been massive. The medium of instruction is a local language through primary grade 3 and English from primary 4 through university.

Ghana has five state-run universities. The University of Ghana at Legon (near Accra), the University of Cape Coast in the Central Region, and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi are well-established and have broad, comprehensive curricula (though UCC emphasizes training secondary teachers and KNUST emphasizes science and technical education). In addition, two new institutions of higher education were recently established in Ghana. The multi-campus University for Development Studies in the Northern Regions emphasizes agriculture and development of technology, and has a medical school. The University College of Education at Winneba (about midway between Accra and Cape Coast) is exclusively a teacher training institution, and also offers distance learning programs. Many faculty members have earned advanced degrees from abroad, including the U.S. Academic exchanges of lecturers, researchers, and students are increasingly common. All five universities currently operate on a semester system.

In the past few years, several private "universities" have been established. They are mostly affiliated with one or another Christian

denomination and their general focuses are business and religious studies.

Salaries in Ghana have been severely eroded through a decade of economic reforms, which limited public expenditures. In addition to poor pay and working conditions for lecturers, other frequently cited challenges facing Ghanaian universities include pressures to provide residential accommodations for increased numbers of students; the need for more books, professional journals, computers, and scientific equipment despite rising costs; and the problems of maintaining the universities' generally attractive but deteriorating buildings, grounds, and equipment.

Commerce and Industry

Independent Ghana's economy, rich in natural and human resources, was among the most advanced and prosperous in West Africa. By 1982-83, two decades of instability and mismanagement had led to virtual economic collapse. A bloated public sector, neglected infrastructures and agriculture, and grossly overvalued currency spurred production declines. The slide, accelerated in the early 1980s by drought, bush fires, and the forced repatriation of about 1 million Ghanaians from Nigeria, left the country with virtually no foreign exchange and severe food shortages.

The Economic Recovery Program, adopted in 1983, drastically devalued the Ghanaian cedi, stabilized prices, improved fiscal and monetary discipline and public sector rationalization, reduced foreign debt arrears, and began the task of rehabilitating Ghana's infrastructure. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, the U.S., and other Western multilateral and bilateral donors have lent strong support. From 1993-1996, Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at an annual rate of 5%.

Inflation in 1999 was at an annual rate of about 13%. The cedi, which in 1983 traded at the rate of 2.75=US \$1, by March 2001 had an exchange rate of about 7,195=US\$1. Private foreign exchange bureaus operate throughout the country buying and selling cedis at free market rates. Agriculture dominates the economy, accounting for almost 60% of the workforce and 37% of the GDP. Cocoa, the main cash crop, generates about 34% of export earnings and substantial tax revenues. Ghana is no longer the world's major cocoa producer, but its output has recovered after sliding to less than one-third of its peak. Other major crops, consumed internally, include cassavas, yams, cocoa, plantains, oil palms, and cereals (maize, millet, and rice). The Ashanti region around Kumasi is a center of cocoa, tobacco, and timber production.

The semiarid savanna of the north (covering nearly half the country) is the main livestock and cereal growing area. The southwest's humid forests produce timber, rubber, and plantains, while the drier southeast produces livestock, poultry, citrus fruits, and vegetables. The government is offering farmers greater incentives to diversify output in order to reduce heavy dependence on imported foodstuffs and provide domestic inputs for the nation's industry. Ghana has rich mineral resources, notably gold, manganese, diamonds, and bauxite. While its gold reserves are among the world's largest, output has been far below former and potential levels. Since the mid-80s, major foreign investments in the mining sector have resulted in large increases in gold production. Ghana's Ashanti Goldfields Company is the only African corporation listed in the New York Stock Exchange.

Ghana currently imports all its crude oil. The Akosombo Dam on the Volta River and the smaller Kpong Dam downstream supply virtually all the country's electricity, though a new thermal plant in Takoradi came on line in early 1998 to supplement the supply. In recent

years, the power grid has gradually been extended to the northern two-thirds of the country.

Ghana has the natural resources, industrial capacity, skilled labor, and relatively inexpensive power necessary to be a successful producer of goods for both domestic consumption and export. While the situation has been improving, industry still is hampered by dilapidated plants and machinery, a high dependence on scarce imported replacement parts and raw materials, slowness in developing domestic supply sources, and rundown infrastructure.

Given the importance of agriculture, the economy remains dependent upon the variable rainfall patterns. These patterns are affected by significant environmental deterioration.

One of the largest foreign investments in Ghana (and Africa's largest aluminum smelter) is the Volta Aluminum Company (VALCO), owned by the U.S. companies Kaiser (90%) and Reynolds (10%). It processes imported bauxite into aluminum ingots, primarily for export. A U.S. company is majority owner of Ghana's second national telephone service provider. Other U.S. firms have invested in Ghana's information technology and communications sectors. Other significant U.S. investments involve tuna fishing and processing (Star-Kist), small-scale manufacture of pharmaceuticals and household products (Johnson Wax and Phyto-River), petroleum products distribution (Mobil), public accountancy (Deloitte & Touche and Price WaterhouseCoopers), electronics products distribution and service (IBM, NCR, Motorola), and wood treatment (KIC International). Many more U.S. firms have active local agents and distributors.

Transportation

Automobiles

Many find it advantageous to import a vehicle, although new and

used vehicles may be obtained locally. Public transportation is unreliable, overcrowded, and generally inadequate. As in the U.S., driving is on the right side of the road. Importation of right-hand-drive vehicles into Ghana is not permitted. Street conditions are fair but strewn with potholes. Higher ground-clearance vehicles, while preferable, are not necessary, unless you plan to make excursions outside of Accra "off the beaten track." There are no safety, color, or emission restrictions related to imported vehicles. Vehicles over 10 years of age on the date of importation cannot be brought into Ghana.

All gasoline sold in Ghana is now unleaded. The catalytic converter need not be removed, but removal is recommended if traveling to other countries. Air-conditioning is strongly recommended, as are first-aid kits and car seats for small children.

Parts and service for most American-made cars are not readily available. Mitsubishi, Nissan, Toyota (both sedan and 4x4 types), Honda, Peugeot, or the European or South African versions of General Motors or Ford products are popular and the easiest to maintain. Duty-paid vehicles are widely available in all price ranges.

Unleaded gasoline and diesel fuel is available locally. The Government of Ghana sets the price. As of February 2000 it is about \$1.25 per U.S. gallon. Fuel prices are expected to rise dramatically over the next few months due to the increase in crude oil prices that has occurred since late 1999.

CB radios are not permitted. Several private FM stations broadcast in Accra with AM stations broadcasting to their parts of the country, although coverage is not complete.

Americans patronize several repair facilities. Though the quality of work is mixed, labor costs are low with used parts common for vehicles widely available and reasonably

priced. Dealer installed new parts and labor is high.

Driver expertise in Accra and outside Accra leaves much to be desired. Defensive driving techniques must be employed at all times. Driving outside of Accra after dark must be absolutely avoided. Plan any trip outside of Accra during daylight hours only. In addition to the almost total absence of any roadside lighting, many drivers drive at night without using headlights under the mistaken impression that they are saving electric power. Over-the-road heavy-duty truck drivers often drive at night in a totally sleep-deprived condition. Driving at night outside Accra is an open invitation to disaster. Most Americans killed in Ghana die by virtue of nighttime auto accidents.

Local

Ghana has about 9,000 kilometers of hard surface roads, in varying degrees of upkeep. While the construction of improved laterite roads has been a major priority for several years, some roads are still not passable during the rainy seasons, especially in rural areas. It is possible to drive east to Lome, west to Abidjan, and north to Kumasi and Tamale. Once you leave the major routes, road conditions can become very rough. Many streets in Accra are narrow and bordered by hazardous open culverts without curbs.

Buses and "tro-tros" are always overcrowded, poorly maintained, odoriferous, and driven by incompetent, reckless and inattentive drivers. Taxis are abundant and cheap in Accra and generally available in other major cities. One must, however, negotiate the cost before entering the taxi. Most taxi drivers speak some English but it is wise to know where you are going before getting in the taxi. Addresses mean little in Accra with most taxi drivers operating by landmarks. Drivers tend to be reckless and do not obey traffic laws since the enforcement of traffic laws is almost nonexistent. Taxis can be hired for an entire day or for a long duration trip. Hiring a taxi

for a trip out of town, however, is not recommended. Rental cars are available but tend to be expensive. It is not possible to rent a car without a driver.

Regional

Ghana Airways and Air Link, a domestic carrier operated by the Ghana Air force, fly between Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale. Ghana Airways and a number of international airlines provide service outside Ghana. At present no American carrier operates in Ghana. At the present time, official travelers are routed between the U.S. and Ghana via Amsterdam on Northwest or KLM under a "code share" agreement. However, a recently signed "open skies" agreement will likely result in code shares with other U.S. carriers.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

The local Post and Ghana Telecommunications Office, Ghana Telecom (GT) and Westel (a U.S. majority-owned firm) provide local telephone service. The average monthly rental for a telephone is about \$1.00 and this must be paid regardless of whether the telephone is working. Local calls cost approximately \$0.10 for 3 minutes for Accra, \$0.15 for 3 minutes to Tema, and \$0.20 for 3 minutes for other regions. As of January 1998 there are cellular phone companies that offer mobile phone services (Celltel, Spacefon, and Mobitel).

Calls between the U.S. and Accra can be made easily using AT&T "USA Direct" service. You must obtain an AT&T international credit card before arrival as there is no direct-dialing service from your home phone unless you pay an additional fee of approximately \$100. "USA Direct" connections are of excellent quality and you receive an AT&T itemized bill. Several companies offer a "call back" system, making phone calls to the U.S. more affordable.

It is possible to obtain Internet service in your home. There are a few local companies to choose from with prices ranging from approximately \$25 to \$35 a month. It is advisable to ship voltage regulators and an uninterruptible power source (UPS) along with quality power strips with surge protection.

Mail

Express, deliveries, Federal Express, DHL, and UPS are available. Services are reliable and expensive.

Radio and TV

Accra enjoys a variety of FM radio stations. The government-owned GAR and university-run Radio Unvers aside, all are privately owned. Broadcasts are dominated by music, and more and more by lively public affairs programming, including popular call-in shows. GAR (95.7) is the first source for those eager for the government's take on current events. Radio GOLD (90.5) is the Voice of America (VOA) affiliate in Accra, and rebroadcasts several VOA news and other programming several times during the day. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Radio France Internationale (RFI) both broadcast their Africa-oriented programming full-time on FM rebroadcast stations in Accra (101.3 and 89.5, respectively).

The government-owned GTV dominates television in Ghana. A typical transmission day begins with some CNN news. From 10:00 am to 3:00 p.m. each weekday GTV broadcasts the U.S. Government's WorldNet programs, including "The Newshour with Jim Lehrer," which appears at 10:00 am.

Competing with GTV in Accra are two private TV broadcasters, METRO TV, which is primarily entertainment programs, and TV3, which screens news, entertainment, documentaries, and sports programs. Many affluent Ghanaians subscribe to cable television, the most popular of which is Multi-choice, which offers a number of

channels, including CNN and BBC World as well as cartoon, movie, and sports channels.

Ghana TV uses the European (625) PAL system, which is incompatible with American receivers. In order to pick up Ghana TV and watch videocassettes, you will need a multi-system, dual-voltage TV and VCR (NTSC, PAL-B, and PAL-G). Be sure your TV and recorder is the same type.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

During your first days in Ghana you will discover the Ghanaian media-government-owned and independent, print and electronic. To prepare you for the encounter, may we offer the following brief introduction to Accra's media scene:

You will find four government-owned newspapers on Accra's streets: The Daily Graphic, a Monday through Saturday tabloid. The Ghanaian Times, also published Monday through Saturday. The Mirror, a weekender published on Saturday by the Graphic. The Spectator, a weekender published on Saturday by the Times.

Accra also supports a lively collection of independent newspapers, which appear weekly, biweekly, or tri-weekly. Among them are The Business & Financial Times, a commercial weekly; The Free Press, an anti-government biweekly; The Ghana Palaver, a pro NDC biweekly; The Ghanaian Chronicle, an independent weekly; The Ghanaian Democrat, a pro-NDC weekly; The Guide and The Crusading Guide, both left-of-center biweeklies; The High Street Journal and The Financial Post, both commercial weeklies; The Independent, an independent weekly; and The Statesman, a pro-NPP biweekly.

The newest media sign of the current constitutional era is the flowering of electronic media. As of September 1999, there were a dozen FM radio stations broadcasting in Accra (only one of them govern-

ment-owned), with another three dozen spread out throughout the country, and roughly a dozen TV stations (some on-air, and some cable) serving the three largest regional markets of Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi.

Health and Medicine

Community Health

Communicable diseases found in tropical developing countries are endemic to Ghana. Take proper preventive measures to avoid serious diseases such as malaria, TB, typhoid, cholera, hepatitis, HIV, endemic fevers, and parasitic diseases. Malaria, including dangerous chloroquine-resistant cerebral malaria, is an ever-present threat throughout Ghana, including Accra. Malaria suppressants must be taken regularly. The recommended regime is weekly Mefloquine, now deemed safe for children under thirty pounds and pregnant women.

Strict cleanliness in food and water preparation is important. All drinking water must be filtered and boiled. All government housing is equipped with water distillers. Vegetables and fruits must be peeled or scrubbed and soaked in an iodine or bleach solution if they are to be eaten raw. All food must be cooked thoroughly. Household help should undergo health examinations before hiring and periodically throughout employment.

Due to the warm, moist climate, skin infections are common. These can be avoided by scrupulous cleansing of even a minor injury. It is unsafe to swim in fresh water streams or lagoons. Schistosomiasis, a parasitic disease transmitted through the skin, is prevalent.

Rabies is prevalent in many animals in Ghana. If you decide to import a pet, make sure it is inoculated against rabies. Veterinary services are available and vaccine is periodically available.

HIV, the virus causing AIDS, is widespread. Transmission, as in the U.S., occurs through sexual contact, contaminated needles, or blood transfusion. Abstinence from new sexual contacts, use of latex condoms, and HIV testing of any blood used for transfusion remain the most reliable means of preventing HIV infection.

Preventive Measures

All travelers should have typhoid, tetanus, meningitis, rabies, hepatitis A and B vaccinations before coming. Yellow fever vaccination is required to enter Ghana. You will not be allowed to enter the country without proof of vaccination.

Bring a good supply of first-aid items, insect repellent, sunscreen, oral thermometer, and basic non-prescription medicines. If you use prescription drugs, bring several months' supply and a written prescription for ordering refills from the U.S. Only a very limited number of American and European drugs are available locally and are extremely costly.

Carry eyeglass and/or contact lens prescriptions with you in case you need to order replacements. Some expatriates have had eyeglasses reliably replaced in Accra.

Poor emergency facilities make seat belts and child/infant seats essential.

Minimal supplies of equipment and medications limit specialty care in Ghana. All of these factors may make diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of a chronic problem difficult or impossible.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Ghana Airways is the only carrier offering direct flights to and from the U.S. U.S. carriers across the north Atlantic connect with 12

flights a week to Accra from London, Amsterdam, Zurich, or Geneva.

A passport and visa are required, as is evidence of a yellow fever vaccination, to enter Ghana. Travelers should obtain the latest information and details from the Embassy of Ghana, 3512 International Drive, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 686-4520, or via the Internet at <http://www.ghana-embassy.org>, or the Ghanaian Consulate General at 19 East 47th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017, telephone (212) 832-1300. Overseas, inquiries should be made to the nearest Ghanaian embassy or consulate.

A Ghanaian drivers license is mandatory for operating a motor vehicle in Ghana. An international drivers license is recommended for anyone who intends to travel outside of Ghana. You may also obtain an international drivers license through AAA. If you have a valid international drivers license that was obtained outside Ghana, it can be used temporarily while your Ghanaian license is being processed.

Locally procured third-party liability insurance is required by law and covers only damage to a second party's car and its occupants. This coverage is good only in Ghana and payment is limited; the present minimum is 2,000,000 cedis and costs approximately \$45 per year at 2000 exchange rates. Higher coverage can be obtained on request. Driving conditions are hazardous due to poorly maintained roads and vehicles.

Visitors entering or departing Ghana with more than 5,000 dollars (US) cash are required to declare the amount upon entry into Ghana. Currency exchange is available at most banks and at licensed foreign exchange bureaus. Currency transactions with private citizens are illegal.

Strict customs regulations govern temporary importation into or

export from Ghana of items such as gold, diamonds and precious natural resources. Only agents licensed by the Precious Metals and Mining Commission, telephone (233)(21) 664-635 or 664-579, may handle import-export transactions of these natural resources. Any transaction lacking this Commission's endorsement is illegal and/or fraudulent. Attempts to evade regulations are punishable by imprisonment. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Ghana in Washington, DC or one of Ghana's consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements.

In rare instances, visitors arriving in Ghana with sophisticated electronic equipment (video cameras and laptop computers) may have to deposit 17.5 per cent of the item's value with the Customs and Excise office at the airport. To get the deposit refunded, visitors must apply to the Customs and Excise Office in central Accra 48 hours before departure.

Americans living in or visiting Ghana are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Ghana and obtain updated information on travel and security within Ghana. The U.S. Embassy is located on Ring Road East, P.O. Box 194, Accra, telephone (233-21) 775-347 or 48; fax number (233-21) 701-1813. The Embassy maintains a home page on the Internet at <http://usembassy.state.gov/ghana/>.

Pets

Pets must have a recent certificate of vaccination against rabies and a certificate of good health signed by a veterinarian not more than 10 days before arrival. If the certificate does not have a block that can be checked to clear the pet for international travel, the words "international health certificate" must be typed onto the form itself. Except under the most unusual conditions, your pets should arrive with you on the same flight and be checked baggage. Should the pets be shipped by air-freight, they must be processed

through customs and animal control at a remote location of the airport where clearance procedures are much more stringent and very time-consuming. When planning to bring along pets, avoid a stop or transfer in London, as Great Britain has very strict regulations regarding transit passage of animals.

Several veterinarians practice in Accra. Rabies is prevalent in Ghana; however, the local vets can administer the vaccine.

Firearms and Ammunition

Ghanaian law specifies that only single shot firearms, manually cycled repeating firearms (revolvers, bolt or pump action) and semi-automatic firearms can be imported. Fully automatic firearms are strictly prohibited.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The unit of currency used in Ghana is the cedi. Currency notes are available in denominations of 5,000, 2,000, and 1,000. Also available are 200, 100, 50, 20, and 10 cedi coins.

The exchange rate as of March 2001 was 7,195=US\$1. Travelers' checks are not widely accepted, but can be cashed at the USDO bank or at a foreign exchange bureau for a reduced rate.

Credit cards are not widely accepted, except at some major hotels and restaurants. Only one bank currently offers cash advances on VISA cards only, both over the counter and via automated teller machines.

Limits are set on the exportation of Ghanaian currency, but none on the importation of dollars, whether in currency or travelers checks.

Ghana changed to the metric system officially in 1975, but it is not in universal use. Many items continue to be measured in the British customary system.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Mar. 6 | Independence Day |
| Mar. (2nd Mon) | Commonwealth Day* |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| July 1 | Republic Day |
| Dec. 6 | Farmers Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| Dec. 26 | Boxing Day |
| Dec. 31 | Revolution Day |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Id al-Adah* |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The standard history of Ghana is W. E. F. Ward's *A History of the Gold Coast*. Those interested in Ashanti history and customs may refer to works by K. A. Busia, R. S. Rattray, and Eva E. R. Mayerowitz. Perhaps the best account of more recent political events is *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*, by Dennis Austin. A book dealing with the same general period is David Apter's *Ghana in Transition*. *Forts and Castles of Ghana*, by Albert van Dantzig, is an interesting description of castles built by European colonial powers along the Gold Coast. Peggy Appiah, Efua Sutherland, Ama Ata Aidoo and Ayi Kwei Armah are Ghanaian novelists of repute. *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, by Ayi Kwei Armah, is a novel which gives a vivid picture of present day urban life in Ghana.

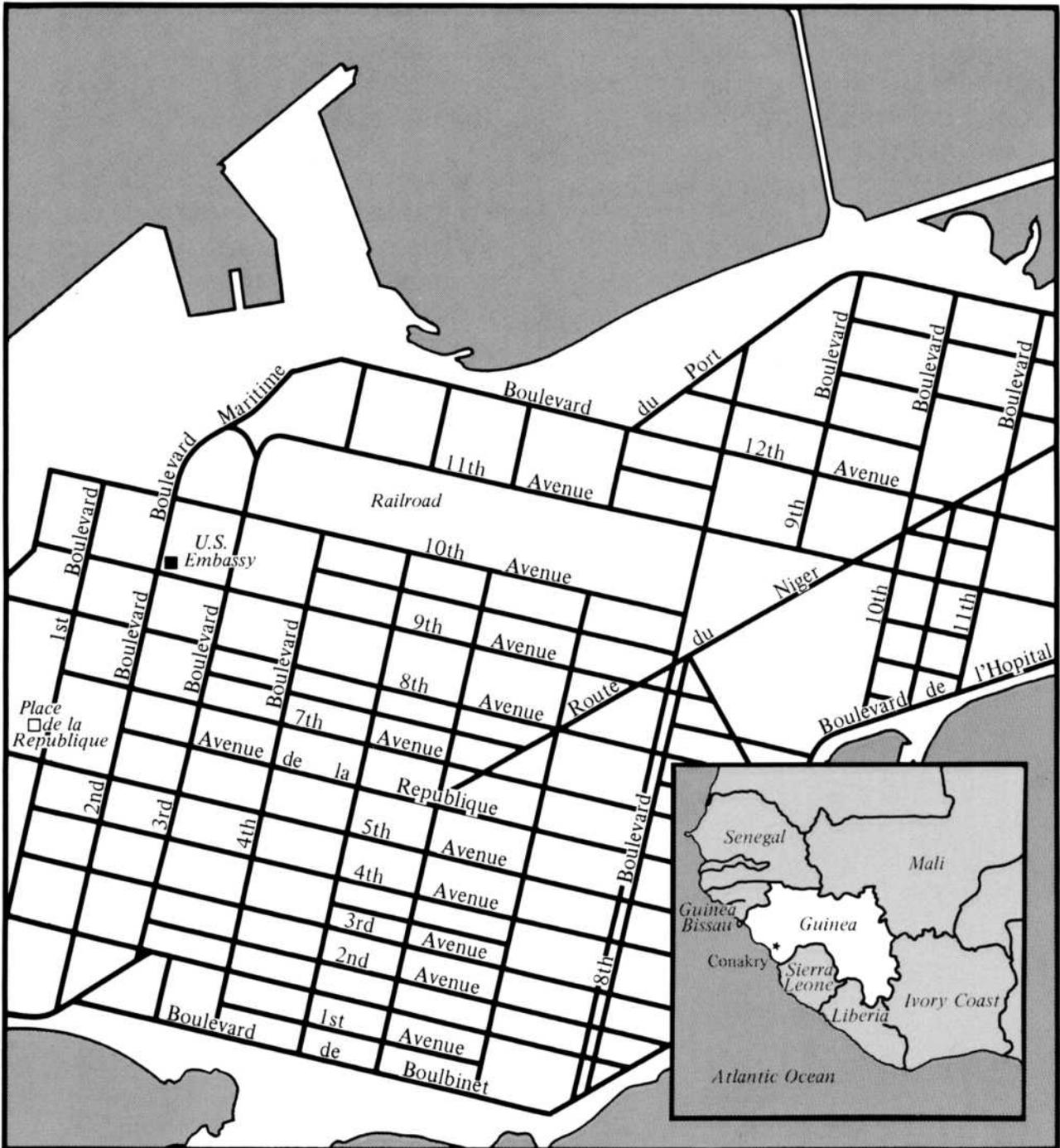
General Interest

Addae, Dr. Stephen. *The History of Western Medicine in Ghana*.

Assimeng, Max. *Social Structure of Ghana*.

Barker, Peter. *Operation Cold Chop*.

- Bouret, F.M. Ghana, *The Road to Independence 1919-1957*.
- Bretton, Henry. *The Rise and Fall of Kwame Nkrumah: A Study of Personal Rule in Africa*.
- Crowder, Michael. *West Africa, An Introduction to Its History*.
- Fitch, Robert and Mary Oppenheimer. *Ghana, End of an Illusion*.
- Lystad, Robert A. *The Ashanti: A Proud People*.
- Mahoney, Richard D. *J.F.K.: Ordeal in Africa*.
- Markowitz, I. *Ghana Without Nkrumah: The Winter of Discontent*.
- McLeod, David. *The Ashanti*.
- Moxon, James. *Volta, Man's Greatest Lake*.
- Nugent, Paul. *Big Man, Small Boys, and Politics in Ghana*.
- Opoku, A.A. *Festivals of Ghana*.
- Page, John D. *Ghana: A Historical Interpretation*.
- Ray, Donald. *Ghana's Politics, Economics, and Society*.
- Thompson, W. Scott. *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966* (a standard work).



Conakry, Guinea

GUINEA

Republic of Guinea

Major City:

Conakry

Other Cities:

Boké, Fria, Kankan, Kindia, Labé, Macenta

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated July 1993. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Most of what is now the Republic of GUINEA was included in the rich and powerful Kingdom of Mali from the 11th through the 16th centuries. From 1810 to 1840, a large section of the country was nominally subject to the Islamic Foulah Empire, which was centered in the Fouta Djallon Mountains.

French penetration along the Atlantic coast began during the 1860s, and most of the country was occupied by the French between 1890 and 1910. The Los Islands (Îles de Loos), a few miles off the coast, were British-controlled from 1815 until 1904. Under France, the country formed the Territory of French Guinea within French West Africa.

Status as a separate entity had been realized in 1946, but a majority vote for total independence came abruptly and dramatically September 28, 1958 when membership in a community of French overseas territories was rejected. Guinea proclaimed itself a sovereign republic four days later.

MAJOR CITY

Conakry

Conakry, with a population of approximately 1.9 million, is the capital of the Republic of Guinea. It lies on the bulge of Africa, some 450 miles southeast of Dakar (Senegal) and 600 miles north of the equator. The central part of the city, Conakry I, is on Tumbo, formerly an island but now connected to the mainland residential Kaloum Peninsula (Conakry II).

French settlement of Conakry (also written Konakri or Konakry) began in 1855, when it was a tiny fishing village. The present form of the city was laid out in 1905 in rectangular blocks. The broad main streets are lined with magnificent mango and kapok (*fromager*) trees, and fine botanical gardens grace the landscape. A few of the buildings were

constructed shortly before independence, but most of the architecture is either old French colonial or African.

In the residential suburbs of Kaloum, modern houses occupied by foreigners or Guinean government officials are on or near the sea, interspersed among traditional African structures. The main streets of the city and suburbs are paved, although poorly maintained. Some residences can be reached only by dirt roads.

Education

The International School of Conakry, a small English-language school with a capacity of 50 students, includes kindergarten through grade eight and follows an American curriculum. The school operates a preschool program for three- and four-year olds. French is taught as a foreign language. Extracurricular activities include art and computer instruction. Owing to a small number of students, instruction is highly individualized.

Some resident Americans prefer to enroll their children in the city's French-language school. Following the French system, it comprises kindergarten through high school, and awards the equivalent of an American high school diploma.



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Wall of Heroes in Conakry, Guinea

The public schools in the capital conduct classes from first grade through high school, and follow the French system of education. Classes are seriously overcrowded; standards of teaching are low, and equipment is old and in short supply. Tuition and supplies (when available) are free. There are no private schools.

No facilities are available for handicapped students.

Recreation

Opportunities in various individual, group, and spectator sports are limited. Soccer and basketball are the most popular among Guineans, and the international community enjoys volleyball during the dry season (October to May). The nearest golf course is in Freetown, Sierra Leone. There are no golf courses, sports clubs, or health spas in Guinea. Outdoor and indoor games such as badminton, ping-pong, darts, horseshoes, croquet, volleyball, softball, and organized events are popular among expatriates. A farm is located outside Conakry where horses can be rented.

Americans do not swim in the ocean around Conakry, as the waters are badly polluted and are filled with large rocks. No sand beaches are located in Conakry proper. However,

during the dry season, swimming is possible at undeveloped beaches located on the Island of Los, just offshore from Conakry. Local boats can be rented for day trips to the islands, although some American expatriates have purchased their own boats.

Except during the height of the rainy season, which extends from May to October, trips are possible to most interior regions of Guinea. The loveliest area for such travel is the Fouta Djallon, where the mountain scenery is magnificent and the climate cooler and less humid than in Conakry. Waterfalls are found near the towns of Kindia (a two-hour drive from Conakry) and Labé (a seven-hour drive). It is possible to camp in these areas, and many Americans do so, but any camping gear must be shipped from home. Another town of interest is Dalaba, which offers a modest hotel and beautiful physical surroundings.

The truly adventurous may travel into the savanna and forest regions, but roads are poor and require four-wheel-drive vehicles, such as Land Rovers. Accommodations are very rustic and must be arranged far in advance of any trip.

The closest major city outside Guinea is Freetown, Sierra Leone,

which provides a distinct change of scenery and has shopping facilities superior to those found in Conakry. The six-hour road trip is possible in the dry season, and sometimes during the rainy interval.

Many Westerners in Guinea take advantage of its geographic location to visit Monrovia (Liberia), Dakar (Senegal), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Accra (Ghana), Algiers (Algeria), Bamako (Mali), Las Palmas in the Canary Islands, or the cities of Morocco. All of these are easily reached by air and, although the trips are costly, shopping facilities and excellent hotel accommodations provide a pleasant break from routine.

Entertainment

Almost all entertainment among expatriates in Conakry is in private homes, usually in the form of dinner, bridge, or cocktail parties. Many local theaters feature French and French-dubbed American, Chinese, Indian, and East European movies. Two are air-conditioned and patronized by expatriates.

Expatriates patronize several of the discotheques and nightclubs where modern African and European music is played. Several restaurants in the city specialize in French, Chinese, Lebanese, and Vietnamese cuisine. Some are excellent and range in price from moderate to expensive.

Many international contacts in Guinea are with Western Europeans; most are French-speaking, but often have a limited command of the English language. It is useful to speak German as well as French, since there is a sizable German community in the capital.

It should be noted that Guineans, although friendly and courteous, seldom accept private social invitations. Invitations to official functions should be cleared by the Guinean Ministry of External Affairs, but this is done promptly. Americans are rarely guests in Guinean homes.

OTHER CITIES

BOKÉ is a port town in western Guinea. Located 110 miles northwest of Conakry, Boké is a market center where fish, cattle, rice, oranges, and palm oil are traded. The Boké area is home to various ethnic groups, including the Landuma, Nalu, Fulani, Mikifore, and Baga peoples.

The western town of **FRIA** is 55 miles south of Conakry and the center of Guinea's bauxite mining region. Guinea's largest industrial enterprise and one of Africa's first alumina-processing plants, the Fria Company, is located near here.

KANKAN is the terminus of a rail center from Conakry, a port on the Milo River (tributary of the Niger), and a highway junction in the eastern part of the country. Situated about 300 miles east of Conakry, Kankan is Guinea's second largest town and the commercial center for the surrounding farming region. It is also the chief trading center of the Malinke and Diula peoples. Crops grown in the area include pineapples, oranges, mangoes, tomatoes, rice, maize, and sesame. There is light industry in Kankan; bricks and fruit juices are made there and there is also a sawmill and a tomato canning factory. Diamonds are mined in the area and Kankan is the site of Guinea's national diamond exchange. It is believed that the city dates back to the 18th century when it was a trade center linking the Atlantic coast and forest belt with the Sudan region. The Muslim religious leader Samory (1835-1900) initiated his military activities in the Kankan area and took the city in 1873. In 1891, Kankan was occupied by the French. Today, Kankan has a polytechnic institute, a national police school, a research center for rice cultivation, and an estimated population of 70,000.

KINDIA is on the rail line, 60 miles northeast of the capital. With an estimated population of 56,000, Kindia is a trade center in a farming

region where fruits, vegetables, manioc, and rice are grown; bauxite is also mined in the area. In Kindia, soap is manufactured and tonic water is bottled. Wood is processed there for use in Conakry's furniture factories. The National School of Agriculture is also located in Kindia. The area surrounding Kindia has a large population of Fulani and Susu peoples.

LABÉ is in the west-central area, about 170 miles northeast of Conakry. It is a market center for the surrounding farm region. Cattle is raised, and citrus fruit, bananas, vegetables, and rice are grown. The city became part of the Mali empire early in the 13th century. Following the decline of Mali, Labé became politically and commercially important, serving as a center of Islam from the 16th to 18th centuries. When the Fulani settled there late in the 18th century, the original inhabitants were displaced. Today, Labé is a major collecting point for oranges, which are trucked to Dakar, Senegal. Lemons and jasmine oil, which is used for making perfume and soap, are also exported from Labé. Labé is Guinea's chief town of Islam and has a population of approximately 273,000.

The town of **MACENTA**, located in a forested region of southeastern Guinea, is home to the Loma and Malinke peoples. Macenta is in the midst of a rich agricultural area and trading center for coffee, rice, tea, cassava, kola nuts, and palm oil.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Guinea, with an area of 95,000 square miles, is about the size of Oregon. Roughly kidney-shaped, the country is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Mali, the Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. It is divided into four distinct geographi-

cal regions: the lower Guinea coastal strip, about 50 miles wide; the Fouta Djallon mountain region, averaging 1,000 feet above sea level, but with some 6,000-foot peaks; the upper Guinea savanna country; and the tropical rain forest of the southeast.

The climate in Conakry is tropical, with dry and rainy seasons. The long dry interval (October to May) is warm, sunny, and humid; when the rains arrive in the months between May and October, the weather is slightly cooler. During the changes of seasons, sunny weather alternates with violent thunderstorms. Temperatures are fairly uniform, rarely rising above 90°F or falling below the mid-70s. March is the hottest month; August, the coolest. Humidity ranges from 70 to 100 percent, and the annual rainfall averages 160–180 inches.

Americans living in Guinea generally find the climate pleasant, but the prolonged downpours during the rainy season can be monotonous and enervating. Cockroaches, termites, mosquitoes, and a variety of other insects are nuisances in most buildings. Because of the high humidity, mildew is a year-round problem. Take precautions to protect clothing, books, food supplies, and other articles.

Population

Guinea's estimated population of 7.6 million consists of four major ethnic groups—the Soussous along the coast, the Peuls (Fulani) in the Fouta Djallon mountains, the Malinke (Mandingo) in the savanna region, and the forestial tribes located in the woodland areas and on the coast. An estimated 85 percent of the population is Muslim; 8 percent, Christian; and 7 percent, animist.

French is used for all government business and in the schools. It is also spoken by all officials in larger towns. In ordinary conversation, people use the language of their ethnic groups. Those working or resid-

ing in Guinea should have a working knowledge of French.

Guinea's international community is small, but has been growing rapidly since the change of government in 1984. Among the diplomatic missions currently maintained are those of France, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, India, the former U.S.S.R., Switzerland, the United States, the United Nations, and several international organizations. Most Eastern European nations also are represented, as well as China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba. Additionally, many African and Middle Eastern nations have missions in the country. Other members of the foreign community include a few Christian missionaries and experts of many nationalities working on bilateral and multilateral assistance programs.

Some Americans and Canadians are employed by Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée (CBG), an international mining consortium at Kamsar, a self-sufficient community a day's drive from Conakry. Many French nationals work at Fria, another bauxite mining camp, about a half-day's drive from the capital. There are also British and other Europeans at a diamond mine in Gbenko. Few Americans have contacts with personnel at these places because of the distances involved.

Government

From 1958 until April 3, 1984, Guinea was a one-party socialist state with a single president. During that time, every aspect of life in the country was state-controlled.

When the Military Committee for National Redressment (CMRN) seized power in a bloodless coup April 3, 1984, it abolished the ruling political body, the Parti démocratique de Guinée (PDG), suspended the constitution, and established the second republic. Control was assumed three days after the funeral of longtime President Ahmed Sékou Touré, who had died in Cleveland, Ohio, following heart surgery. Gen. Lansana Conté was

named as the country's new president.

Conté's early months in power were marked by tremendous upheaval and instability. In July 1985, elements of the Guinean military launched a coup against the government while Conté was out of the country. The coup attempt was quickly defeated by troops loyal to Conté.

In October 1989, Conté announced that his government was prepared to institute a truly democratic government and embarked on a transition to multiparty democracy. A new constitution, calling for a democratically elected president and an elected unicameral parliament was drafted and approved by referendum on December 23, 1990. In January 1991, the Military Committee for National Recovery (CMRN), which had governed Guinea since the April 1984 coup, dissolved itself and was replaced by the Transitional Committee for National Regeneration (CTRN). Political parties were legalized in 1992, and legislative elections were held in June 1995. In 1999, President Conté was reelected for another 5 year term.

Guinea is divided into four geographic sections: Maritime, Middle, Upper, and Forest Guinea. These sections are subdivided into 29 administrative regions.

The flag of Guinea consists of three vertical bands of red, yellow, and green.

Arts, Science, Education

A small collection of traditional African arts and sculpture is available for public viewing at the National Museum in the capital. Cultural attractions from other countries appear in Conakry occasionally. Guinea's excellent national dance troupes tour foreign countries, including the U.S., and also perform frequently in Conakry.

Local crafts include delicate leather work such as belts, sandals, coasters, and handbags. Woven and coil-type baskets and other decorative pieces also are available. Tie-dyeing is a Guinean specialty, and lovely pieces of such fabrics can be purchased, as can pottery and handcrafted musical instruments. Small wood sculptures, primarily from up-country sculptors, are often well done.

A scientific research institute is located in Kindia, a small city near Conakry. There, human and animal vaccines are produced, and snake venom is milked for export to European laboratories for conversion into serum. A horticultural research operation and university campus are located nearby at Foulayah. Prominent on the northern horizon of the capital, in Rogbane, is the Oceanographic and Heliophysical Institute (CERESCOR), constructed by the former U.S.S.R., which engages in oceanographic and atmospheric studies there.

Several secondary schools are located in Conakry, the two largest of which are the Lycée Technique and L'École National des Arts et Métiers. The National University, also in the capital, has programs of study which include humanities, agronomy, agriculture, engineering, basic sciences, architecture, and medicine. Other major university campuses are at Kankan, also the seat of a national vocational secondary school, and at Foulayah and Faranah. Public school education is compulsory at the elementary level, with French the language of instruction. Education at every level is provided at government expense. Guinea's literacy rate is very low. Only 36 percent of the population age 15 and over could read and write.

Commerce and Industry

Although possessing many natural resources and considerable potential for agricultural development, Guinea is one of the poorest coun-

tries in the world with a per capita income of \$1300 in 2000. Following a change in government, sweeping economic reforms were launched in 1985, as Guinea left behind 26 years of state control and attempted to establish a system of private enterprise. Collective farms were abolished, state-owned enterprises were liquidated, food prices were decontrolled, and foreign investment was sought in a variety of economic sectors.

In spite of the substantial success of these programs, Guinea's infrastructure remains underdeveloped, hampering further economic progress.

Subsistence agriculture employs roughly 80 percent of the population. Currently, only three percent of Guinea's land is arable. The main food crops are rice, corn, vegetables, and cassava. Bananas, coffee, pineapples, cotton, and palm kernels are grown for export. Guinea's agricultural output has been hampered by poor transport facilities and lack of mechanization.

Guinea has a small industrial sector, accounting for approximately 35 percent of GDP. Aluminum smelting, food processing, textiles, and plywood manufacturing are the main industries. Shortages of skilled labor has prevented Guinean industries from reaching their full potential.

Minerals and mining represent the economy's most dynamic sector, providing 25 percent of GDP. Guinea possesses over 30 percent of the world's bauxite reserves. American firms have interests in two joint venture bauxite mines, *Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée* (CBG) and *Friguia*, which processes bauxite into alumina. Diamonds are the only minerals being mined and exported on a large scale. Australian, British, and Swiss firms are joint venture partners with the government in *AREDOR*, a large scale diamond mining company. *AREDOR* began production in mid-1984 and is mining diamonds that are 90 percent gem quality. Small-

scale gold mining is also pursued by the joint venture gold mine *Aurifere de Guinee*, which is run by the *Union Miniere of Belgium*. Deposits of copper, manganese, titanium, and uranium have been found but have not been exploited.

Guinea's exports consist mainly of alumina, bauxite, diamonds, coffee, bananas, pineapples, and palm kernels. These exports are sent to the United States, European Community (EC) countries, the former U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe, and Canada. Petroleum products, transport equipment, machinery, food, and textiles are Guinea's principal imports. These products are provided by the United States, France, and Brazil.

The address of Guinea's Chamber of Commerce is B.P. 609, Conakry.

Transportation

Air Guinée offers domestic flights to several up-country towns. It also operates international routes with Boeing 737 planes. All aircraft are occasionally used for official government trips, which may temporarily disrupt *Air Guinée* flight schedules. Several other international airlines also fly into Conakry's airport.

The Guinean national railway, *Chemin de Fer de Guinée*, no longer operates in the interior. Up-country journeys are made by road or by scheduled *Air Guinée* service to regional centers. Travel by road sometimes requires a four-by-four vehicle, particularly during the rainy season, but major up-country centers are usually accessible with regular cars having a high clearance. Other points in Africa can be reached by air and, occasionally, by freighter.

Conakry has a modern municipal bus system, but it is overcrowded. Point-to-point taxis are available, but not recommended. Jitney-like taxis that follow regular routes are overcrowded and mechanically unreliable.

Drivers' licenses are issued without tests to those having valid U.S. or other foreign licenses. Driving is on the left-hand side in Guinea.

Communications

The telephone system in Conakry and throughout Guinea is being improved, but is still antiquated and overloaded. Telephone service is limited to offices, embassies, and some businesses. Direct-dial service exists between the U.S. and Europe, but is very expensive. Telegraph service is available through the Post and Telegraph Office (PTT). However, telegraph service is costly and often delayed. Guinea is five time zones ahead of eastern standard time.

Airmail from the U.S. is delivered within two weeks, but surface mail usually is two to four months in transit.

Guinea has one radio and television service, state-operated *Radiodiffusion-Télévision Guinée*. It broadcasts on FM and medium- and shortwave bands in French, English, Portuguese, Arabic and the three major national languages. English-language programming is limited to about forty-five minutes per week. Mediumwave radios also can pick up broadcasts in English from Sierra Leone, in French from Dakar, and in Spanish from Las Palmas. Most Americans in Conakry have shortwave radios that receive Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and other foreign stations. Shortwave radios should be of good quality, battery-powered, tropicalized, and multiband. VCRs (VHS) are widely used among expatriates.

Guinean television programming is limited. No programming is available in English. Occasionally, it is possible to receive programs from Freetown. Sets brought from home must be adjusted for use in Africa.

Few local publications are available. French-language newspapers and magazines sometimes can be found at the major hotels.

Apart from the government-owned, occasionally printed newspaper *Horoya*, few publications are available locally. French-language publications and occasional copies of the *International Herald Tribune* and *Newsweek* are available at various outlets. The U.S. Embassy in Conakry maintains a paperback library of donated books for its personnel. Expensive books brought from home must be carefully protected against high humidity and insect damage.

Health

Government hospitals in the capital are staffed by Guineans and some foreign (largely East European and Chinese) doctors. Lack of equipment, inadequate nursing care, and poor sanitation make these hospitals unsuitable for Americans. Although a few dentists maintain private practices in the city, Westerners needing dental care usually go to Dakar, or Europe. Guinea has no optical testing facilities but these, although expensive, can be found in Dakar.

Guinean public health controls are limited to elementary sanitation and to vaccinations against yellow fever.

City water is treated, but tap water is unsafe to drink. Conakry has an underground sewage system; streets are cleaned and garbage is collected in the city, but not regularly in the suburbs.

Malaria, schistosomiasis, tuberculosis, yaws, leprosy, venereal diseases, and intestinal parasites are all endemic among the Guinean population. With proper precautions, these diseases pose minimal risks to Americans.

Malaria suppressants must be taken regularly, beginning two weeks before arrival in the country and continuing for six weeks after departure. Water for both drinking and cooking must be boiled and filtered, and it is also necessary to soak fruits and vegetables in an iodine solution before consumption. Because of the lack of proper health

facilities, it is imperative that anyone planning to live in Guinea have thorough prior medical, dental, and optical examinations, and that all corrective treatment be completed before arrival.

Rabies is prevalent throughout the country; pets should be given a reliable vaccine, preferably the three-day live virus type. Revaccinations are available through a local veterinarian.

Clothing and Services

Casual clothing is usually the dress mode in Conakry, even for office wear and social functions. The occasional formal event calls for dark wash-and-wear business suits or long, cruise-type dresses. Men's daily wear consists primarily of safari suits (with a high percentage of cotton content), or open-necked, short-sleeved shirts, and slacks. Women wear casual dresses or skirts and sandals. Cotton is the preferred fabric because it is cool and easy to maintain. It is important to have an adequate wardrobe, as daily washing is hard on clothes; there are no dry cleaning facilities. Slacks and shorts are acceptable for house wear, the beach, and other outdoor activities.

Conakry is built on old volcanic outpourings. Thus, the ground is rough and shoes wear out quickly. It is advisable to have a supply of sandals for daytime wear, and rubber thongs for the beach or for use during the rainy season. Leather shoes and bags must be carefully protected from mildew.

Swimsuits and beachwear are essential. Bikinis are acceptable, and swimsuit cover-ups are useful.

Most people find raincoats too hot in this tropical climate; however, some people use rubberized ponchos during the rainy season. Heavy-duty umbrellas are required as the rain is heavy. Heavy clothing is rarely needed in Conakry, but it can get cool up-country. A sweater or jacket

should be included in one's wardrobe.

Children's clothing should be simple in style and easy to care for. The most common apparel consists of short pants with colored short-sleeved shirts for boys, and sleeveless shifts (or blouses with shorts or slacks) for girls. Children wear leather or composition sandals or tennis shoes to school.

Almost no equipment, supplies, or repair facilities are available in Conakry. Repairmen are scarce and poorly trained. Cobblers make only simple repairs, using recycled materials; the results are often unsatisfactory. Local tailors make virtually all types of clothing, but quality is erratic. A wide selection of fabrics is available but expensive. Any electrical or mechanical equipment brought to Guinea should be simple, durable, and accompanied by spare parts, as there are no radio or household repairs available. Plumbers, electricians, and radio repairmen are scarce and poorly trained. Some basic services are provided at the U.S. Embassy for its own personnel.

There are barber and beauty shops of varying quality. A good supply of beauty and hair needs, such as permanent kits, cream rinses, tints and colors, hair spray, and cosmetics, should be brought from home.

Domestic Help

Domestic help, a necessity (and nearly always male), is usually hired on the recommendation of other Americans or Europeans. Most are trained in French housekeeping methods and are unfamiliar with American foods or elaborate household equipment. Well-trained servants are not easily found, and all require supervision. The majority speak only a little French and are illiterate. English-speaking servants are rare.

Ordinarily, a houseperson/domestic is employed to do the cleaning, laundry, and shopping. Guards are hired to watch the house at night. Some

houses, with large gardens, require the services of a gardener.

Servants rarely live in, and are expected to provide their own food. Uniforms, if desired, are furnished by the employer and must be tailored locally. Most servants expect their employers to provide them with raincoats.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Conakry is served by several international airlines. These include flights from Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Rome, Casablanca, Dakar, Abidjan, Freetown, Bissau, Banjul, Accra, Bamako, and Lagos, with connecting flights to other locations. The most reliable flights are KLM from Amsterdam, SABENA from Brussels, and UTA from Paris. Passenger ships generally do not stop at Conakry ports.

A valid passport and visa (exit and reentry) are required. Travelers stopping overnight in other African cities (such as Dakar, Abidjan, or Freetown) should also obtain visas for those countries. Health records must include documentation of vaccination against smallpox, yellow fever, and cholera, and of other appropriate inoculations (see Health section).

No quarantine is imposed on pets. Generally, they can be cleared through customs without difficulty. Rabies vaccinations and certificates of general health (dated within two

months of arrival) must be presented. Dogs and cats are easily obtainable in Conakry.

The following denominations maintain places of worship in Conakry: Roman Catholic (services in French and English), Anglican (services in French, English, and one local language), French Reformed (French and English), and Muslim. There are four American-sponsored Protestant missions: Baptist, Evangelical, Bible Way, and Assemblies of God.

The time in Guinea is Greenwich Mean Time.

The country's currency is the Guinean *franc*. Those departing from Guinea are allowed to have no more than 5,000 Guinean *francs* in their possession. Guinean currency is generally not convertible on the world market. All payments within Guinea must be made in Guinean *francs*. All money or money instruments brought into the country must be declared at the airport upon arrival. Currency can only be exchanged at government-approved sites, generally banks or the international hotels.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

Special Note: Care should be exercised in taking photographs in Guinea, as officials and other individuals sometimes object even when a permit is presented. Nevertheless, it is wise to have a camera on hand for those infrequent occasions, such as public ceremonies and celebra-

tions, when taking photos is no problem.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Apr. 3 | Declaration 2nd Republic |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| Aug. 15 | Assumption Day |
| Aug. 27 | Anniversary of Women's Revolt |
| Sept. 28 | Referendum Day |
| Oct. 2 | Independence Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| | Id al-Adah* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |

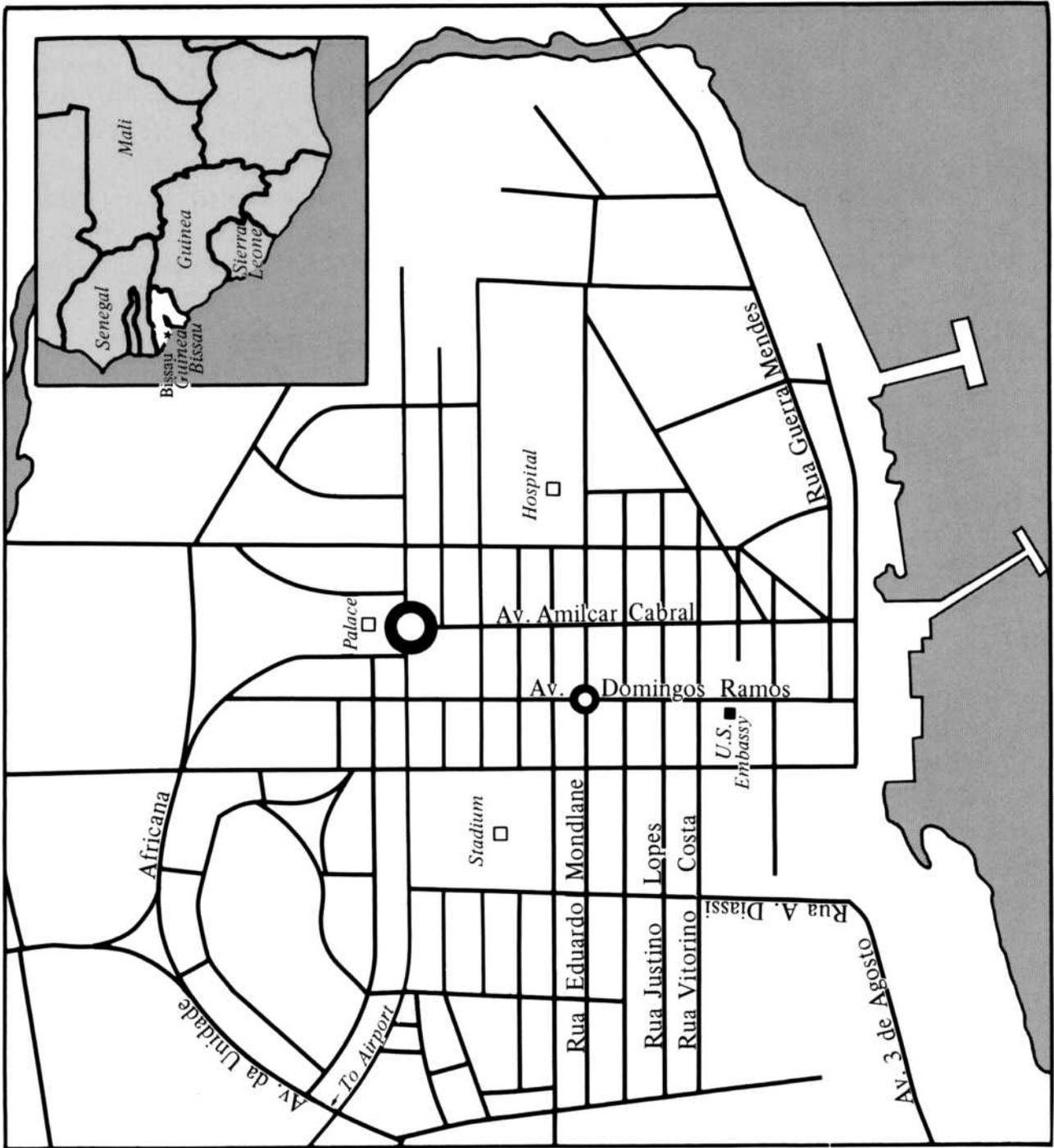
*Variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Africa South of the Sahara 1992. London: Europa Publications, 1991.

O'Toole, Thomas E. *Historical Dictionary of Guinea (Republic of Guinea/Conakry).* 2nd ed. African Historical Dictionaries Series, no. 16. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1988.



Bissau, Guinea-Bissau

GUINEA-BISSAU

Guinea-Bissau

Major City:

Bissau

Other Cities:

Bafata, Bolama, Cacheu, Farim, Gabú, Mansôa

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated April 1996. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of **GUINEA-BISSAU**, an enclave between Senegal in the north and northwest of Africa, and Guinea in the southeast, is an independent state once known as Portuguese Guinea. This small overseas province, discovered in 1446, was a center for slave trade in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Guinea-Bissau's remarkably successful struggle for autonomy, twenty years in the making, was achieved in 1974 when its former colonial power recognized it as a republic. That year, it became a member of the United Nations. Representatives of Guinea-Bissau serve as members of several of the special-

ized agencies within that international body.

MAJOR CITY

Bissau

Bissau, the capital of Guinea-Bissau, was founded in 1692. Its population is approximately 233,000. The city, located on the Geba River where it meets the South Atlantic Ocean, is 400 miles south of Dakar, Senegal, and 200 miles south of Banjul, The Gambia. Bissau has low, Portuguese-style buildings and mango tree-lined streets.

Food

In recent years the food situation has improved dramatically in Bissau. Frozen and fresh fish and shrimp of good quality are generally available year round. Oysters can be found in season. Seafood is not expensive by international standards. Frozen, imported meat arrives monthly. Fresh vegetables, eggs, and fruits are available in the local markets. Normally, one may purchase green beans, lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, okra, kale, green and red peppers, and a variety of other vegetables. Flour, sugar, and dried whole milk are almost always available. Several stores

offer a variety of imported cheese, processed meats, canned goods, and bottled products. Local butcher shops sell cuts of beef, pork, and lamb. Soft drinks, beer, wines, selected liquors, soap products, and other household items are always available, at prices considerably higher than for similar products purchased in Europe or the U.S. In season, tropical fruits, such as mango, papaya, bananas, oranges, grapefruit, limes, and pineapple are available on the local market.

Clothing

For men, suits and ties are worn on special occasions. For women, such occasions generally require Western- or African-style dresses. Gloves are not worn. Guineans dress informally in open, short-sleeved shirts and slacks during the normal business day. Safari suits are also very popular. Women generally wear informal cotton dresses or skirt/slacks and blouse to the office. People tend to stick to cotton fabrics as the humid, hot conditions make polyester materials uncomfortable. Also, cotton does not require dry-cleaning, which is nonexistent. Some local tailoring is available and reasonably priced, but quality is uneven. Those having something made usually supply the material and pattern. Ready-made items, although available, generally are

not suitable for most American tastes.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: Local sundries are unreliable.

Basic Services: Dry-cleaning does not exist. Shoe repair is not very satisfactory. Bissau has a few barbers and hairdressers.

Religious Activities

Bissau has three Catholic churches where Mass is held on Sundays: the venerable Bissau Cathedral in the downtown area (in Portuguese), the newer church on the airport road (also in Portuguese), and another Catholic church in one of the town's suburbs (in Crioulo). Bissau has several mosques, but no synagogues.

Education

Bissau offers no educational facilities with English as the language of instruction. Almost all primary and secondary education is in Portuguese and Crioulo. Two French schools also operate in the primary grades, with monitors supervising study lessons, which are forwarded to France for correction and comments.

The Portuguese Embassy and the Brazilian Cultural Center sponsor Portuguese language classes; the Alliance Francaise offers French-language lessons.

Sports

Guineans love soccer. Games are scheduled at one of the two major stadiums virtually every weekend and are well attended.

Guineans and a number of foreigners play tennis at a variety of skill levels on the other five tennis courts in Bissau. Tennis lessons can be arranged with one of several keen Guinean players at a reasonable cost. A number of foreign volunteers and Guineans play volleyball during the weekend, usually later in the afternoon when the heat abates. Local play and travel to the annual softball tournament in Dakar are

possibilities. Many people in Bissau spend their weekends traveling to favorite fishing spots to cast for a variety of saltwater species of fish. For those who like to get close to nature, there are bird-watching opportunities outside Bissau.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The Island of Bubaque is the most well developed within the archipelago off the coast, with an airstrip and paved road linking a hotel with a lovely beach, 10 kilometers away. Weekend packages can be arranged, covering lodging, meals, and transportation to and from the beach. Erratic schedules of water transport to and from the island and irregular flights are constraints to further development of tourism on other islands. One of the country's best mainland beaches is Varela, in the northwesternmost corner of the country, just south of the Senegalese border. The trip from Bissau takes about 4 hours, and a high-clearance vehicle is recommended for the trip because of the ferry crossings. The pristine beach is not developed and there is only one rudimentary hotel. Campers must take all their own food and equipment, including drinking water. A number of Guineans and foreigners make the trip to Varela to enjoy long weekends or holidays.

Nearer Bissau is a small beach called Biombo, offering fishing and swimming; the road is paved until the last few miles. Just 20 minutes from Bissau is Quinhamel, a pleasant spot for swimming, picnicking, or fishing; a small restaurant offers tasty food at reasonable prices.

Driving into Guinea-Bissau's interior, one can find primitive camping and swimming at Saltinho and Cuselinta, both river rapids areas approximately a 2-hour drive from Bissau on paved roads. A new tourist camp near Saltinho has good food and comfortable lodging.

The trip by road to Ziguinchor in southern Senegal takes 4–5 hours. This principal town in the Casamance Region of the country has a

number of good hotels and restaurants. From Ziguinchor, 1 hour's drive west, is the coastal resort of Cap Skirring, which boasts an excellent beach and many fine hotels, including a huge Club Mediterranean with an array of facilities.

From October to May the "Africa Queen," a French-registered ship, which sleeps 35, offers 3–7 day cruises from Bissau in the Bijagos Archipelago. The trips are popular with both visiting French tourists and the local international community.

Entertainment

The French Cultural Center offers a wide range of activities, including concerts, art exhibits, film showings, and lectures, all at reasonable cost; the center also has a lending library.

The Hotti Hotel offers outdoor dinner and dancing next to its swimming pool on weekends during the dry season. In recent years a number of new restaurants which offer a variety of cuisine—French, Cape Verdean, Italian, Lebanese, and Portuguese, have sprung up.

Discos are popular with the younger crowd and usually come to life after 11 pm. The most popular of them are Cabana, Tropicana, O Rio, and Ponto Neto.

Social Activities

Among Americans: The small American community consists primarily of official U.S. Government personnel and their dependents, plus Peace Corps volunteers. A number of American citizen contractors and consultants also come through Bissau, either associated with A.I.D. activities or with other donor organization projects.

Informal contact among Americans is frequent.

International Contacts: Guineans are among the friendliest people in Africa. A growing number have been educated in the U.S. and bring back warm memories of their time

there, as well as fluency in English. A larger number know French, in addition to Portuguese.

The international community consists of members of a dozen foreign embassies plus the various international organizations. Social activities generally depend on the preference of the host. Luncheons, small sit-down dinners, buffets, and larger cocktail receptions are common.

OTHER CITIES

Located in the east-central part of the country, **BAFATA** lies along the Geba River and is an important trading center. The growing of peanuts and livestock raising are the main economic pursuits in the town and surrounding area.

BOLAMA is a port town and capital of Guinea until 1941. Situated on the southeast side of the Ilha de Bolama, between the mainland and the Bijagós Islands, the town has been declining in importance since the 1940s. The opening of a footwear factory in the early 1980s was a major economic boost to Bolama.

CACHEU has flourished and declined with the West African slave trade. Situated in the northwestern part of the country on the south bank of the Rio Cacheu, it gained prominence in the 17th and 18th centuries. When the slave trade dwindled in the early 19th century and Bolama became Guinea-Bissau's capital, Cacheu's importance diminished. In the late 1970s, phosphate deposits were found nearby, spurring hopes of growth. Today it is a small port town, as well as a market center where local farmers sell coconuts, palm oil, and rice. Subsistence crops such as millet, corn, and sorghum are grown near Cacheu.

The northern town of **FARIM** is a marketing center for peanuts and livestock. Significant phosphate deposits have been located near Farim, but have yet to be exploited.

GABÚ in eastern Guinea-Bissau, is home to the Fulani people. Situated along the Colufe River, Gabú is an agricultural center. Peanuts are the principal crop of the region.

MANSÔA is a town situated in central Guinea-Bissau. Areas surrounding Mansôa are known for their forests and rice production. Attempts have been made to develop sugar plantations near Mansôa.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Guinea-Bissau is a small nation on the African West Coast bounded on the north by Senegal, and to the south and east by the Republic of Guinea (Conakry). Its 36,000-square-kilometer area rises from a low coastal plain in the south to forested plains in the center of the nation and a low plateau in the northwest. Guinea-Bissau also extends through the Bijagos Archipelago, a series of scenic islands off the west coast.

The country is cut by many rivers and the sea encroaches deeply into the interior. Major rivers are the Corubal, Cacheu, Mansoa, Geba, and the Rio Grande de Buba.

Guinea-Bissau is a tropical country with only two seasons. The wet season extends from June to October and the dry season from November to May.

Average annual rainfall is 1,000–2,000 mm (49–80 inches). Usual temperatures range from 75°F to 90°F.

Population

The population of Guinea-Bissau was estimated at 1.3 million in 2000. Bissau, the capital, is estimated to have a population of 233,000. Other population centers

of Bafata, Gabu, and Canchungo have 10–20,000 inhabitants. The majority of the people live in small villages. Ethnic groups include the Balanta, Fula, Manjaco, Mandinga, and Papel.

Portuguese is the official language; Crioulo, a mixture of Portuguese and various African languages, is the lingua franca. Each ethnic group also retains its own language, customs, and social life in rural areas.

50 percent of the people are animists and follow traditional African religions. Moslems comprise about 45 percent and are concentrated in the Fula and Mandinga areas in the northeast. Some 5 percent of the population is Christian, with Roman Catholic the largest denomination. Several Protestant churches are also represented.

Public Institutions

The rivers of Guinea and the islands of Cape Verde were among the first areas in Africa explored by the Portuguese in the 15th century. Although the nominal rulers of Guinea-Bissau for 500 years, the Portuguese did not have a major impact on the country beyond giving it its official language. Even today, most of Guinea-Bissau's inhabitants live in traditional African societies, almost untouched by the outside world.

The independence movement was born in 1956 with the formation of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the country's current ruling party. The PAIGC moved its headquarters to neighboring Conakry in 1960 and initiated armed rebellion in 1963. Despite the presence of more than 35,000 Portuguese troops, the PAIGC had gained control over much of the country by 1972 and unilaterally declared independence on September 24, 1973. Hostilities in Guinea-Bissau ended in 1974, following the April revolution in Portugal. Guinea-Bissau gained formal independence in September 1974.

Amilcar Cabral, the founder of the independence movement and its widely respected leader throughout "The Struggle," was assassinated under mysterious circumstances in Conakry in 1973. Today, his picture is displayed in every government office in Guinea-Bissau, his birthday is a national holiday, and the country's leadership is still dominated by his disciples.

At independence, the new government adopted an essentially Marxist philosophy, emphasizing government control of the economy. By 1980, the economy had failed to improve and complaints against the Cape Verdean-dominated government were widespread. A successful coup d'état with support from the armed forces, ousted President Luis Cabral in November 1980. The leader of the coup, Prime Minister Joao Bernardo Vieira, was awarded the Presidency and has ruled Guinea-Bissau ever since.

In 1984 a new Constitution, which continued the tradition of a single legal political party, was approved by the one-party legislature. By the mid-1980s the paralysis of the statist economic system led to broad economic reforms; in 1989 the ruling PAIGC under the direction of President Vieira began to outline a political liberalization program which the legislature approved in 1991. Under the revised constitution, multiple political parties were legalized, freedom of the press was recognized, and independent trade unions given the right to strike. There are 13 recognized political parties.

Guinea-Bissau's first multi-party elections were held in July and August 1994 and were judged free and fair by all international observers. Elections were once again held in 1999, when Koumba Yala of the Social Renewal Party (PRS) won the presidency and his party gained a majority in the legislature. The term for President is 5 years and for members of the legislature, 4 years.

The President selects, with the advice of the various political parties, a Prime Minister, who heads the government and presides over the Cabinet (currently 26 ministers and Secretaries of State). The President currently appoints judges, but under the revised Constitution the independence of the judiciary should be enhanced through judicial selections made by a panel of senior judges with Presidential concurrence.

The President appoints mayors, called presidents of the council, for the major urban areas. The country is divided into eight regions, plus the capital area.

Arts, Science, and Education

Except for local artisans working in traditional modes, such as weaving lengths of fabric called "panos," arts and sciences are extremely limited. A few local outlets, including a church-run artisans' workshop, sell African arts and crafts, which are mostly wood carvings and masks.

Education is primarily a function of the central government and remains one of the country's major problem areas. In a country where the great majority of the population live in dispersed rural settlements, schools compete with the agricultural industry to attract students. There are shortages of educational facilities, teachers and supplies. The suitability of Portuguese as the initial language of instruction, instead of Crioulo or indigenous languages, has long been debated without resolution. An estimated 70 percent of the population remains illiterate in any language.

Beyond secondary school, there is a law faculty affiliated with Lisbon University, a 3-year secondary teacher training college; a medical faculty relying on Cuban doctors and curriculum, nurses' and medical technicians' training facilities (these three health facilities are to be merged in the near future), and a

3-year accounting/public administration course granting a technical mid-level degree. The Catholic Church also runs a seminary.

Commerce and Industry

Guinea-Bissau is one of the twenty the 20 poorest countries in the world, with a per capita GDP of about \$850. Over 60 percent of economic activity is informal and is not reflected in statistics. The economy is dominated by subsistence farming. Commercial farming includes cashews, peanuts and palm kernels. USAID projects include local processing of cashew nuts and improving mango production for export. Guinea-Bissau is the world's sixth largest cashew producing country. Cashews comprise 70 percent of product exports, generating over \$20 million in 1994, double the revenue earned from fishing licenses. Some fishing license agreements are being renegotiated to reduce over-fishing and provide more revenue. Although rice production has increased, imports of this staple remain high. Crops for domestic consumption include rice, millet, maize, sorghum, beans, cassava, manioc, and vegetables, as well as bananas and other fruits.

The nation is completing the transition to a market economy. The state no longer dominates either the productive or service sectors, having abolished state marketing boards, privatized some companies, ended price controls (except on petroleum), passed a new investment law, and adopted laws and procedures to facilitate private economic activity. Transport, commerce, and service sector responses to these changes have been very positive.

The most successful aspects of Guinea-Bissau's structural adjustment program have been in trade reform and price liberalization. A military conflict between the government and a military junta in 1998 and 1999 caused a major decline in economic activity. The

GDP has begun to recover since, and the country saw 7.6 percent growth in 2000. Guinea-Bissau has one of the heaviest debt burdens in the world. External debt is over US\$600 million; a debt to GDP ratio of 300 percent. A Paris Club rescheduling of bilateral debt in February 1995 reduced debt service payments and improved the economic climate.

Transportation

Local

Traffic outside the capital in Guinea-Bissau is light, though one must be watchful for people, cattle, pigs, goats, or chickens suddenly crossing the road. Within Bissau, as the economic reform program has begun to take effect, commercial activity and traffic have increased. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that there is only one main road into town from the airport.

Throughout Guinea-Bissau and especially in the capital, defensive driving is a must! Pedestrians wander at will, without regard for vehicular traffic. Most local drivers are first-generation, with little experience. Motorists must be prepared for all kinds of unpredictable behavior, from stopping suddenly in the middle of the road to pick someone up, to dangerous maneuvers at excessive speeds which cause many accidents in the country. A related problem is caused by failure to impose effective motor vehicle inspection standards. Many cars and trucks simply are not road worthy, lacking rearview mirrors, lights, or windshields. The presence of these unsafe vehicles on the roads and highways of the country offers an additional challenge to the motorist in Guinea-Bissau.

Although inexpensive, buses are usually crowded and not reliable in terms of a regular schedule. Taxis are generally available, except late in the evening or in the predawn morning hours. They are "communal" in the sense drivers pick up passengers until the car's capacity is reached, dropping customers off

along the way while proceeding in the general direction you want to go.

Regional

Guinea-Bissau has no railroads. Travel between towns is normally by "bush taxi," the ubiquitous enclosed trucks which have equipped the rear end with benches. People are squeezed in like sardines and transported to where they want to get off. Bush taxis are cheap, but only the hardy wishing to gain intimate contact with the sights, sounds, and smells of the country choose this mode of transportation.

Most major roads are paved and one can easily travel overland to Senegal and The Gambia. Roads in Guinea-Conakry are poor, but the trip from Bissau to Conakry can be made in the dry season. Many secondary roads in Guinea-Bissau are impassable during the rainy season.

Travelers must have valid entry visas for The Gambia and Guinea-Conakry.

Air service to and from Bissau is available from Europe and neighboring countries. T.A.P. (Air Portugal) operates a weekly flight from Lisbon. Air Bissau and Air Afrique jointly operate a weekly flight from Paris via Bamako. Flights are available 4 days a week to and from Dakar on Air Senegal or Air Bissau. Other flights are scheduled during the week which link Conakry, Banjul, and Praia with Bissau.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local telephone service is not up to U.S. standards. Individuals can expect their telephones to be out of service for several days per year. It is not always easy to telephone from the capital to other parts of the country.

However, international service is reliable, and it is easy to call Europe or the U.S. from Bissau. International direct dial was instituted in the country a few years ago. The

costs are high, but connections are quick and usually very good. However, not all countries can dial direct into Guinea-Bissau. Telephone calls to Bissau from Europe and other African countries can be difficult.

Telegraphic links also are adequate.

Radio and TV

Guinea-Bissau's TV station began broadcasting in 1989 and now broadcasts up to 8 hours daily. Most TV programs are in Portuguese, though often U.S. films are aired in English, with Portuguese subtitles.

Local TV operates using the European system (PAL).

A shortwave radio receiver is another item travelers cannot do without. VOA, BBC, and other international broadcasters beam strong signals into Guinea-Bissau in the morning and evening hours.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Guinea-Bissau's Government-owned newspaper, *No Pintcha*, and several independent papers appear irregularly. Some foreign publications, including the *International Herald Tribune* and the *Economist*, can be purchased at the local book shop and arrive within a week of publication. A number of Portuguese and Brazilian newspapers can be found on a regular basis.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Guinea-Bissau has one of the poorest medical systems in the world. Local medical providers are, in most cases, competent, but due to limited facilities and supplies are unable to manage problems at a Western level of care. Only the most basic diagnostic tests can be done in country. Therefore, the need for medical evacuation to more appropriate medical facilities is frequent.

Community Health

Travelers are encouraged to receive all immunizations recommended by Medical Services prior to arriving in Bissau.

Malaria is a constant threat in Guinea-Bissau, and everyone should take steps to prevent it. Primary prevention (how not to get bit by mosquitoes) is at the forefront of the malaria battle. Keeping screens in good shape and using bed nets is also encouraged. Bring plenty of insect repellent (DEET based). In addition, individuals should start malaria prophylaxis prior to arriving in Bissau. The most effective malarial prophylaxis is mefloquine.

Preventive Measures

All water in Guinea-Bissau must be boiled or chemically treated prior to consumption. Bottled water and drinks are readily available in restaurants and markets. All fruits and vegetables must be cooked or chemically treated prior to eating. Meats, seafood, and poultry need to be well cooked. Fresh milk is difficult to find and requires boiling, but powdered and heat-treated milk are available.

Although some over-the-counter medications and supplies are available in Bissau, the brand selection, compared to the U.S. is limited, costly, and unfamiliar. Those coming to Guinea-Bissau should ship or bring most items normally found in their medicine cabinets. As Guinea-Bissau's water is deficient in fluoride, parents should bring fluoride supplements for their children.

You should have a prescription for refills, either in hand or on record at your pharmacy.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

The U.S. Department of State warns American citizens against travel to Bissau. Although the civil war has ended, the political situation is unstable and potentially dangerous.

There are still landmines located throughout the country, and any travelers should exercise extreme caution at all times.

Those traveling to Bissau usually fly an American carrier to Lisbon or Paris, and then take the weekly Air Portugal (T.A.P.) or Air Afrique flights to Bissau. Alternatively, one can fly to Europe and transfer to a plane bound either for Banjul or Dakar, then fly into Bissau. A final possibility is to catch the thrice weekly New York/Dakar flight of Air Afrique and then make the Bissau connection.

You must secure a visa before entering Bissau. Visas can be obtained from the Guinea-Bissau Embassy in Washington, D.C. the Guinea-Bissau Mission to the U.N. in New York, or Guinea-Bissau's Embassies in Lisbon or Dakar. Allow 2 weeks to get the visa.

Pets may be brought into the country if a valid official veterinarian's certificate of health is presented. Check the pet regulations in the Lisbon Post Report if transiting Lisbon with a pet. Inoculate pets every 6–12 months against rabies and other diseases as advised by the veterinarian.

A veterinarian at the government veterinary facility in Bissau will treat private cases. The Peace Corps medical officer has only rabies vaccine on hand.

Few houses have sufficient outside exercise space, and ticks, fleas, and other pests abound.

The unit of currency is the CFA franc. In January 2001, the exchange rate was U.S. \$1 equals 699 CFA francs. Money can be exchanged at the International Bank of Guinea-Bissau.

For emergency travel, bring travelers checks, as they cannot be purchased in Bissau. Credit cards are accepted only at the Hotti Hotel and at some, but not all, of the airlines in Bissau. Senegalese resorts accept VISA cards more often than others.

Guinea Bissau uses the metric system of weights and measures.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Jan.1 | New Year's Day |
| Jan. | Heroes' Day* |
| Mar. 8 | Women's Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| Aug. 3 | Martyrs of Colonialism Day |
| Sept. 24. | Independence Day |
| Nov.14 | Readjustment Movement Day |
| Dec. 24 | Christmas Eve |
| Dec. 25 & 26 | Christmas Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Id al-Adha* |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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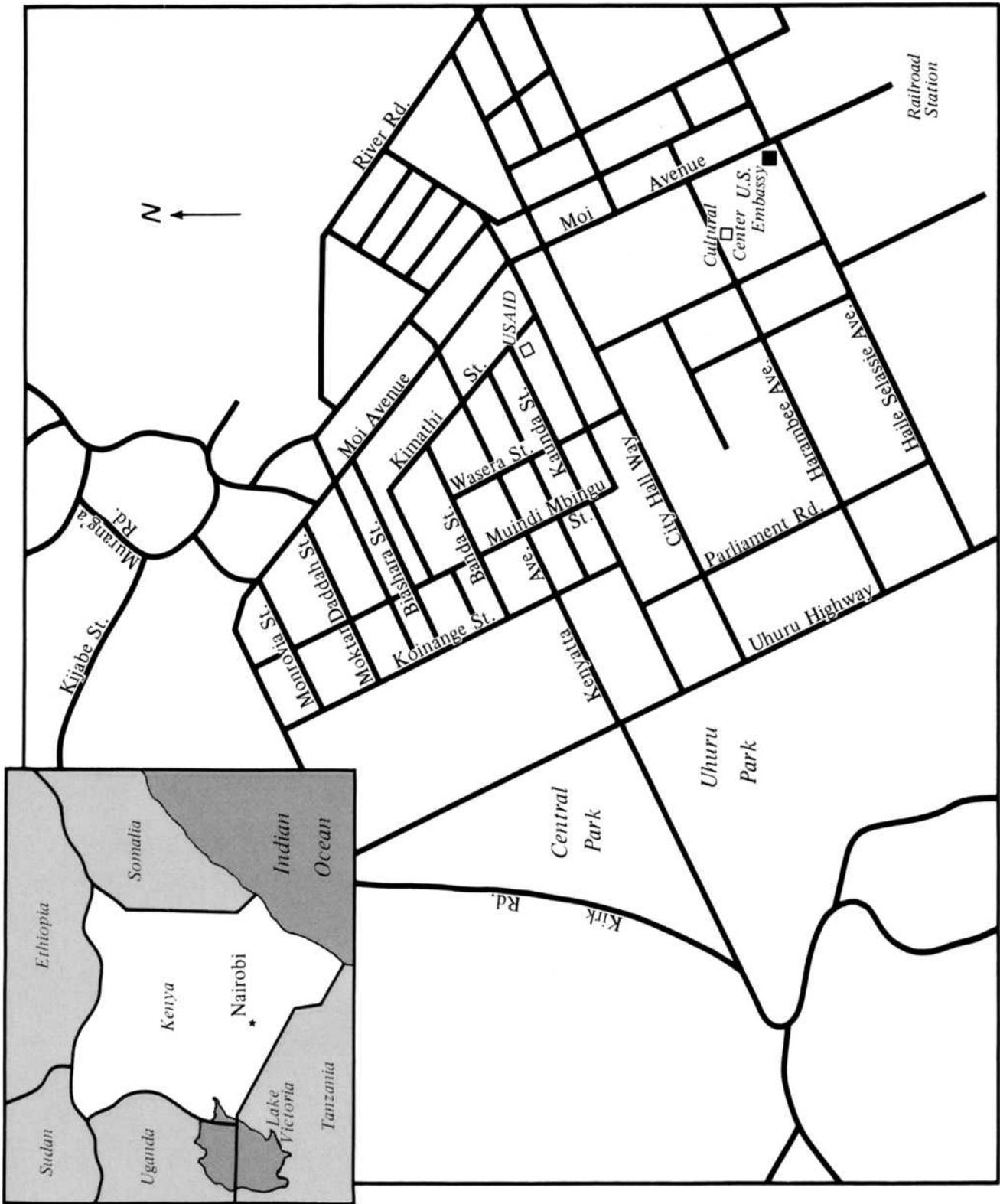
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Nairobi, Kenya

KENYA

Republic of Kenya

Major Cities:

Nairobi, Mombasa

Other Cities:

Eldoret, Garissa, Kisumu, Lamu, Malindi, Nakuru, Nanyuki, Nyeri, Thika

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated February 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Kenya offers an interesting political and economic situation, a modern capital by African standards, an enjoyable climate, varied sports facilities, good schools, and year-round availability of fresh meats and produce.

Wild animals can be found minutes from downtown Nairobi, and lodges and game parks abound. Along with elephants, lions, zebras, and rhinoceroses, Kenya has more species of exotic, colorful birds than are known in most other countries. Driving in Kenya gives access to the parks and lakes, as well as to a fascinating variety of local cultures. Some 60,000 American tourists come here for vacations each year.

Archeologists believe human existence began here perhaps 2.9 million years ago. The famous Leakey family of paleontologists continues to work at various sites throughout Kenya to learn more about man's origin and ancestors.

Kenya has a great deal to offer Americans who are willing to take advantage of it.

MAJOR CITIES

Nairobi

With a population of about 2,320,000, Nairobi has a modern downtown with an assortment of hotels, international restaurants, shops of all kinds, tree-lined streets, lovely flowering plants year round, and handsome residential areas.

The city is a mixture of Europe, Asia, and Africa, with the latter becoming increasingly prominent economically due, in part, to the government's systematic program of business "indigenization."

Nairobi is a busy financial center as well as a jumping-off place for safaris in search of game animals. Hunting is prohibited, but photographic safaris are popular. Tourists come

through Nairobi by the thousands en route Kenya's many national parks and preserves. About 50,000 American tourists visit Kenya each year.

Traffic is congested during business hours and hazardous at all times. The downtown section can be covered by foot. Residential areas are spread out over the city with driving time to offices varying from 10 to 45 minutes. Downtown parking is inadequate during business hours.

Nairobi has changed dramatically since independence. Many modern office buildings and hotels including the Kenyatta Conference Center mark the changing skyline. This 26-story structure contains offices and conference facilities. The downtown area has an elevation of 5,400 feet, but some residential areas are located at over 6,000 feet. Nairobi is 87 miles south of the Equator and some 300 miles west of the Indian Ocean.

Food

Food in Nairobi, in general, is fairly expensive. Fresh fruits and vegetables are plentiful year round, including such items as strawberries, mushrooms, ginger root, asparagus, and avocados. The growing season is year round, and some people grow many of their own vegeta-



David Johnson. Reproduced by permission.

Street in Nairobi, Kenya

bles. Tropical fruits such as mangoes, pawpaws, and pineapples are available in season. Temperate Zone fruits such as apples, peaches, pears, and grapes are grown here as well as imported.

A few frozen items are available, but only in the larger stores. Fish, beef, mutton, and lamb are usually available. Chicken, turkey, and pork are available, but are more expensive than in the U.S.

Butter, cream, eggs, and pasteurized milk in sealed containers are of good quality. Kenyan yogurt, sour cream, and cheese differ significantly in taste from their American equivalents.

Because of the liberalization of import restrictions, you can purchase almost anything you need locally. Most of these imported items are, however, very expensive. Many products imported from South Africa are quite good and reasonably priced. There are occasionally shortages of maize (corn) meal, butter, milk, and sugar.

Soy milk or formula is not usually available for babies with allergies. Some infant formulas can be bought in powdered form but, are scarce and often outdated. Strained and

pureed foods are almost never available. Families with young babies may want to make their own baby food with a blender or a hand grinder.

Clothing

Clothing is expensive in Kenya and often inferior in quality. Bring a fairly complete wardrobe for warm weather and the cooler season. Local shoes are sold in Nairobi, but to be sure of good quality and fit, bring shoes from the U.S. Bring shoes with closed toes as well as sandals. People with narrow feet find it impossible to buy shoes that fit. Shirts, socks, and underwear are of inferior quality, very expensive, or both. Hats to protect against the sun are a must.

Nights in Nairobi are chilly, but you will not need a winter coat. The lowest temperature recorded in 25 years was about 40° F, but the mean minimum for the coldest month, July, is 52° F. You will need some summer clothes as the days become quite warm—the daily maximum in the warmest months is about 82° F—and a trip to the coast and to other parts of Kenya at lower altitude will require summer clothing. A ski jacket or some warm clothing is a good idea for going on safari to places at high altitudes.

Men: American light- and medium-weight suits or sports coats are worn most of the year. Heavy wool suits and overcoats are not needed, but sweaters and a lightweight raincoat come in handy. For the warm season, tropical worsted and washable suits are useful. Light informal cotton clothing is suggested for the coast.

Men's summer suits and suiting are available in a limited range. Suit styles made by local tailors are different and tailoring questionable. Safari suits can be purchased ready-made or can be made by a local tailor at a reasonable price. They are used for informal occasions as well as for travel.

Women: Lightweight wools, cottons, polyesters, silks, and knits are worn in Nairobi. Evenings are cool, furs are not normally worn, and Nairobi has no fur storage facilities.

In general, informal fabrics and styling are more suitable than elegant clothing, and colorful prints are worn. For evening, long and short casual cottons and jerseys as well as pantsuits are used for dinners, receptions, and at-home entertaining. Some women have a few dresses made in an African print by a local tailor. These are attractive and relatively inexpensive. Ready-made clothing is generally costly.

For daytime, slacks, jacket and skirt, and dress and sweater are most suitable. The weather can change during the day from very cool in the morning to hot at noon, to cool again, so sweaters and lightweight suits are useful. The wide range of casual and sports clothes available in the U.S. cannot be found.

Riding is popular, but riding clothes and boots are costly. Tennis dresses and bathing suits are also expensive. Lingerie and panty hose are of poor quality and expensive.

A lightweight raincoat is useful during the rainy seasons. Local rubber boots are available.

Children: Children's clothes are available, but are limited in variety, inferior in quality, and much more expensive than American brands. Some American styles in jeans and shirts are available at double the U.S. price. Underwear and socks purchased locally are of poor quality and do not wear well. Children's dress clothes are seldom worn.

Since nights are cold, warm sleepers for infants are advised. Heavy-weight blanket sleepers for babies and young children are not sold in Nairobi. Boots can be purchased here.

Mediumweight clothing and sweaters are essential for Nairobi's cooler seasons. Sunsuits are useful for small children during the warm seasons and holidays at the coast.

Cloth diapers available in Nairobi are made of terry toweling and are not as good as American brands. Disposable diapers are available, but are very expensive.

Local Bata (brand) tennis shoes are available, but quality is poor. Special shoes for soccer and other sports are expensive.

Supplies and Services

Basic Services: Most basic services are available. Barbers and beauticians compare to those in the U.S. Among Nairobi's tailors and dressmakers, you will find some who do good work. Drycleaning is fair but not always dependable. Kid and suede cannot be cleaned here.

Religious Activities

Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Dutch Reformed, Church of Scotland (Presbyterian), Church of the Province of Kenya (Episcopalian), Lutheran, Methodist, Seventh Day Adventist, Baptist, Church of Christ, United (Methodist, Presbyterian, and Anglican), Christian Scientist, Jewish, Quaker, Pentecostal, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Hindi, Islamic, and Sikh places of worship can be found in Nairobi.



Kenyatta Avenue, Nairobi, Kenya

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Education

The Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges accredits the secondary, middle, and elementary schools of the International School of Kenya.

The Kenyan school system is composed of Standards I-VIII equivalent to American grades 1-8, and Forms I-VI, roughly equivalent to American high school. This Kenyan system prepares students for a series of standard government examinations: The Certificate of Primary Education examination at the end of Standard VIII; and the high school certificate at the end of Form IV.

The International School of Kenya (ISK), PO Box 14103, Nairobi, is a coed school for prekindergarten through grade 12, located about 8 miles (out Peponi Road) from the city center on 45 acres of a coffee plantation.

The elementary (prekindergarten through grade 5) core curriculum includes language, arts, science, social studies, and mathematics. This is supplemented by a special program offering art, music, swimming (girls must wear one-piece swimsuits), physical education, computers, French and Spanish for

grades 1-5, and an elective activity program once a week. The middle school (6-8) continues this program and provides preparation for high school.

The high school's program is primarily college preparatory with both required and elective courses in English, social studies, mathematics, the sciences, and physical education.

Language offerings include French and Spanish, with German at the more advanced levels. Elective courses in fine arts, art, drama, typing, business, and computers, and an International Baccalaureate/Honors program are also available. Of special note is an extensive field trip program available to students through ISK's Intercultural Program as well as the east African history class and extracurricular activities. ISK has science laboratories and a library, well stocked with books, current publications, and an AV system including a video system. The school also provides specialized services through its counselor, the learning resource center, and English as a Second Language Program. Extracurricular activities are many, examples being the National Honor Society, three school publications, an annual school musical, and

an extensive intramural sports program.

To enter kindergarten, a child must be 5 years of age by September 15. Bus transportation is optional, serving the greater part of Nairobi. A snackbar on campus sells lunches, snacks, and drinks.

Testing programs include ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) given to elementary and middle scholars every year, PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test), SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), SAT Achievement Tests, and ACT (American College Testing Program) exams are given regularly through the American Cultural Center. Achievements, ACT (American College Testing Program), and IB exams are made available to college-bound upperclassmen.

The ISK was jointly purchased under the auspices of the U.S. and Canadian Governments in 1976 and is incorporated under Kenyan law. Seven diplomatic officers of the American Embassy and the Canadian High Commission form the school's Board of Governors, which has delegated responsibility for determining school policy to a 9-member Board of Directors, 6 of whom are elected by the parents and 3 appointed by the Board of Governors. The superintendent is the executive officer of the Board and is responsible for the organization, operation, and administration of the total school program. The superintendent is aided by the principals of the three schools, a counselor, and a professional staff of 50 full-time and 10 part-time teachers. Faculty members must be certified and experienced teachers; most are American or British trained.

Rift Valley Academy, Kijabe, Kenya, a boarding school, is located on the slopes of the Great Rift Valley, 50 kilometers from Nairobi off the Nakuru Road. It was founded in 1906 for missionaries' children, and still caters to these, but accepts other foreign students when space is available. It follows the American program of studies from grades 1 to

12. The secondary department is fully accredited by the Middle States Accreditation Association of the U.S. The principal emphasis of the academic program is on college preparatory courses. Additional classes are offered, however, in graphic arts, home economics, typing, mechanical drawing, industrial arts, and music. Three choirs, a band, and a number of smaller musical groups provide opportunity for many students to develop their talents in music. Private instruction is also offered on individual instruments. Nonmissionary enrollment is limited, and the final decisions are made on or about June 15 for September admission.

Other Schools Available in Nairobi include:

- Banda School, P.O. Box 24772, Nairobi, Kenya; Tel. 891220/891689, on the Magadi Road off Langata Road. Coed, primary 5-13 years of age. British syllabus. UK Common Entrance at 11, 12, and 13. Waiting list.

- Braeburn House, PO Box 45112, Tel. 566350, Gitanga Road. Coed, primary 5-13 years. CPE and Common Entrance syllabus.

- Cavina School, PO Box 43090, Tel. 566011, Argwings Kodhek Road Boys primary 6-13 years. Common Entrance syllabus. Basically Christian outlook.

- Consolata School, PO Box 14538, Tel. 43537, Chiromo Road. Coed primary, CPE syllabus.

- Greenacres School, PO Box 46919, Tel. Redhill 254, Limuru Road. Coed primary. British syllabus. Girls only secondary, boarding and day. GCE London O levels.

- Hillcrest School, PO Box 30365, about 8 miles from city center. Coed elementary. Pupils are prepared for Common Entrance Examination and for Hillcrest Secondary School. School year begins in January.

- Hillcrest Secondary School, PO Box 24819, on Langata Road in Karen. Coed, high school. British

syllabus. School year begins in January.

- Kestral Manor School, PO Box 14489, Nairobi, is located on Ring Road in the Westlands area of Nairobi. It is coed for children ages 3 to 9 and offers British education methods in an open classroom environment. The school is very child centered with many British, American, and Australian students.

- Kenton College, PO Box 30017, Tel. 560260. Boys' and girls' preparatory school. Ages 6-14. Follows multinational British syllabus. Boarding and day pupils.

- Nairobi Academy, PO Box 24817, Tel. 891281, Langata Road. Coed, primary and secondary. CPE and Common Entrance Syllabus.

- Rosslyn Academy, P.O. Box 14146, Coed, grades 1 to 7. Run by Mennonite and Baptist Missions, but is nondenominational. Boarding through grade 6. School year follows American schedule.

- St. Mary's School, PO Box 40580, Coed elementary. British syllabus. Day school. School year begins in January.

- Strathmore College, PO Box 25095, boys' high school. British syllabus. Day school. School year begins in January.

Nursery Schools: Nursery schools in most neighborhoods take children from age 2-3 and often continue through grades 1 or 2. These schools operate primarily in the mornings, but some will also care for children in the afternoons. In addition, informal play groups, organized by mothers of small children, meet one morning each week with all the mothers sharing responsibility for planning and implementing a program that provides a positive experience for the children.

Special Educational Opportunities

The Church of the Province of Kenya Language School, located on

Bishops Road, offers Swahili courses with several options for time and meeting, including evenings.

Alliance Francaise and the French Cultural Center, both located at Loita/ Monrovia Streets, offer courses in French at varying levels of proficiency.

The Italian Cultural Institute in the Prudential Assurance Building, on Wabera Street, offers conversational courses and intensive elementary courses.

International University-Africa, PO Box 14634, Nairobi, is affiliated with the U.S. International University in San Diego, California. Located about 20 minutes from downtown Nairobi, it specializes in business administration and human behavior and is fully accredited. Students attending the Nairobi campus can earn an Associate of Arts (AA, 2-year course) in business or general studies. Courses are also offered leading to bachelor's degrees in business administration, human behavior, or international relations. Students who are accepted by the University in Nairobi may transfer to any campus of the University to continue their studies. Other campuses are located in San Diego, London, and Mexico City. In addition to undergraduate courses, a graduate program leading to a Master of Science in management and organizational development is offered in Nairobi. New students are accepted each term. You should apply as early as possible before the term in which you wish to attend, preferably 6 months. For additional information, write to the International University-Africa, PO Box 14634, Nairobi, Kenya, or U.S. International University, 10455 Pomerado Road, San Diego, Calif. 92131.

The University of Nairobi, PO Box 30197, Nairobi, has formal arrangements with some universities in the U.S. for a 1-year exchange program. Schools currently participating in the program are the University of California system, Kalamazoo Col-

lege, and Pennsylvania State University. The University has no openings for foreigners at undergraduate levels due to the great demand for places by Kenyans. No auditing is allowed because of space limitations. Postgraduates who have a special need to do work in Kenya because of their area of study can attend the University as an "occasional student" for 1 year.

Institute of Adult Studies in the Extra-Mural Division of the University of Nairobi, PO Box 30197, Nairobi, offers evening courses with enrollment open to non-Kenyans as well as Kenyans. Courses offered include accounting, computer programming, business administration, commerce, economics, mathematics, statistics (related to CPA), marketing, history, geography, French, Kiswahili, German, Arabic, car maintenance, and personnel management. Classes are offered three terms during the year, beginning in January, May, and September.

The Goethe Institute, Makioki, and UNEP offer language classes.

Sports

A wide variety of outdoor sports is available in Kenya. Nairobi clubs offer swimming, tennis, squash, golf (very good 18-hole courses), and other sports. Some membership fees are expensive. Fishing and mountain climbing are popular upcountry, and the coast provides some excellent swimming, water skiing, sailing, wind surfing, scuba diving, snorkeling, and deep-sea fishing. Facilities for badminton, hockey, polo, soccer, rugby, cricket, bowling-on-the-green, judo, water polo, fencing, and gocarting are available. Many children and adults ride horses or take riding lessons. Informal softball leagues and football games are held in the dry seasons. Hunting other than birds is banned in Kenya. Sports equipment can be expensive and one should bring an adequate supply.

Planes may be rented at slightly higher than American prices and an FAA private pilot's license may be

converted to a Kenyan license with little difficulty. Pilots should bring their FAA license, log books, and FCC radio license. CAA certified instructors and examiners are available and FAA medical and biennial reviews can be obtained.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Kenya is famed as a tourist paradise, and most Americans take advantage of the wildlife industry. The scenery and wildlife are magnificent. You can drive yourself; go on a totally organized safari; or fly to many places. Almost all the country's game parks and reserves are within reasonable driving distance from Nairobi.

Accommodations at the parks and reserves are designed to meet the tastes of almost everyone. If a visitor likes to "rough it," campsites and self-service bandas (cabins) are available. For those who consider comfort more important, lodges and tented camps provide a touch of luxury.

Equipment is available in Nairobi to purchase or rent—but prices are high, and the availability of certain items is limited. A local fuel, white gas, is currently available for American-brand camp stoves. A different type of camp stove using gas canisters is sold here. Paper plates and cups are sometimes available in the local stores.

Fishing enthusiasts should bring their gear. Lake Naivasha, just 55 miles from Nairobi, offers great widemouth bass fishing. You can rent bungalows on the lake, and a hotel is also available. Stream fishing (fly only) for trout is available in the high country near Mount Kenya and in the Aberdare Nyandarua Range. Fishing flies are available locally.

Reasonably priced bandas located at several parks in Kenya can be reserved, far in advance, from tourist offices in Nairobi. The bandas contain beds (you may bring your own linens or rent them there for a small fee) and simply equipped

kitchens. Again, your own cooler would be handy. Some bandas have cooking utensils and dishes.

For a beach holiday on Kenya's coast, 300 miles from Nairobi, there is a choice of luxury beach hotels, family-type hotels, rented beach houses, or tent sites on the beach. Most beach hotels offer discounts during the off season. Many beach houses are also available to rent from private individuals for short holidays at reasonable prices.

As might be expected, Kenya is a photographer's paradise. If you have a specific camera in mind, purchase it in the U.S. as availability in Kenya is limited. Cameras, telephoto lenses, filters, tripods, and projectors can also be rented. Prices vary from shop to shop. Both black-and-white and color film are available, but prices are high compared to those in the U.S.

Entertainment

While Nairobi has several movie theaters, they are not generally frequented by Americans. Concerts and theater productions are presented at the National Theater and the French Cultural Center. The Phoenix Players in the Professional Center. has a fine repertory company and a number of amateur groups offer surprisingly good productions. Restaurants, casinos, large hotels with dinner-dancing, and numerous small nightclubs are available.

Social Activities

Many opportunities to meet Kenyans and nationals of other countries are afforded through official contact, sports clubs, service groups, and other associations. The USIS American Cultural Center, besides its 7,000-volume library, has an exhibit hall which offers lectures by visiting Americans, seminars, and other activities. The American Women's Association, through its service activities, offers many such opportunities, as do the National Christian Council of Kenya, Rotary International, East Africa Women's League, the local Consumers Organization, the National Museum



Street in Mombasa, Kenya

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Society, church and school groups, and many other such organizations. There is a Boy Scouts of America troop associated with ISK.

Mombasa

With a population of 465,000, Mombasa is Kenya's other large and cosmopolitan city, and the country's chief port. Its harbor, Kilindini, on the Indian Ocean, is one of Africa's best. For several centuries, the city was a center for slave and ivory trade.

One of Kenya's oldest settlements, Mombasa was settled by Arabs in the 11th century and, in 1498, was visited by the Portuguese navigator, Vasco da Gama, during his first voyage to India. Portugal held control until late in the 17th century, when the city was regained by Arabs; it later became part of the Sultanate of Zanzibar. Mombasa passed to Great Britain as a protectorate in 1887 and, for two decades, was headquarters of the British Administration of Kenya.

The city retains much of the flavor of bygone eras. Massive Fort Jesus, built by the Portuguese in 1593, broods over the old harbor where *dhow*s from Arabia still drop anchor. The oldest section of the

city, where streets are too narrow for cars, blends the bazaars and mosques of the east with the mystery of Africa. Old Mombasa melds into a plethora of small shops, houses, and apartment buildings that constitute most of the present-day city. Here, the principal thoroughfares host a number of modern stores, as well as the stalls of hundreds of souvenir hawkers.

Mombasa is a multi-racial city. Most of its citizens are Swahili—clearly African, but of mixed ancestry. Up country Kenyans have come in large numbers to work in government, industry, and on the docks. There are a dozen distinct Asian and Arab communities, whose members are mostly in business. A substantial resident European community and a smaller expatriate community completes the census.

The city is a thriving commercial port serving all of East Africa. It is also a liberty port for U.S. Navy ships in the Indian Ocean. American sailors, along with thousands of tourists from Europe, enjoy the amenities of Kenya's luxurious beach hotels and the safaris to nearby national parks and reserves.

Traffic in Mombasa is congested during rush hours, and driving

standards are poor. The downtown section can be covered on foot, but since most Americans live in Nyali, which is about 20 minutes from Mombasa, a car is necessary.

Mombasa's temperature is fairly constant—hot and humid. The average daily temperature is about 85°F and the humidity rarely drops below 77 percent.

Education

No American-curriculum school operates in Mombasa. Two British-oriented schools are used by most expatriate students, but neither has a complete secondary department.

Mombasa Academy, in the American residential area of Nyali, is a private, coeducational institution with a multi-racial student body of several hundred. The challenging secondary curriculum is geared toward the London General Certificate of Education (GCE), and the faculty is principally British. Sports, swimming, music, and theater are offered. About 20 children comprise each class.

Coast Academy is a private school located on the island of Mombasa. It is slightly smaller than Mombasa Academy, but has a similar academic program. Many American children from the American missionary community living in Mombasa have attended the Coast Academy.

Recreation and Entertainment

The sea provides opportunities for sailing, windsurfing, deep-sea fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, and other water sports. Several sports clubs in the city offer golf, squash, cricket, and tennis. Mombasa's hot (average, 85°F) and humid climate limits the hours of strenuous exercise to early morning and late afternoon. Mombasa has a well-organized yacht club.

Several excellent restaurants in Mombasa's many hotels on the coast, and a wide variety of others, cater to the tourist trade. Hotels organize discos and other entertain-

ment for guests and are open to the public.

Mombasa's moderately clean movie theaters show recent American films. A local theater club stages several dramatic productions each year. Social life is relaxed and informal.

OTHER CITIES

ELDORET lies on the Uasin Gishu Plateau, about 200 miles northwest of Nairobi. Located in an agricultural area of western Kenya, Eldoret was a haven for Europeans in colonial times. Its temperate climate makes the city a leading agricultural and cattle raising area. Local industries include flour-milling and food-processing plants. The railroad to Uganda stops in Eldoret. Eldoret's population in 2000 was approximately 105,000.

Located 215 miles (350 km) east of Nairobi, **GARISSA** is a market town on the Tana River. Primary industries include food processing, beverages, plastics, and tobacco products.

KISUMU, in Kenya's western region, is a major inland port, industrial, commercial, and transportation center, and Kenya's third largest city. It is situated on the shores of Victoria Nyanza, the world's third largest lake (after the Caspian Sea—an inland salt lake—and Lake Superior in North America). Kisumu, whose population was estimated at 185,000 in 2000, was called Port Florence in earlier times. Asians once comprised more than a quarter of the population, but that number has declined since 1963.

The ancient island town of **LAMU** ranks as one of Africa's most unique. Located about 150 miles northeast of Mombasa in the Indian Ocean, the town has retained its 18th century atmosphere. Today, Lamu serves as a port and district capital, with tourism as an important industry. The town was the base of the legendary Sinbad the

Sailor. In the 19th century, Lamu was an important trading center for gold, spices, and slaves. Steeped in the Swahili culture and a major center of Islamic learning, there are 22 mosques in the city. The Lamu Museum displays items from the varied cultures of the island.

MALINDI is a beach resort town and marine reserve on the east coast, 60 miles north of Mombasa. Its resident population is swelled each autumn by the thousands of tourists who come to take part in Kenya's popular November Sea Festival. Swahili influence is strong in this area.

NAKURU, in west-central Kenya 95 miles (153 kilometers) northwest of Nairobi, is the capital of Rift Valley Province. The city is a busy commercial and transport center. It is the home of Egerton College and the headquarters of the Kenya Farmers Association. The fascinating Lake Nakuru Game Park lies just beyond the city limits. Nakuru has a population of 163,000 (2000 est.).

At the foot of Mount Kenya, in the safari country of the central area, is **NANYUKI**. This farming town is near the Mount Kenya Safari Club and Game Ranch, Mountain Lodge, and Secret Valley. Rhino, buffalo, occasional leopard and elephant sightings make Nanyuki a tourist favorite.

NYERI is a resort town and agricultural center in the highlands. It lies close to Mount Kenya and Aberdare National Parks. Nearby is the renowned Treetops Hotel where, in comfort and safety, guests can view wild and rare game. In 2000, Nyeri's population was roughly 89,000.

Pineapples and other fruits are the mainstays of **THIKA**, which is about 25 miles northeast of Nairobi in south-central Kenya. Kenya's High Level Sisal Research Station is in the town, studying the problems of growing sisal, a durable fiber used to make twine. Industries such as textiles, matches, and can production are located in Thika.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Kenya is bounded on the north by Ethiopia and Sudan, on the west by Uganda, on the south by Tanzania, and on the east by Somalia and the Indian Ocean. It has an area of 224,960 square miles, about the size of Oregon. The northern and eastern three-fifths of the country is arid. The southern two-fifths, where most of the population and nearly all the economic production is centered, is low-lying coastal area and a plateau varying in altitude from 3,000 to 10,000 feet. Although only about 20 percent of the land is suitable for cultivation, agriculture is the most important economic activity.

The Nairobi area offers the contrasts of green rolling uplands, thorn scrub of the famous game plains, coffee and tea estates, and entry to the Great Rift Valley. Farther afield are the forests and snows of Mount Kenya, the dairy and farm country of the highlands, the tropical beaches of the coastal strip, and the deserts of the northeast.

Nairobi has four seasons, but overall temperature changes are moderate: Mid-December through March—mainly sunny and warm by day, cool at night, generally dry; April and May—principal rainy season with lower day temperatures; June through September—mainly dry, but often cloudy and cool, with cool nights; and October and November—short rainy season, long sunny periods, warm days and cool nights.

Daily temperature range is great. It can be quite warm at midday in February and March, yet cool in the evening. In July and August, days are cool and nights are cold.

Average annual rainfall in Nairobi is about 1,030.4 millimeters (39

inches), but the actual amount varies widely in any year.

Population

Kenya's population in 2000 was about 29.3 million, of whom approximately 300,000 were non-Africans, principally people from South Asia. About 88 percent of the population live in rural areas. The urban population is centered mainly in greater Nairobi, which has about 2.3 million people, and in Mombasa, which has over 465,000. The standard of living in major urban centers is among the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, and the people are proud of their country's development. The largest ethnic groups are Kikuyu (22%), Luo (13%) and Abaluhya (14%).

About 66 percent of Kenya's population is Christian, with a heavy concentration in Nairobi. Another 26 percent or so is animist, and the population of the coastal area is predominantly Moslem, comprising about 7 percent.

Kiswahili and English are the official languages, and English is used in most schools beyond the lower grades. Kiswahili is the more important lingua franca.

Public Institutions

Multi-partyism returned to Kenya in 1991, and in December 1992, multi-party elections were held. The President, Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, was reelected and his Kenya African National Union (KANU) won the majority of parliamentary seats. Elections were again held in 1997, when the president was reelected for another 5 year term and KANU still held the majority in the National Assembly.

The unicameral National Assembly consists of 210 elected representatives, 12 members appointed by the President, and 2 ex officio members. Although local government is under central government control, district and municipal councils retain some responsibilities.

The U.N. and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) maintain important offices in Nairobi. The U.N. Environment Program (UNEP) and the U.N. Center for Human Settlements (HABITAT) have been headquartered in Nairobi since their creation, respectively in 1972 and 1976. Other U.N. bodies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the U.N. Information Center, and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) maintain regional headquarters in Nairobi. The Red Cross, International Lions, and other philanthropic organizations are similarly represented. The Ford and Rockefeller Foundations have regional headquarters in Nairobi. Many international conferences are held in Nairobi, where the facilities of the Kenyatta Conference Center are available.

Arts, Science, and Education

Nairobi offers a range of cultural institutions and activities. Several organizations offer classes for adults and children in painting, ballet, voice, and instrumental music. French, German, and Italian lessons are available from the Alliance Francaise and the French Cultural Center, the Goethe Institute, and the Italian Cultural Center. Libraries in Nairobi include the National Library and those of the University of Nairobi, the British Council, U.S. Information Service (USIS), the French Cultural Center, the Goethe Institute, and the Nairobi City Council (the MacMillan Library).

Repertory theater is offered by the Phoenix Players and the Kenya National Theater. The University Players and amateur groups present European- and African-oriented plays throughout the year. Nairobi's several movie theaters show mostly Indian and older American and British films. Due to the condition of the theaters and the equipment, most Mission personnel do not frequent them.

The National Museum sponsors the Kenya Museum Society. This society

and the East African Natural History Society sponsor lectures and films and organize activities and trips to places of natural and historical interest. Specialized groups, such as the East African Wildlife Society, the Nairobi Photographic Society, and the Nairobi Music Society also exist.

The Kenyan educational system follows the American calendar or 8-4-4 system with a British style system of external examiners. The school year runs from mid-January-mid-December with breaks in April and August. All work leads toward passing the Kenyan primary and secondary examinations. Numerous government, private, and parochial primary and secondary schools can be found here.

The standard American curriculum is offered by the International School of Kenya (grades kindergarten through grade 12), which is well attended. The U.S. International University of San Diego has a campus in Nairobi and offers courses at both the undergraduate and graduate university levels.

The University of Nairobi is strong in many areas. Its curriculum includes arts and sciences, commerce, architecture, and engineering. Kenyatta University focuses on education but offers a university-level curriculum. Two other universities, Moi and Egerton, offer degrees in a variety of subjects. Several private business and commercial colleges in Nairobi offer courses equivalent to American college freshman level. More and more private businesses and commercial colleges are offering computer science courses, some leading to degrees with examinations conducted by British institutions.

Commerce and Industry

Kenya enjoyed rapid and impressive economic growth after gaining independence in 1963. In recent years, real growth in gross domestic product slowed to less than 1 per-

cent per year. Economic reforms since 1999, however, have brightened the economic picture for the future. These combined with a rebound in both tea and coffee prices, Kenya's two largest exports, have helped reduce chronic balance-of-payments deficits. Increases in nontraditional exports such as horticulture have compensated for largely stagnant earnings from Kenya's other important foreign exchange earner, tourism. The debt situation, however, is still problematic. Until the government can meet the conditions of the multilateral financial institutions, Kenya's ability to repay existing debt and receive new development assistance will be compromised.

Domestically, Kenya's economic fortunes have only recently begun to recover. Kenya's 2000 population was about 29.3 million. The average Kenyan woman has eight children during her lifetime. By the 1980s the high population growth rate meant lower overall economic growth and stagnation in per capita income for the first time since independence. Rapid population growth also translates into high unemployment, which was estimated at 50% in 2000. The government has acknowledged the need to create millions of new jobs.

The manufacturing sector produces 13 percent of the country's gross national product; the remainder is in agricultural production, roughly 25 percent, and services, 62 percent. Manufactured or assembled products include automobiles, tires, dry cell batteries, and a range of consumer goods. Kenya's limited mineral resources include soda ash and fluorspar. Kenya lacks any significant natural resources other than fertile soil, a hard-working population, and its scenery and wildlife. Nairobi continues to experience rapid expansion in construction, primarily large office buildings, which have produced a world-class skyline.

Although Kenya has encountered new economic hurdles in recent years, it remains something of an

economic success story in Africa, especially in comparison to its immediate neighbors. It is largely committed to many of the same economic principles as the U.S.; i.e., a market system with limited government interference in the private sector. Despite its difficulties, Kenya remains the linchpin of the East African economy.

Transportation

Local

Buses, including informal minibuses called "matatus," serve most areas of Nairobi, but are rarely used by travelers due to extreme overcrowding and poor mechanical condition. Taxis are difficult to obtain except around the larger tourist hotels. Fares are expensive and should always be negotiated in advance. "Kenatco" company taxis are cleaner and better maintained than ordinary taxis, but their fares are normally higher. Avis, Hertz, and other car rental agencies operate in Nairobi. Daily and monthly rates are considerably higher than those in the U.S.

Regional

Nairobi is an international air center. Frequent flights are available for practically any place in the world, as well as regular air service throughout east Africa.

Kenya Railways provides overnight train service from Nairobi to Mombasa and from Nairobi to Kisumu and Kampala, Uganda.

The main road, Mombasa-Nairobi-Kisumu, and other primary roads are paved, but potholes exist on many stretches. The Mombasa-Nairobi road was closed for several days in 1994 due to mud-covered rough sections. Other roads vary in quality. Many are fairly good all-weather dirt roads, others can only be negotiated in four-wheel-drive vehicles. Road accidents are common and are a serious threat to life and limb.

At night, street lights rarely function. The lack of painted center lines

or curbs contributes to difficult night driving even in Nairobi. Use extreme caution; defensive driving is essential both in the cities and the countryside. Be sure your car has good seatbelts installed.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Nairobi's telephone service is adequate; however, there are occasional breakdowns. International toll call services to the U.S. are available through AT&T, MCI, SPRINT calling card systems, and the local PT&T. International calls to other countries can be made through the local PT&T. FAX and TELEX services are available commercially.

Radio and TV

The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation broadcasts in both English and Kiswahili but carries little international news. Either the new model shortwave radio with digital read-out or the older shortwave radio models with at least six bands is desirable. The Voice of America (VOA) reception is fairly good in the early morning hours and in the evening. VOA broadcasts programs directed to Africa in English called "African Panorama" and "African Safari," as well as programs designed for a worldwide audience. Many other international broadcasts are also received here, particularly, the BBC World Service.

The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) provides daytime and evening TV on one VHF channel in both English and Kiswahili. BBC news is carried every evening. A few American sitcoms and entertainment programs are telecast but usually are quite dated. Some British and German entertainment programs and sports are also telecast. KBC has introduced a pay-cable station featuring South African programming but a start-up fee to receive the channel comes to several hundred dollars.

Channel 62, a UHF station owned by the Kenya Times Media Trust, began broadcasting in 1990. It

broadcasts CNN and local news. Older U.S. reruns are common with some current TV programs, films, and sports. Although UHF antennas are available, they are somewhat costly and of inferior quality. The one available VHF station primarily broadcasts local programs.

The Kenyan TV system is PAL (VHF/UHF).

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Kenya's English-language daily newspapers—*The Standard*, *Kenya Times (KANU)* and the *Nation* and a few others—provide some coverage of international affairs, mainly through Reuters, AP, and Agency France Presse.

The *International Herald Tribune* arrives 1–2 days after publication. British Sunday newspapers are available late the same day. The Sunday *New York Times* and *Washington Post* are available by subscription.

Magazines available include the *Weekly Review* which carries weekly news commentary, *Economic Review*, and *Finance Magazine*. Many technical journals are available, especially in trade and agriculture. European editions of *Time* and *Newsweek*, as well as other European magazines, are available.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

The Nairobi Hospital is the local hospital most commonly used for inpatient care. Patients are referred to local labs and radiology facilities for diagnostic tests at the patient's expense. A mammography facility approved by the Department of State's Office of Medical Services is here. Since complete medical care is limited, medical evacuations to London or Pretoria are occasionally necessary. The list of local physicians includes surgeons, internists, general practitioners, obstetricians, pediatricians, and ophthalmologists. General dentistry is available.

Orthodontic care is limited to maintenance, but not initiation of treatment. Ophthalmologists and opticians are available in Nairobi and eyeglasses can be fitted locally. Solutions for soft contact lenses are not available. Pharmacies with many prescription medicines are available, often under trade names different than those in the U.S.

If you are taking a prescription medicine, bring an adequate supply.

Community Health

Some houses have distillers; but, otherwise filter and then boil drinking water. Vegetables to be eaten raw should be well cleansed. Fluoride supplements for children are recommended in most locations.

Preventive Measures

The altitude is similar to that of Denver, but Nairobi is located close to the Equator. Strenuous physical activity should be limited for the first few weeks after arrival. Because of the altitude and equatorial location, the effects of sunlight on the skin are markedly enhanced. Bring sun blocking lotions or creams and exercise caution to avoid overexposure to the sun.

Malaria is not a significant risk in Nairobi or in certain other areas nearby. Many parts of Kenya, including the much visited coastal resort areas and the game parks, however, present the risk of chloroquine-resistant malaria. Those who travel to any of the areas where malaria is endemic must take malaria prophylactics while in the malaria zone and for 4 weeks after leaving the area. The recommended malaria prophylactic is mefloquine weekly, or doxycycline daily. An alternative is weekly chloroquine plus daily proguanil (Paludrine). One of these regimens will be recommended depending on your age and medical history, and whether or not you are pregnant.

In addition to all routine childhood immunizations, people coming to Kenya should be immunized against yellow fever, meningococcal meningitis, typhoid, Hepatitis B,

Hepatitis A, and rabies. Proof of vaccination against yellow fever, is required for entry into Kenya and many other countries in Africa, and should be obtained in the U.S. It is recommended that people receive a cholera vaccine stamp in their immunization booklets for entry into certain countries, although the vaccine itself is no longer recommended.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Most travelers fly to Kenya via Europe, stopping en route in London, Paris, Frankfurt, or Amsterdam. There are frequent flights to Nairobi from these cities. Travelers should make sure their travel is in compliance with the Fly America Act.

All those entering Kenya must have a valid Kenyan visa in their passports and must have up-to-date health certificates. Visas are required; they may be obtained at any Kenyan Embassy or consulate, or at the port of entry. Yellow fever immunizations is required for entry into Kenya.

If you are bringing a pet to Kenya, obtain all the documents described below. Any animal arriving in the country without the proper certificates will be kept in quarantine at the owner's expense for up to 6 months. Pets which do not arrive on the same flight as the owner will be cleared by a forwarding company. Their fee is a personal expense of the owner.

If coming from the U.S., obtain an import permit from the Kenyan Embassy in Washington, D.C., in person, if possible, since long delays have been experienced in applying for these forms by mail. This permit will have name and address of owner and a description of the pet, and it should accompany the animal on its trip to Kenya. Americans who have recently brought in pets have been advised



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Central Park, Nyayo Monument in Nairobi, Kenya

to send a copy of the permit with the animal and to bring the original when they claim the animal at Nairobi Airport. After the permit form is completed and you have obtained the certificates described below from a veterinarian, all papers must be returned to the Kenyan Embassy where the permit will be signed.

Certificate of Vaccination Against Rabies. The certificate signed by a veterinarian must state:

- Type, manufacture, and batch number of the vaccine.
- The apparent age of the animal at time of vaccination;
- Date of vaccination.

Living avianized vaccine (Flury or Kelev strain) has the following validity: Canines, 1 month to 36 months post vaccination; felines, 1 month to 12 months post vaccination. Animals vaccinated against rabies less than 6 months before arrival must have a certificate signed by a government veterinary officer of the country of origin stating that there has been no rabies within 30 miles of the place of origin in the last 6 months.

Rabies vaccination of cats is required, and cats must have a certificate from a government veterinarian stating that they have not been within 30 miles of a rabies outbreak during the previous 6 months, and have been vaccinated for rabies.

Certificate of Health. The animal must have a veterinarian's certificate stating that it is free from any contagious or infectious disease. It must be signed not more than 5 days before the animal's date of departure.

Certificate of Isolation. If an animal enters by ship, it must have a certificate from the ship's master stating that it did not leave the ship and was isolated from other animals while on board. Animals arriving by air must have a certificate stating that transport was in crates effectively isolating them from other animals, and that they remained aboard the plane from point of embarkation until arrival in Kenya.

If stopping on your way to Kenya, you can arrange for a kennel to keep your pet and take it to the airport after your departure. Also, if you must stay in a hotel in Kenya before moving into a house, you can keep your pet in a Nairobi kennel.

The unit of currency is the Kenya Shilling (KShs.) and values under a shilling follow the decimal system in cents. The exchange rate early 1997 was roughly US\$1 = 79 shillings; Coins are in denominations of .50, 1, 5, and 10 shillings; bills are in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500 and 1,000 shillings. It is illegal to destroy Kenyan currency, regardless of the amount. Violations often result in an arrest and fine.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Mar. | |
| (2nd Mon). | Commonwealth Day* |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| June 1 | Madaraka Day |
| Oct. 10 | Moi Day |
| Oct. 20 | Kenyatta Day |
| Dec. 12 | Jamhuri Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| Dec. 26 | Boxing Day |
| | Id al-Adah* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id-al-Fitr* |

*variable

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These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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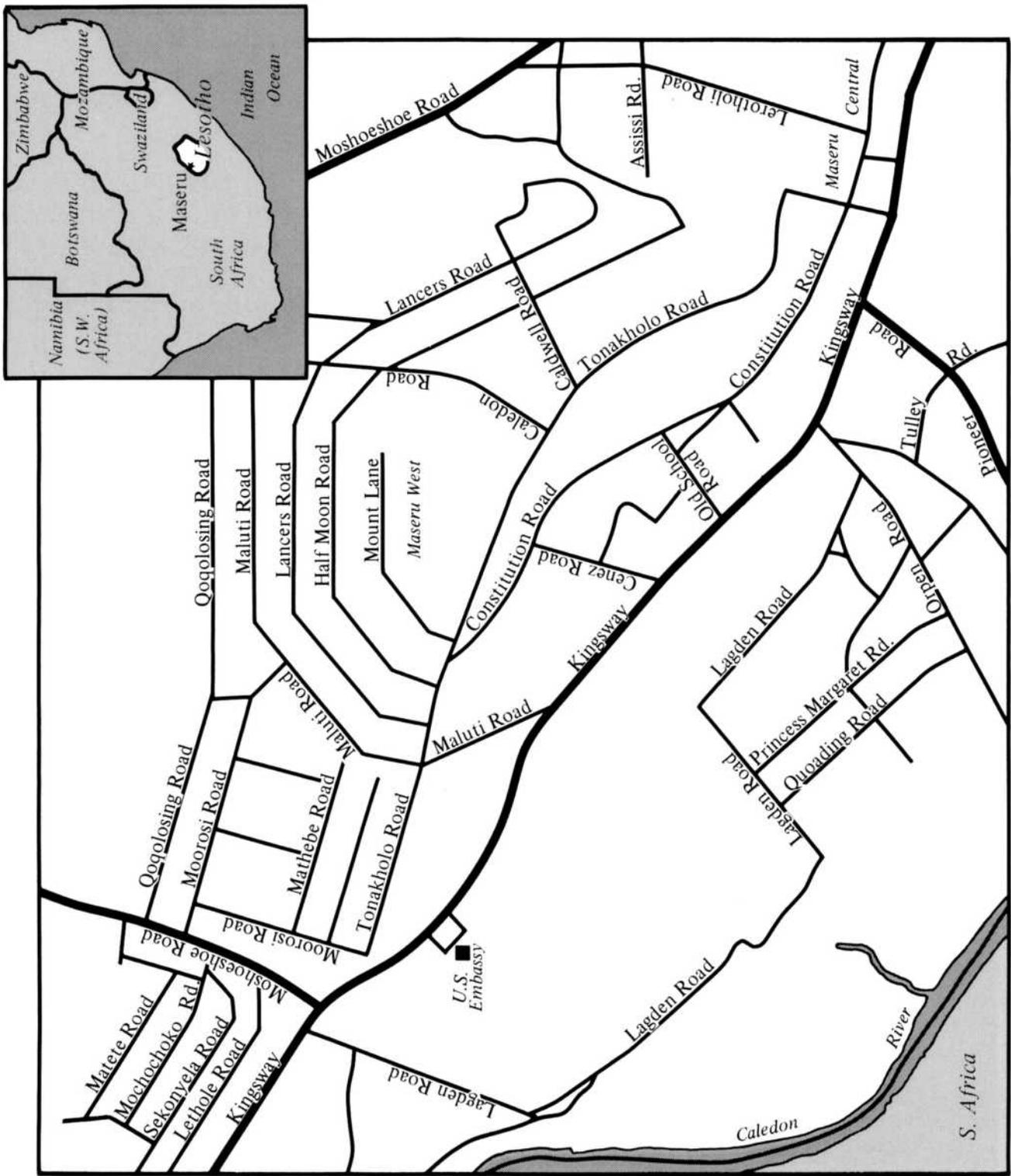
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Maseru, Lesotho

LESOTHO

Kingdom of Lesotho

Major City:

Maseru

Other Cities:

Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Mafeteng, Maputsoe, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2001 for Lesotho. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Lesotho has dramatic snow-clad mountain ranges, high waterfalls plunging into deep basalt gorges, neat villages of thatched houses linked by only a bridle path to the outside world, small market towns where blanketed horsemen outnumber cars, and a unique capital, Maseru, where people from five continents work together to solve the nation's problems.

These are but glimpses of a small and remarkable country whose survival as an enclave is testimony to an enduring national spirit; a country created by the wisdom and diplomacy of Moshoeshe the Great; and a country which, in 1966, after 98 years under the British flag, again

took its place among the family of nations.

In Lesotho today, all are equal under the law, and all those who come in this spirit are welcome. Lesotho prizes its friendship with foreign countries and gratefully acknowledges their interest in its national development.

Although Lesotho may seem small on the map of Africa, it is possible to travel for many days and not exhaust its scenic delights. Map makers have as yet recorded few of its 10,000 villages; few persons have climbed more than a score of its thousand mountain peaks; and archaeologists have as yet probed only a handful of its hundreds of rock shelters.

MAJOR CITY

Maseru

Maseru, the capital of the "mile high" kingdom of Lesotho, is a small, bustling city largely dependent on South Africa for its support. After its foundation as a police camp in 1869, Maseru grew slowly at first. Its population, still less than 1,000 in 1906, increased slowly to only 14,000 by 1966, and is now

about 150,000. In 1966, the only paved road in the country was one small, tarred road through the center of town, together with a small spur road to the railway station. Now there are large four-lane divided boulevards in town, street lights in most areas, and paving on the roads to most of the larger towns up-country.

Food

A substantial variety of food is available in the local market in Maseru. There is one large modern supermarket in Maseru, the OK/ShopRite. Most shop for food in Ladybrand, which has a Spar and a ShopRite (not your U.S. Shop-Rite), or in Bloemfontein, which has many supermarkets, some of which sell fine gourmet fruits, vegetables, dairy goods and groceries at reasonable prices. Local butchers supply high quality meat cut to order and will deliver to a Maseru residence. Packaged meat is available in the supermarkets. Food quality is at least as high as in the U.S. at prices which are noticeably lower than in the U.S. High-quality South African wines are available in great variety at low prices. Several bakeries provide a good choice of bread, rolls and cakes. Several kinds of frozen fish are available. There is no need to bring food to Maseru, except perhaps for a few comfort items like American condiments, sweet break-

fast cereals Crisco chocolate chips, and marinated artichoke hearts, (a particular favorite of the U.S. Ambassador).

Clothing

Although there is a good selection of clothing available in the shops in Ladybrand and Bloemfontein, the styles are not really to American taste. Clothing selection is more limited in Maseru. In better clothing stores prices are similar to those in the U.S. or a little lower. It is difficult to find women's shoes made to American standards. In South African women's shoe sizing, the narrowest shoes are in a B width.

Children's clothing comes in a wide variety of styles and colors. Children's shoes are quite inexpensive. Many Maseru residents shop at the mall stores in Bloemfontein. If a family member must have a certain type of jeans or other clothing item, bring extra ones from the U.S.

An alternative to local shopping for clothing is to order from catalogs or order on-line. Goods ordered from the U.S. take about 3 weeks to arrive.

Civil servants in Maseru generally wear suits and ties to work. Black-tie occasions seldom arise. Cocktail and dinner parties are most common, for which men and women wear business suits. Many social occasions call for "smart casual" attire.

It is essential to have heavy clothing for winter. In Maseru, winter temperatures are typically brisk and often go below freezing at night. Up-country, sudden snowstorms are common and travel is hazardous. In summer, temperatures occasionally reach the high eighties and lightweight clothing is most comfortable.

Basotho women generally dress quite conservatively, with skirts below the knees. Only modern young local women in Maseru will wear slacks, jeans, or short skirts. Although South African men and

women often wear shorts out in public, it would be more culturally sensitive to dress more conservatively.

Supplies and Services

Basic toiletries, over-the-counter drugs and common household items are available in Maseru and in South Africa. Many are familiar U.S. name brands manufactured in South Africa. Prices are generally lower than in the U.S. Certain American brands of cosmetics are available, but they are significantly more expensive than in the U.S. It is advisable to bring cosmetics with you. If you sew, fabric is available but notions and patterns are in limited variety. This would be another mail order item.

A wide variety of cigarette brands, including American brands manufactured in South Africa, can be purchased at reasonable prices. Excellent South African beer and wine is available in Maseru.

There are several hairdressing salons for men and women in Maseru. Most men and women prefer to go to Ladybrand or Bloemfontein for hairdressing and other personal services. Drycleaning is available in Maseru and Ladybrand but there is some risk to the clothes in sending them for drycleaning. Tailoring and dressmaking services of good quality are available. Shoe repair services are available.

Domestic Help

Domestic help is readily available - full or part time, live in or out. Skill levels and English proficiency vary, as does ability to cook. The going wage for a domestic is quite low. Gardeners are available to help one take advantage of the soil and the climate here. Large flower and vegetable gardens are common.

Religious Activities

According to the most recent survey (1996), 49% of the population is Roman Catholic; 39% belongs to the Lesotho Evangelical Church (the independent daughter church of the

French Protestant Mission); 8% are Anglicans; 2% are other.

Education

The school year is divided into three terms beginning in August and ending in late June. A number of pre-schools are available that enroll children from age two years. No nursery care for younger expatriate children is available publicly; usually a nanny is hired for the home. The Maseru Preparatory School is the largest English medium primary school in Maseru. It has an enrollment of over 300 students of 37 different nationalities. Generally, the Ginn (British) system of instruction and examination is used, with supplemental materials supplied by other governments. The school offers the equivalent of U.S. grades kindergarten through grade 5, with class sizes of 20-25 children. Afternoon school for grades 3, 4, and 5 consists of study, clubs, and sports activities. A uniform is required and is available locally.

The American International School of Lesotho opened in September 1991. An American system of instruction is used, and currently there is a staff of 5 teachers and several teacher assistants, with an enrollment of 63 students. Some grades are combined and the structure is not rigid between grade levels. The school currently offers kindergarten through grade 7, with class size limited to 15. No uniform is required.

Machabeng College (high school) offers the equivalent of American junior high and high school (grades 6-12) as well as an International Baccalaureate (IB) program. The British system of instruction and examination is followed and the standards of the school are high. A uniform is required and is available at the school.

Sports

Tennis, squash, soccer, cricket and golf are the most widely played sports in Maseru. Occasionally, golf, tennis and squash tournaments and

cricket or soccer matches are held in season. There is a challenging 9-hole golf course (with 18 tee boxes) next door to the U.S. Embassy. Rental horses and riding lessons are available at stables near Ladybrand.

Memberships are available at local hotels: tennis, swimming and children's playgrounds are available, but recently the Maseru Sun Cabanas has restricted pool memberships to adults over 18. At the Lesotho Sun, only Interclub or Sun Friends members and their children may use the swimming pool. There is no public swimming pool in Maseru. The Maseru Club offers tennis and squash, and has an Italian restaurant. There are several public tennis courts in Maseru that are available on a pay-per-use basis or by joining the club.

A limited amount of sporting goods are available in Maseru; a much wider selection can be found in Bloemfontein. American sports equipment can be located with some effort, but it would be better to bring equipment from the U.S. Some possibilities for snow skiing exist in the mountains of Lesotho, but no formal facilities are developed, and snow is rarely adequate. Water sports are popular in South Africa. Dams for sailing are within an hour's drive of Maseru. The lake behind Katse Dam is quite large, but is not yet developed from a water sports standpoint.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Lesotho is famous for pony-trekking. There are a number of resorts at which ponies and guides can be hired; trips can range from 2 hours to 5 days. Pony treks provide fabulous views of the mountains as well as views of some of the prehistoric cave paintings.

Another popular Lesotho activity is fishing. Lesotho has trout in many of its mountain streams. Several fishing spots in the mountains offer permanent, though basic, accommo-

dation and are accessible by car, light plane or horseback. Hiking and camping are available in some of the most spectacular African mountain scenery. One example is Semonkong, where a magnificent 600-foot waterfall cascades over the edge of a cliff. It is one of the longest free falls of water in the world. There is a hotel within walking distance of the falls.

The mountains of Lesotho provide ample opportunity for sightseeing and outdoor recreation. Bushman paintings and prehistoric dinosaur footprints can be found in many parts of Lesotho, some only a short drive from Maseru. With a four-wheel drive vehicle, one can drive out to Mokhotlong and on through the Sani Pass, which is very near to Thabana-Ntlenyana, the highest peak in Southern Africa.

Swaziland, with its rolling hills and green countryside, is a seven-hour drive from Maseru. Wildlife parks, curios and casinos are among the attractions that draw visitors there. The Ezulwini Valley has one of the best handicraft markets in southern Africa.

Botswana is an eight-hour drive from Maseru. The Okavango Delta is still the least-developed wildlife reserve in southern Africa. Camps can be reached by four-wheel drive, plane or native canoe. Tourist firms operate from Gaborone and Maim.

Zimbabwe offers many game reserves, some of which are quite inexpensive. Victoria Falls, Lake Karibu and the Great Zimbabwe ruins (an archaeological site in the southern part of the country) are popular attractions. One needs to get an update on the current security situation before proceeding to Zimbabwe.

South Africa offers a multitude of tourist possibilities from beaches to mountains to cities. Cape Town is fourteen hours south and west of Maseru; Johannesburg is five hours away to the north; and Durban is six

hours southeast of Maseru. Bloemfontein (90 minutes away) provides good weekend outings to the zoo, museums, and the occasional play or ballet.

Kruger National Park in South Africa on the Mozambique border is still the most visited game park in all of Southern Africa. It offers 12 camps for visitors and the best chance to spot thousands of animals even on a weekend trip. Kruger is also the home of a multitude of species of birds. Bring your binoculars and bird book. The park is about 10 hours from Maseru.

Entertainment

All the hotels offer occasional entertainment sponsored by various organizations in Maseru. The Lesotho Sun Hotel has regular live music in its a la carte restaurant. The hotel also offers a variety of films, usually within one-to-two years after release in the U.S. The British Council and the Alliance Francaise offer videos and cultural presentations. Various social clubs, such as Rotary and Lions, have chapters with regular meetings and community projects. There are a number of daytime social groups and charity organizations to get involved with if one is not working outside the home. There is a chapter of the Hash House Harriers in Maseru. Members meet to run on Sunday mornings or Monday afternoons, depending on the time of year.

Organized entertainment for children is limited. Little League softball is sometimes available. Music, art and sports lessons are offered, depending on who in the community is available to teach.

Social Activities

Americans will have some social contact with Basotho, but the majority of socializing in Maseru will be with other expatriates. The United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, European Union,

United Nations and the People's Republic of China have Missions in Lesotho. Generally, social life is what each individual makes it. You have to make your own fun.

OTHER CITIES

BUTHA-BUTHE is 60 miles northeast of Maseru on the Roof of Africa road. It has a hotel, craft center, and modern mosque.

LERIBE is a village in northwestern Lesotho, about 45 miles from Maseru. The farm-based community grows corn, wheat, and sorghum, and sells livestock hides for export. A ruined fort, built by the Cape Colony in the late 1870s, gives mute testimony to the subjugation of the people of Lesotho.

MAFETENG is a commercial and communications center 40 miles south of Maseru. The town is linked to the capital by a tarred road and is considered a good base point for touring the area. The population of Mafeteng is over 15,000.

Located 52 miles north of Maseru, **MAPUTSOE** is an expanding industrial center. Many new factories are in the town, strategically situated one mile from South Africa's railhead at Ficksburg.

MOHALE'S HOEK is a small village located in southwestern Lesotho. The area is predominantly agricultural with livestock serving as the main source of income. Wool and mohair are processed here for export.

QUTHING (also called Moyeni) lies near the Senqu (Orange) River in the south. The Abathembu and Baphuthi people live in the city; they have unique language, dress, and customs. Nearby, an unusual cave dwelling from the 1860s and fossil footprints may be viewed. Quthing boasts a new hotel complex.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Lesotho (Leh-SOO-too) is a landlocked country in the east-central part of the Republic of South Africa. It is bounded on the north and west by the Free State of South Africa; on the south by the Eastern Cape Province; and on the east by KwaZulu Natal Province.

Slightly larger than Maryland and slightly smaller than Belgium, Lesotho covers an area of 11,116 square miles. It is roughly in the form of a circle, 125 miles across. The western one-quarter of Lesotho is lowlands where the altitude varies from 5,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level. This is the country's main agricultural zone and contains most of the population. The rest of the country is composed of highlands that rise to 11,400 feet in the Drakensburg Range, which forms the eastern boundary with KwaZulu Natal. Thabana-Ntlenyana, the highest peak in Southern Africa at 11,424 feet, is just inside Lesotho's eastern border near the Sani Pass.

Maseru (Muh-SEH-roo), the capital, has an estimated population of 150,000. It is located 5,000 feet above sea level on the Caledon River, which forms the western boundary between Lesotho and the Free State in South Africa. Surrounded by scenic bluffs and mesas, Maseru has a small central business district and several neighborhoods with good housing. Beyond that, the city sprawls for miles with collections of small tin-roofed houses and roadside businesses. The surrounding countryside is severely affected by soil erosion, and despite sufficient water, the lowlands have little natural vegetation for much of the year. The landscape, mountainous, bare, dotted with picturesque villages, is starkly beautiful.

The climate is temperate year round. Rainfall, occurring mostly from October to April, ranges from 24 inches a year over most of the lowlands to over 40 inches a year in the mountains. A windy season dur-

ing August and September occasionally brings dust storms.

Average daytime temperatures are in the high 80°F in summer and can reach 100°F in Maseru. In winter, daytime temperatures average in the mid 60°F and at night sometimes drop to the teens in Maseru. Wide variations occur between daytime and nighttime temperatures. Temperatures in the mountains are even more extreme with snowfalls common in winter. The humidity year round is quite low.

Population

The country of Lesotho is inhabited by the Basotho (Bah-SOO-too) people. The singular of Basotho is Mosotho (Muh-SOO-too). The language they speak is Sesotho (Seh-SOO-too).

The Basotho combine a respect for tradition, symbolized by the hereditary Head of State, with a keen interest in their modern institutions. Their history as a nation is a source of considerable pride. Since the days of their national founder, Moshoeshoe I (Muh-SCHWAY schway) who ruled from 1824 to 1870, the Basotho have maintained their territorial integrity, and since 1966, their national sovereignty.

The population in Lesotho is now slightly over 2.1 million. Another three million ethnic Basotho live in South Africa. English is Lesotho's second language and is widely spoken, especially in the lowlands. The average citizen has a relatively low standard of living: the average annual per capita income is about \$430. There are small communities of North Americans, Europeans, South Asians and Chinese in the country.

Public Institutions

Lesotho, the former British Protectorate of Basutoland (1868-1966), became independent as a constitutional monarchy on October 4, 1966. Unfortunately, the democratic elections of 1965 were not repeated, and



Street in Maseru, Lesotho

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

Liboa Jonathan dissolved the Parliament and seized power in 1970. He was overthrown by a military coup in 1986. A second ruling military council ceded power to an elected civilian government on April 2, 1993, marking the return of democratic rule to Lesotho. King Letsie III is the constitutional monarch of Lesotho, but the Prime Minister and his Cabinet hold executive power.

In September 1998, there was a civil disturbance in Maseru and other western towns. Substantial portions of the downtown Maseru business area were burned. Troops from (SADC) intervened and restored order. As this is written (early 2001), businesses are being rebuilt and the city center is coming back to life. In addition, the main thoroughfare between the South African border and the center of town is being upgraded to a four lane divided boulevard.

The hereditary chieftanship is an important traditional institution to which many Basotho look for leadership and guidance. The king is paramount chief. The principal chiefs of Lesotho act as the king's agents in some local and community government matters and oversee the allocation and leasing of land. All land is owned by the king and may only be leased.

The Christian churches (Lesotho Evangelical, Catholic, Anglican, African Methodist Episcopal and Assemblies of God) are significant institutions in Lesotho and play a prominent role in the national educational system. There is an international interdenominational church active in Maseru. The Islamic and Bahai faiths also play significant roles in the religious affairs of the country.

Various charitable and development assistance organizations are active

and include Save the Children Fund, the Red Cross Society, CARE and Caritas. The UN Development Program provides about 200 technical assistance experts. The European Union, Ireland Aid, and the UK (DIFD) also have large development assistance programs.

Arts, Science, and Education

The town of Morija, located about 25 miles outside of Maseru, boasts an exceptional museum - the Morija Museum and Archives is a treasure house of Lesotho history. It has a wonderful collection of fossilized remains of prehistoric reptiles, including dinosaurs. Traditional shields and spears adorn the walls, and two examples of the Khau, the Basotho equivalent of the Victoria Cross, are on display. Jewelry, worn in the 19th century by wealthy people, particularly those of Nguni ori-

gin, is also on display. The museum abounds with traditional clothing and implements.

The Basotho have long valued education. The National University of Lesotho (NUL), formerly shared by Botswana and Swaziland, was nationalized in 1975. NUL provides for Lesotho's higher education needs in humanities, physical sciences, law, economics and social sciences. Programs are also developing in agriculture and technical education. NUL is located in Roma, 20 miles from Maseru.

Commerce and Industry

Because of its location, Lesotho is heavily dependent on the Republic of South Africa for trade and employment opportunities. A significant portion of Lesotho's income comes from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), of which Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa are members. Most private commercial enterprises are small. Attractive wall hangings, rugs, pottery and other handicrafts are produced locally.

The mines of South Africa still provide employment to Basotho males, but not nearly as much as in the recent past. The garment and construction industries have experienced important growth in recent years, but the agricultural sector livestock and subsistence farming - remains the largest domestic source of employment. Lesotho will benefit from AGOA, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, since it will eliminate tariffs on goods already competitively produced in Lesotho for export to the U.S. The bottom line is that Lesotho has a serious unemployment/under-employment problem that is not susceptible to easy solutions.

Lesotho and South Africa are now engaged in a massive public works project to capture and pump Lesotho water to the Johannesburg area. Katse Dam was completed in

1998 along with a tunnel to transfer water north to Gauteng Province. A second dam, Mohale, is under construction now together with a tunnel to transfer water from behind this dam over to the Katse Reservoir. Scheduled to last through 2030, the Lesotho Highlands Development Project (LHDP) will absorb over \$5 billion of capital investment. In 1998 the country began receiving royalties for water transferred through LHDP tunnels and pipelines to Gauteng.

Transportation

Automobiles

Americans have no special problems licensing and registering their vehicles in Lesotho. Leaded and unleaded gasoline are available in Lesotho and South Africa. A wide range of family and four wheel-drive vehicles is available locally.

Although new vehicles are slightly more expensive than in the U.S., used vehicles are available at prices comparable to or better than those in the U.S. When imported vehicles are sold to individuals without duty-free privileges, a 50% duty is charged if the vehicle has been in the country for less than 2 years. Since left hand-drive cars are no longer allowed to be imported into South Africa, the prospective market for sale of a left-hand drive vehicle is limited to Lesotho. In all of southern Africa, traffic moves on the left side of the road. All things considered, a prospective resident of Lesotho would be better off with a right-hand drive car as it is easier to see past the car in front when overtaking. Nevertheless, left-hand-drive cars may be safely driven here.

Most German and Japanese and some American cars can be serviced in Maseru. However, standards of service vary from good to poor, depending on the particular vehicle and on the particular mechanic. Frequently, parts for American cars must be ordered from the U.S., and extended waits for repairs are commonplace. Some prefer to take

their vehicles to South Africa for servicing (Ladybrand is 12 miles and Bloemfontein is 85 miles away). Dealer service for the most popular makes and models is available, but bear in mind that a car built for the U.S. market will be quite different from the same car built for the South African market. Toyota, Nissan, Honda, Mazda, Isuzu, Mercedes Benz, BMW, VW and Opel are all popular in the South African market.

Third-party liability insurance is unnecessary in southern Africa because it is provided automatically through a tax on gasoline purchases. However, third party property insurance must be purchased locally. By American standards, it is inexpensive. Collision and comprehensive insurance should be purchased through one of the U.S. firms that specializes in overseas automobile insurance (e.g., Harry Jannette or Clements).

It is a good idea to bring an international drivers license with you (purchase at AAA in the U.S.) to obtain a Lesotho license. Drivers will otherwise have to submit their American license to be kept until they surrender their Lesotho license at departure.

Local

About 1,000 miles of Lesotho's roads are paved, including the major north-south road and the road to Mokhotlong in the east. A few main rural highways compare to U.S. two-lane rural roads, but lane markings, signs, shoulders, and guardrails are not to U.S. standards. Unfenced livestock poses a particular danger. Other roads are rough, and mountain travel outside of the dry season requires a four wheel-drive vehicle. Traffic in Lesotho as well as in the rest of southern Africa keeps to the left. Public transportation consists of government-owned buses and private taxis (actually minivans). Intercity travel at night is not recommended.

Regional

There is only rail freight service into Lesotho from South Africa. Bloem-

fontein (85 miles from Maseru) is the nearest place to board a passenger train. Moshoeshoe I International Airport is 12 miles outside of Maseru. The only air service is provided by South African Airlink between Maseru and Johannesburg International Airport. SA Airlink flies Citation 41 turboprop planes into Maseru. These flights are often overbooked and connecting travelers are advised to reconfirm their onward flight to Maseru as soon as possible after arrival in Johannesburg. Travelers may also fly to Bloemfontein and arrange road transportation on to Maseru.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Acceptable telephone and cellular service is available in the larger population centers, but much of the interior can only be reached by radio operated by the police or missionary organizations. Cellular coverage for many parts of the country is spotty. Good international telephone and fax service is available in all of the larger towns.

Radio and TV

In Maseru, 10 FM stations and 4 AM stations can be heard. The BBC transmits on FM 24 hours a day. Other stations have programming in English, Sesotho, and Afrikaans. Some of the South African stations have programming very similar to easy listening stations in the U.S. With the decline in the value of the rand/maloti relative to the dollar over the last 2 years, prices for electronic equipment and recorded music and video will seem quite low compared to U.S. prices. The videotapes that are available locally are formatted in the British PAL system. A multisystem TV, which can be purchased in South Africa more cheaply than in the U.S., would be quite useful in that it will receive local and cable TV as well as play local and U.S. videos. Since the nearest full-size cinema is located 85 miles from Maseru, a TV VCR player has the potential to provide considerable entertainment. Lesotho has no TV station of its

own, but rebroadcasts news for 1 1/2 hours each evening through a South African pay-TV station. South African TV (SABC 1 and SABC 2) is multi-lingual and is received on British PAL system frequencies. An inexpensive outside TV antenna is required in Maseru. Programs in English and Afrikaans alternate throughout the day and are interspersed with programs in native languages. Shows are usually South African, British or American in origin. Also available is satellite TV service (DSTV) from South Africa. About 40 channels are available including CNN, BBC, SkyNews, CNBC, ESPN, local sports and entertainment (National Geographic, Discovery, BBC Prime, movies, food and fashion). The DSTV costs \$400 for a dish and setup, with subscription cost at approximately \$50 per month.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

One government-sponsored and four independent English-language newspapers are published weekly in Maseru. South African dailies are available, but their coverage of international news is spotty. The South African Weekly Mail and Guardian has been internationally acclaimed for its excellent reporting.

Many popular South African, British and American magazines are available locally. Magazines published/printed in South Africa are quite inexpensive, while imported publications usually sell for more than the price printed on the cover. Local bookstores and variety shops have a good selection of magazines. Paperback and hard cover books are available at several bookstores in Bloemfontein; they are, in general, more expensive than in the U.S. Amazon.com is a good alternative.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Physician care is available in Ladybrand, South Africa (15 minutes drive).

Specialist care and hospitalization require travel to Bloemfontein (90 minutes drive). Bloemfontein has several hospitals and the standard of medical services provided is very high. The Government-operated hospital in Maseru is not recommended.

Community Health

Most of the central part of Maseru is connected to a central sewage system. Garbage is collected once a week in most of the capital and is disposed of in landfills. Maseru's tap water is generally potable.

Lesotho's various public health problems are most serious in the rural areas. During the rainy season, heavy runoff will contaminate drinking water supplies and cause outbreaks of intestinal diseases. There is no malaria in Lesotho. Disease incidence in Maseru is low. The most serious public health concerns are HIV/AIDS, road accidents and tuberculosis, which is highly contagious at a certain stage.

Preventive Measures

There are no required immunizations for entry into Lesotho. However, the State Department recommends that visitors be immunized for Hepatitis A and B, typhoid fever, tetanus and diphtheria. Although yellow fever is not endemic in Lesotho, proof of vaccination for that illness may be required for those entering from countries in which yellow fever does exist (other parts of sub-Saharan Africa and certain Latin American countries).

Some poisonous snakes and scorpions are found in Lesotho, especially in the warmer months. Common-sense precautions should be taken. Children should be warned periodically about the possibility of encountering these critters in the garden.

It may take the new arrival a few weeks to adjust to Lesotho's altitude - just over 5,000 feet. Some people experience headaches, dizziness and a general lethargy, but these symptoms soon pass. Although houses in Maseru have no central

heat, some residences have fireplaces, electric radiators and split A/Cheating units. The humidity is quite low, especially in the winter. Depending on your preference, electric blankets or down comforters will be good items to have during the winter.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

There are daily flights to Maseru and Bloemfontein from Johannesburg International Airport. Travelers with an overnight layover in Johannesburg en route to Maseru should book a room well in advance at the Holiday Inn at the airport. There is regular minivan service between the airport and the hotel. There is also a transit hotel inside the terminal building. Service is very basic but economical and convenient if one is making a direct connection outside of South Africa. It is a Protea Hotel and can be booked through a travel agent.

A passport is required, but no visa is needed for visits of 30 days or less. For more information concerning entry requirements, travelers may contact the Embassy of the Kingdom of Lesotho, 2511 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 797-5533. Overseas, inquiries may be made at the nearest Embassy or Consulate of Lesotho.

Residential permits for Lesotho can be obtained after your arrival. Most travel to and from Lesotho requires transit passage through South Africa. Tourist (blue) passport holders do not need a South African visa.

Americans living in or visiting Lesotho are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy and obtain updated information on travel and security within Lesotho. The U.S. Embassy is located at 254 Kingsway, Maseru West; the mailing address is P.O.

Box 333, Maseru 100, Lesotho. The telephone number is 266-312-666.

Pets

Because of frequent delays in air-freight arrivals, pets should travel with you on the plane. Check the quarantine laws in countries in which you plan to stop. (Britain, for example, has very strict laws regarding animal quarantine.) It is best not to layover anywhere when traveling with pets. Animals arriving in Lesotho must be accompanied by a certificate of good health issued within the six months previous to arrival and a current rabies vaccination, given within 30 days prior to arrival. A Lesotho import permit can be obtained after arrival. An import permit for South Africa will be issued 6 to 8 weeks prior to travel by: Veterinary Services Private Bag X138 Pretoria 001 R.S.A.

Additionally, all pets entering South Africa must travel as manifested air cargo, not as unaccompanied air baggage. If your pet arrives without the proper documentation or as unaccompanied baggage, it will be denied entry. You may want to employ the services of a pet expediter: Animal Travel Agency (Pty) Ltd. PO. Box 1478, Greenpark Bldg., Corner 11th Ave & Wessel Rd. Rivonia, R.S.A. Tel: (011) 803-1883.

The agency can obtain the necessary airport permit for South Africa, can meet the pets at the airport, can handle the formalities, and can arrange for kennel facilities, if necessary.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The maloti (M), Lesotho's currency, is pegged one-to-one to the South African rand. The rand is accepted in Lesotho, while the maloti is not accepted in South Africa, except in a few border towns. The commercial banks in Maseru (Standard Bank, Nedbank, and Lesotho Bank) offer the same services available in the U.S., but charges fees for almost every transaction. Foreign exchange transactions are possible through the Standard Bank. Banks through-

out South Africa have ATMs which will accept American ATM cards and provide rand. Security concerns must be taken into account when using ATM machines as there is the possibility of a thief grabbing the money as it comes out of the machine.

A General Sales Tax (GST) is presently in effect in Lesotho; there are plans to institute a Value Added Tax (VAT) in the near future.

Lesotho uses the Metric system of weights and measures i.e., kilometers, liters, kilograms, meters and degrees Celsius.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Mar. | |
| (2nd Mon) | Commonwealth Day* |
| Mar. 12 | Moshoeshoe's Day |
| Mar. 21 | National Tree Planting Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 2 | King's Birthday |
| May/June | Ascension Day* |
| July 4 | Family Day |
| Oct. 4 | Independence Day |
| Oct. 7 | National Sports Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| Dec. 26 | Boxing Day |
| | *variable |

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country.

Bardell, John E. and James H. Cobbe. *Lesotho: Dilemmas of Dependence in Southern Africa*. Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado.

Becker, Peter. *Hill of Destiny: The Life and Times of Moshesh, Ruler of the Basotho*. Penguin Books.

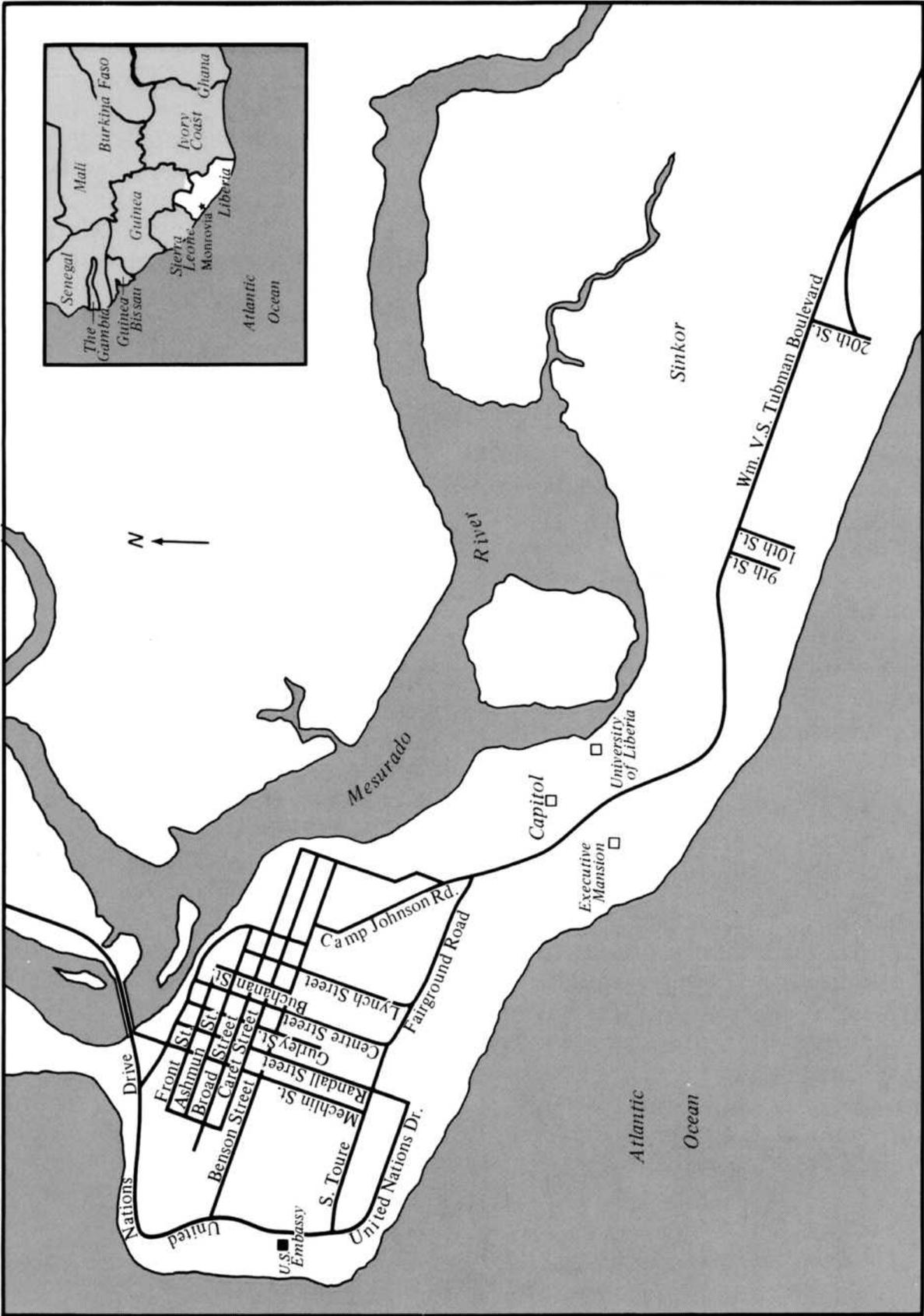
Grill, Steven. *A Brief History of Lesotho*. Available at local bookstores in Maseru.

Haliburton, Gordon. *Historical Dictionary of Lesotho*. Scarecrow Press, Inc: Metuchen, New Jersey, 1977.

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Monrovia, Liberia

LIBERIA

Republic of Liberia

Major City:
Monrovia

Other Cities:
Buchanan, Gbarnga, Greenville, Harbel, Harper,
Robertsport, Sanniquellie, Voinjama

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report for Liberia. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Editor's Note: Liberia experienced a devastating civil war in the 1990s. The capital, Monrovia, and other parts of the country were heavily damaged. Some parts of this entry are based on conditions in Liberia prior to this war.

The name **LIBERIA**, from the Latin *liber*, meaning "free," was chosen to signify the intent of the republic's founding on the west Guinean coast. The present-day history of Liberia began in 1822, when the American Colonization Society was chartered by Congress to sponsor in Africa a colony of freed slaves from the United States. Several thousand emancipated blacks, who had been held in servitude on Brit-

ish and American naval vessels, joined the settlement and, in 1847, Liberia became the first independent republic in sub-Saharan Africa. In the ensuing years, the young nation struggled for survival against a hostile geographical environment, financial uncertainty, and the threatened encroachment of European colonialism.

Although there are many political, social, and economic links with the U.S., Liberia has a rich culture of its own. It shares a multitude of problems with other developing nations in striving toward economic self-reliance, and in using its natural and human resources. Liberia is a country in transition, attempting to redefine its national identity and aims.

MAJOR CITY

Monrovia

Monrovia is situated on a long narrow cape, with one side facing a vast expanse of mangrove swamps drained by the Mesurado River and the other facing the Atlantic Ocean.

Founded in 1822 with the arrival of the first settlers, many localities are still identified by the names of orig-

inal villages, settler communities, and the ethnic tribal districts that grew up around them, all becoming incorporated into the city of Monrovia as it expanded. Originally named Christopolis, it was renamed after one of the settlement's most prominent sponsors, U.S. President James Monroe.

Downtown Monrovia, with its markets, stores, offices, and apartment buildings, occupies the tip of Cape Mesurado, rising to the promontory of Mamba Point. The narrow body of the Cape is taken up by the mostly residential Sinkor area. Beyond Sinkor, a number of suburbs extend towards the base of the Cape, and along fingers of land jutting out into the mangroves. Between the downtown and Sinkor areas is Capitol Hill, where the Executive Mansion, government office buildings, and the University of Liberia campus are located.

Two bridges cross the Mesurado River from the downtown area to Bushrod Island—the industrial section of the city, with many factories, the refinery, the Freeport of Monrovia, and many low, overcrowded buildings. Another bridge at the far end of the island crosses the wide St. Paul River.

Monrovia's population, estimated at 15,000 in 1950, is currently

1,413,000. Growing at twice the national average, the population is exerting great stresses on the city's health, sanitation, and transport services. Modern apartments and government buildings are often surrounded by squatter settlements.

Monrovia's business community includes many Americans and Europeans. Lebanese and Indian nationals operate most of the large stores and commercial enterprises. A sizable group of non-Liberian Africans (mostly Sierra Leoneans, Ghanaians, Guineans, and Nigerians) also live in the city. In addition, tourists and business persons visit the capital.

Education

Most dependents attend the American Cooperative School (ACS) in the Congotown area of Monrovia. This private, coeducational school offers a U.S. style education from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 for students of all nationalities. A seven-member board of directors, elected for two-year terms by the membership of the American Cooperative Education Association, governs the school. Associate membership is automatically conferred on parents and guardians of all children enrolled in the school.

The curriculum resembles that of U.S. public schools. French, Spanish, art, typing, computer science, journalism, photography, African cultural studies, chess, drama, choir, yearbook, sports, and other electives are offered in grades nine through 12. Personal computers are maintained for class use. Numerous field trips and study opportunities to local industries as well as various cross-cultural experiences are provided. Proximity to the ocean allows for practical instruction in marine biology. The school year runs from late August to early June, and usually includes a two-week break at Christmas. All Liberian holidays and U.S. Thanksgiving Day are observed.

ACS, accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges, is one of only three American high

schools in Africa so accredited. The major effect of accreditation is to ensure the acceptance of school credits when students transfer or present transcripts for college entrance. The school is housed in an air-conditioned building with 22 classrooms, an administrative office, gymnasium, library, counselor's office, and teacher's lounge. There are two athletic playing fields. An American superintendent directs the school, assisted by an American principal. All teachers have U.S. teaching credentials. Bus service is provided.

Recreation

The national sport in Liberia is soccer, the leading teams having large and enthusiastic followings. Matches are played either at the Antoinette Tubman Stadium in Monrovia, or at a modern sports complex located five miles beyond the Sinkor area. Soccer enthusiasts have praised the performance of West African teams. Basketball is a growing sport.

There is ample opportunity for participation in a wide variety of sporting activities in Liberia, and especially around Monrovia. Local recreation associations and other expatriate organizations provide a great number of activities in a variety of settings.

The Monrovia Sporting Club, located in the modern Hotel Africa complex, offers a large swimming pool, a private beach and lagoon, windsurfing, tennis, horseback riding, and other activities.

The Voice of America (VOA) complex has a nine-hole golf course, swimming pool, and tennis courts, available through membership.

Golf is very popular. There are courses at VOA, Firestone, and Bong Mines—all within two hours of Monrovia—and at several other locations as well.

The Liberia Squash Club in Monrovia offers low rates for an increasingly popular sport among both Americans and Liberians. The

YMCA, the first on the continent, offers a number of programs and facilities, including an active Tae Kwon Doe karate club.

The American community and other expatriate organizations often join in intramural activities. During the dry season softball leagues are often organized, while the less conventional "Hash House Harrier" runs are fast becoming an institution. Leagues often grow up around a single individual with organizational abilities and enthusiasm. Even when formal facilities do not exist or special equipment is required, one will often hear of an individual or group that has outfitted itself as necessary. For example, scuba diving, ultra-lite flying clubs, weight training, and other groups have been organized.

All sports equipment must be brought to Liberia. While some equipment can be borrowed, practically none is available in town.

Outdoor activities abound in Liberia, with water sports being the most accessible. A number of beautiful local beaches have their own distinct attractions, depending upon the mixture of those who frequent them, the facilities, and relative isolation. One beach may have a popular restaurant and bar, another may have nothing but isolated beaches and beautiful lagoons. Robertsport, a few hours from Monrovia, offers pristine beaches and a small hotel near Liberia's largest lake. Fish and other seafood can be bought from local fishermen as they land their canoes.

Harper, an hour's flight down the coast, was the center of the Maryland Colonization Society's settlements, and is a small attractive town out of the last century. Buchanan, a two-hour drive southeast of Monrovia, has isolated beaches and lagoons.

In all locations, care must be exercised when swimming because of strong currents and undertow. Children should always be supervised, and should preferably stay in the



View of Monrovia, Liberia

EPD Photos. Reproduced by permission.

lagoons. Snorkeling, spear fishing, and scuba diving are all practicable, but one must establish connections with small local groups that can service equipment. Boating and fishing, centered on the St. Paul River area, are popular. A number of boats owned by members of the expatriate communities are used for deep sea, surf, and river fishing.

The Bong Mining Company, in the Bong Mountains about two hours north of Monrovia, has extensive recreational facilities, including a golf course, two German and one Italian restaurant, and aircraft and shooting clubs. Weapons must be borrowed locally. A large swimming pool, soccer fields, tennis courts, weight facilities, and a guest house make the area a pleasant weekend stay. The LAMCO mining community in northeastern Liberia, about eight hours from Monrovia, similarly offers modern facilities in a mountain setting.

In contrast to these resort type areas, Liberia's interior offers a vastly different and rich experience. Liberia has the largest remaining areas of intact tropical rain forests in West Africa, with an incredible diversity of birds, plants, and wildlife. Over 500 species of birds are listed for the country and many more remain to be discovered. Elephants, leopards, chimpanzees, and pygmy hippos still live in the interior regions. The privately owned Monrovia Zoo offers a glimpse of some of this natural wealth. Gardening and bird watching are enjoyed near Monrovia. Regionally, the Sahel zone of Africa to the north holds the escarpment dwellings of Mali and the European-influenced cities of Banjul, Dakar, and Abidjan. Morocco and the Canary Islands also offer changes of scenery and culture.

Entertainment

Evening entertainment in Monrovia centers around the home, where a casual atmosphere prevails. Activities include barbecues, cocktail parties, and televised sports events. Although there are several movie theaters in town, most Americans frequent only one, the Relda in the Sinkor area, which shows American and European films. Local dramatic groups occasionally present amateur theater productions—the most active of these is the Monrovia Players, but activity depends on the interest, efforts, and talents of city residents. Productions are staged at the Ducor Hotel, with buffet dinners preceding the performances.

Monrovia's several good restaurants offer a variety of international cuisines (Lebanese, German, Liberian, French, Italian, Spanish, Oriental, and Indian). The food is generally good, but service is sometimes slow.

Prices are comparable to those in U.S. cities. Nightclubs range from the popular disco at Hotel Africa to a number of clubs in town. Movie houses usually play Indian and karate movies, but some have begun to introduce a few African films.

Cultural exhibitions take place on Providence Island, the original landing place of the settlers, while African musicians frequently perform in town.

The American Women in Liberia is an organization which provides interesting activities and fellowship for U.S. expatriates; it encourages associate memberships for non-Americans. The U.S. Mission Women's Club and the teen club also sponsor a variety of activities. Since many other countries have diplomatic missions in Liberia, international social contacts are numerous.

Most Monrovia have an up-country hometown. One of the richest local experiences is being introduced to up-country life by Liberian friends, either at small town church socials outside of Monrovia, or at "coming out" feasts for bush schools. Initiative and friendliness can open many doors. Generally speaking, Liberians are friendly and open people. The pace in this country is easier than many places, and patience, courtesy, and a sense of humor are necessary traits.

OTHER CITIES

BUCHANAN, formerly called Grand Bassa, is the largest of Liberia's other cities, although it only has a population of about 25,000. It is located in Grand Bassa County, about 70 miles southeast of the capital, and is the port from which Mount Nimba's iron ore is exported. Africa's first iron-ore washing and pelletizing plant was opened here in 1968. The city was founded in 1835 by a black group, the Quakers of the Young Men's Colonization Society.

GBARNGA (also spelled Gbanga and Gbanka), with a population of about 10,860, is located northeast of the capital near the Guinean border. Poultry farming and a rubber factory dominate its commercial activities. There are also secondary schools, churches, and a mosque in Gbarnga.

Nestled on the Atlantic coast, **GREENVILLE** is a port city approximately 150 miles south of Monrovia. It was established by freed American slaves in 1838 and was once known as Sino (also spelled Sinoe). Its main exports include lumber, rubber, and agricultural products. Linked to the capital and to Tchien in the north, Greenville has a population of about 9,000.

Home of the Firestone rubber plantation, **HARBEL** is less than 50 miles northeast of Monrovia. Harbel plays a crucial role in the exportation of liquid latex and crepe rubber. Firestone maintains the city's hospital, power plant, radio service, as well as roads, housing, schools, and a literacy program. The Liberian Institute of Tropical Medicine and Roberts International Airport are two miles southeast of the city. Roughly 11,500 people live in Harbel.

In the extreme southeast, near the border of Cote d'Ivoire, is the town of **HARPER**, a commercial seaport for the vast rubber plantations of the interior. Named for Robert Goodloe Harper of the American Colonization Society, the town is the site of Maryland College of Our Lady of Fatima, the William V.S. Tubman College of Technology, the J.J. Dossen Memorial Hospital, a public library and several churches. A sugar refinery was opened here in 1978.

ROBERTSPORT, also a seaport, is in Grand Cape Mount County. It is named for Joseph Jenkins Roberts, Liberia's first president. It is connected to Monrovia by air and by road. The town experiences heavy rainfall, roughly 205 inches annually. Inhabitants engaged in fishing

and rice farming. It is noted for such tourist attractions as picturesque Lake Piso and Massating Island, which is rich with wildlife and small fishing villages.

SANNIQUELLIE is the northern trading center at the foot of Mount Nimba, and **VOINJAMA**, Liberia's most northern city, is above the Wologisi Range, where a national park is being created.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Liberia, about the size of Ohio, lies on the west coast of Africa, some 150 miles north of the equator. It shares borders with Sierra Leone and Guinea on the north and northwest, with Cote d'Ivoire on the east, and courses the Atlantic Ocean on the south. Largely covered by rain forests, it has a sea-level coastal area that gradually rises to a low plateau and ends in the low-lying mountains (4,000 feet) on the Guinea-Cote d'Ivoire border. Liberia has a relatively long coastline of 350 miles and no point is further than 170 miles inland.

Because of its proximity to the ocean and the equator, and its low altitude, Liberia's climate is tropical. The only variation is a six-month rainy season from May through November, marked by frequent, long-lasting, and often torrential rainfalls. Occasional sunny days break up this long rainy interval, and some areas are refreshed by sea breezes.

Liberia receives very heavy rainfall, with roughly 200 inches a year in Monrovia. Temperatures average 81°F.

The dry season (December through April), sometimes characterized by a dust-laden atmosphere, is the hottest period. However, the country maintains its green look throughout

the year. Liberia's temperatures are less noticeable than its oppressive humidity—one of the world's highest. Averaging between 70 and 80 percent, the humidity deteriorates vehicles, furnishings, and clothing, and encourages household pests. Constant precautions must be taken to avoid mildew and rust.

Population

Liberia's population is estimated at 3.1 million, a figure that does not count the refugees who fled the country during the civil war (more than half Liberia's population at the time). Monrovia's population is approximately 1.4 million. Liberians are either members of indigenous ethnic groups, 95 percent, descendants of black Americans who began settling in the area in 1822, or, increasingly, a mixture of both. Influences of American settlers are reflected in both family and Christian names, as well as in the designations of towns, cities, and counties. The current trend, however, is to recover or adopt African names. In a relationship unique in Africa, Liberia has maintained strong cultural, social, familial, and business ties with Americans.

The 16 major ethnic groups are the Kru, Kpelle, Mandingo, Gola, Loma, Krahn, Bassa, Grebo, Vai, Mano, Mendi, Dey, Gise, Gio, Belle, and Gbande. Many tribal customs are still practiced; others have disappeared or changed over the years. The increasing educational level, economic modernization, migration toward urban centers, and the spread of both Christianity and Islam have exerted strong pressures on traditional culture.

English is Liberia's official language, but tribal dialects are widely spoken. Most Liberians with whom Americans come in contact, either socially or in business, speak fluent English. Many government officials have been educated in the U.S. or Europe. The less educated, on the other hand, speak a "Liberian English" with distinctive idioms and pronunciation.

Government

In 1847, Liberia became the first African republic with the declaration of its independence from the founding American societies and adoption of a constitution based on the U.S. model. The dominant True Whig Party ruled virtually uncontested until 1980, when the government was overthrown by a group of noncommissioned officers led by Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe.

In 1984, a new constitution guaranteeing personal and political freedoms was ratified by referendum, an Interim National Assembly was appointed, and the ban on political activities was lifted. Multi-party elections were held in 1985 and, amidst much controversy, Samuel K. Doe was declared the winner. Throughout 1988 and 1989, the Doe government cracked down on all political opposition.

In January 1990, a small group of rebels led by Charles Taylor launched a series of attacks against Doe's government troops. The skirmishes quickly degenerated into a bloody civil war, with fighting along tribal lines. The rebels called themselves the National Patriotic Forces of Liberia (NPFL). A second rebel group, calling itself the Independent NPFL and opposed to Taylor's group, formed with Prince Johnson as its leader. The government, which was now forced to fight against two rebel groups simultaneously, lost control of Monrovia to Prince Johnson's rebels in July 1990. Doe and remnants of his army retreated to the heavily fortified Presidential Palace.

In August 1990, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sent a 4,000-man peace-keeping force (ECOMOG) to Monrovia in an attempt to end the fighting. However, President Doe was captured, tortured, and executed by Prince Johnson's rebels in September 1990. Despite three peace agreements, fighting continued into the 1990s.

On May 8, 1996 Liberia's rival factions approved a peace plan requiring an immediate cease-fire. Charles Taylor was elected president in mid-1997 and took office in August. Liberia's civil war cost as many as 200,000 lives and displaced about 700,000 people from their homes.

The flag of Liberia consists of six red and five white horizontal stripes. In the upper corner, near the staff, is a dark blue square with a white star. Liberia's flag is very similar to the American flag.

Arts, Science, Education

The isolation of the interior until recent times has left much of the traditional culture intact. The main socializing forces have been the age grades of Eastern Liberia and the "secret" initiation societies, such as the men's *Poro* and women's *Sande* societies of the western and central portions of the country.

Traditionally, village children attend a society's "bush school" for a period of years, while those attending modern schools participate only for shorter periods between semesters. In the society bush school, they are taught the skills and traditions needed for life, forge the bonds of society membership, and pass together into adulthood.

In addition, much traditional knowledge reposes in special societies that incorporate, or have developed around, particular special skills and needs, such as the use of herbal medicines, blacksmithing, and bridge building.

Traditional arts still thrive in Liberia. Dancing, story-telling, brass-casting, and carving are widely practiced. The endless variety of masked and costumed "devils" serves not only to delight and entertain, but also to teach traditional values and judge litigations in traditional life; some are viewed as the embodiment of forest spirits and are powerful agents of social control.

Statues, masks, and other carvings are not only great aesthetic works; they serve as links to the spiritual world. The carvings of one group in particular, the Dan of northeast Liberia, are world renowned. Many of these arts are performed or displayed as vital components of public occasions. Efforts are being made to record the oral histories, knowledge of plant medicines, and the manufacture of items characteristic of traditional life. The National Museum in the capital is expected to play a leadership role in this effort.

The University of Liberia in Monrovia and Cuttington University College in the interior were founded in the mid- and late 1800s. The Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) is working to increase the fertility of Liberia's weathered soils, and to develop alternatives to the destructive slash-and-burn agriculture practiced by most farmers. The Liberian Institute for Biomedical Research, working with chimpanzees captured in the interior, was instrumental in developing a vaccine for Hepatitis B, a disease that affects more than 200 million people worldwide. Research into other major tropical diseases continues.

The formation of technical institutes and public foundations, such as the Tubman Institute of Technology, the Liberian Association of Writers, and the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia, has resulted in a growing awareness of the benefits of technology, as well as its possible threat to traditional culture and the environment. As with many African countries, Liberia is struggling to realize the promise of its resources and cultural wealth, under increasingly unfavorable circumstances.

Commerce and Industry

Civil war during the 1990s destroyed much of Liberia's economy, especially the infrastructure in and around Monrovia. Expatriate businessmen fled the country, tak-

ing capital and expertise with them. There is concern that many of them will not return. Richly endowed with water, mineral resources, forests, and a climate favorable to agriculture, Liberia had been a producer and exporter of basic products, while local manufacturing, mainly foreign owned, has been small in scope. Currently, economic priorities include restoring infrastructure and developing sound fiscal policies to spur growth.

Prior to the civil war, agriculture was the most important sector of the economy. In 1989, it contributed nearly 40 percent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employed nearly 70 percent of the work force. Principal cash crops were coffee, cocoa, rubber, and timber. Rice, cassava, and vegetables were the main food crops.

Liberia's industrial capacity is extremely small and contributes only a small percentage of GDP, currently 10 percent. Industries included rubber processing, palm oil processing, food processing, furniture, and construction materials.

Prior to the civil war, Liberia was one of the world's major producers and exporters of iron ore. However, the fighting has severely damaged the mining sector. In the past, diamonds and gold were also mined in small quantities. Liberia has deposits of bauxite, manganese, barite, and uranium, but these have not been exploited.

Iron ore, rubber, timber, and coffee were Liberia's primary exports. Most of these products were destined for the United States, countries of the European Community, and the Netherlands. Liberia imported chemicals, machinery, transport equipment, and foodstuffs from the United States, Japan, China, the Netherlands, and its West African neighbors.

Liberia maintains a Chamber of Commerce at Capitol Hill, P.O. Box 92, Monrovia; telephone: 223738; telex: 44211.

Transportation

Public transportation in Monrovia consists mainly of taxis and buses. Vans or buses from central "parking stations" serve the country, any point being reachable by changing vehicles at appropriate stations along the way. Overcrowding and a high rate of accidents discourage most Americans from using this system, but vehicles can be chartered at a negotiable price. Small aircraft charter service is available to Monrovia to all towns which have airfields. Roberts International Airport, 36 miles from Monrovia, is serviced daily by a number of African and European airlines.

Since taxi service partly substitutes for public transportation, it is operated as such. Passengers constantly enter and leave taxis, and frequently numerous stops are made before the individual destination is reached. If the driver is requested not to make stops, a negotiable and higher fare must be paid. Drivers generally know the way to familiar landmarks or major street intersections, but often they must be directed to less well-known locations. Although the accident rate among taxis is high, many expatriate Americans who own private cars choose taxis for going downtown, rather than having to look for parking spaces on the crowded streets. It should be noted that all taxis in Monrovia are yellow.

Liberia has about 400 miles of paved roads, including those in the capital. The rest are laterite dirt. During the rainy season, laterite roads are made difficult or impassable by erosion and mud. In the dry season, long drives can be uncomfortably dusty. Personal cars should be undercoated and equipped with heavy-duty springs and shock absorbers. Air conditioning is advantageous, as it not only provides relief from the heat and humidity, but also from the dust. The humid climate has a dramatic effect on vehicles; rust is the most serious problem, but car interiors also eventually develop mildew odors.

Unleaded gasoline is not available in Liberia. Catalytic convertors must be removed from cars shipped to the country.

Small cars are the most convenient on narrow, crowded city streets. Nonfuel-injection engines should be specified for any cars being shipped to Liberia because of the lack of repair facilities and spare parts for fuel-injection models. All locally purchased auto parts are costly, and certain items must be ordered from abroad. The following spare parts are useful to have on hand: alternator or generator, fan belts for car and air conditioner, wiper blades, heavy-duty shock absorbers, extra set of points, battery, muffler, exhaust pipe, and tires.

Chevrolet is represented in Monrovia by dealers who have repair facilities. Honda, Nissan, Mazda, Toyota, Peugeot, Renault, Mercedes, BMW, and Volkswagen are also among models sold and serviced in the capital.

A Liberian driver's license (including vision test) is required, and third-party liability insurance is mandatory. Insurance costs vary according to the car's value, age, and engine. Full coverage for personal liability and collision insurance are additional. The Liberian Government requires annual vehicle inspections.

Communications

Telephone and postal services are in short supply in Monrovia, having been severely disrupted during the civil war. Prior to the war, these services were generally inadequate.

The government-controlled Liberian Broadcasting Corporation, which oversees all broadcasting, operates commercial radio and commercial television stations. There were approximately 790,000 radios and 70,000 television sets prior to the fighting in Monrovia in mid-1990.

Many of the English-language newspapers and magazines pub-

lished during the Doe regime ceased publication during late 1990. In 1991, a number of new papers had been launched. The titles include *The Inquirer*, *New Times*, and *The Patriot*.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, many resident Americans received copies of the *International Herald Tribune* and international editions of *Time* and *Newsweek*. The magazine *Africa Now* appeared sporadically.

Health

Major medical and surgical cases among expatriates are always referred to either European or American hospitals. Missionary hospitals operate in Liberia, but facilities for treating complicated conditions which require specialized equipment or in-patient care are not available locally.

Community health and sanitation in Liberia are far below American and European standards. Even in Monrovia, garbage collection is sporadic. Frequent breaks in water lines and lack of adherence to plumbing codes necessitate the boiling and filtering of all drinking water. Food inspection is inadequate. All locally purchased meat must be thoroughly cooked before consumption, and vegetables should be well cleaned and soaked in chlorine solution.

Malaria is endemic throughout the country, as are schistosomiasis and several other parasitic diseases. Poisonous snakes, although present, are not a health hazard.

Diarrhea and general fatigue are common ailments experienced by Americans living in Liberia. For protection from the more serious preventable diseases prevalent in the country, several recommendations are made: boiling and filtering of all drinking water; regular use of malaria suppressants (initiated two weeks before arrival, and continued for six weeks after departure); eating only fruits and vegetables that have been treated with chlorine;

staying out of fresh water, particularly up-country, where the water is infested with schistosomes; and keeping all immunizations current (yellow fever, typhoid, polio, cholera, tetanus, and gamma globulin). It is imperative that yellow fever inoculations are current for entry into Liberia. Currently, AIDS is a minimal risk in Liberia. Health conditions throughout Liberia have deteriorated greatly as a result of the civil war.

Clothing and Services

Because of the hot, humid climate and the poor quality of dry cleaning, loose-fitting, washable clothing is recommended. It is acceptable for all occasions. With year-round wear and frequent laundering, clothes rarely last long; an initial good supply is needed for an extended stay. Local markets sell a limited selection of ready-made (usually inferior) clothing at high prices. Dressmakers do satisfactory work and, in addition to making African-style, loose-fitting dresses, they will copy simple catalogue styles or favorite garments reasonably well. Tailors make good quality leisure and dress suits, shirts, and women's dresses from lappa cloth, tie-dyed material, or imported fabrics. African styles are popular for work or casual parties for both men and women.

A wide selection of European shoes is available, but many Americans find that the fit is quite different. An adequate supply of footwear is a must, since moisture, mud, and dust play havoc with shoes. Local shoe repair is mediocre.

Raincoats are not often worn because of the heat, but it is wise to have one for the occasional torrential downpours. An umbrella—preferably large—is essential for each member of the family during the rainy season, and galoshes are needed for small children.

Most people wear only cotton clothing outdoors. Although synthetic fabrics are attractive, wash easily,

and pack well, items made of these materials become uncomfortable in Liberia's extreme heat. Swimsuits and beachwear are hard to find locally; each family member will need at least two swimsuits, as well as sunglasses and some sort of head protection. One special recommendation is a beach umbrella for relief from the intense heat and sunlight.

Business wear is more relaxed than in the U.S. In offices, men wear wash-and-wear suits (often without ties) or locally made slacks and short-sleeved jackets; these correspond to the usual coat and tie worn elsewhere. Working women wear either dresses or skirts and blouses and, since all offices are air conditioned, many also find hosiery and light sweaters comfortable. Otherwise, warm-weather clothing is suitable everywhere. Long cotton skirts or African dresses (usually beautifully embroidered) are as popular for parties as are short dresses. Women are much less influenced by fashion trends than in the U.S. The dress code is relaxed and informal. However, shorts and halter tops should never be worn in town.

Children's clothing is locally available in limited supply and at high prices. Children's wear is much the same as at home, but in the lightest-weight materials possible. Jeans and T-shirts with sneakers or sandals are popular. Preschool children wear play clothes most of the time. Infant clothing is available, but at prices higher than in the U.S.; all baby equipment is expensive.

In general, almost anything can be bought in Monrovia if one is willing to search for it and to pay inflated prices. However, the "buy it if you see it—tomorrow it may be gone" approach should be followed, as stocks are often small and selections poor compared to those in Western countries. Items usually found in American supermarkets can also be found in Monrovia, but favorite brands of toiletries, patent medicines, and cleaning and repair supplies should be included in one's household shipment if substitutes are unacceptable. Many people

planning extended stays ship artificial Christmas trees and decorations.

Dry cleaning is fair. Shoe repair is adequate. Commercial laundry service is available, but servants usually do the work at home. Several beauty shops in Monrovia are known for good work; they use mostly European and American products.

Automobile repair is adequate, although some jobs may take more than one trip to the mechanic. Repair of electrical appliances is scarce and poor.

Domestic Help

Household in Liberia traditionally employ domestic help of some kind. Most Americans hire domestic servants, the number and type depending on individual preferences and requirements. Most Americans hire housekeepers, at least on a part-time basis. Others hire cooks and nannies. Some households employ gardeners and launderers. Employers provide uniforms and pay for recommended medical examinations. If meals are not provided, employers provide a food allowance. Domestic workers require supervision to ensure personal cleanliness and suitable performance. Many domestic employees are not literate.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

As of February 2002, the U.S. Department of State reaffirms its warning to U.S. citizens against travel to Monrovia. Liberia's declaration of a state of emergency marks a further deterioration in security. Travel outside of Monrovia is difficult and dangerous due to an absence of central authority and inadequate living conditions. Many Liberians and foreign nationals, including some Americans, have been detained in rebel-controlled territory, or have been prohibited from traveling freely between rebel-

controlled territory and other areas. Only limited air service exists between Freetown, Sierra Leone, Conakry, Guinea, or Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire and Monrovia and no overland routes to the capital are open. All Americans who decide to travel to Liberia should register with the U.S. Embassy immediately upon arrival.

Regardless of the type of passport, and of any information to the contrary, all Americans must have visas to enter Liberia. This requirement cannot be overemphasized. Both official and nonofficial persons without proper documentation have been detained at the airport. Yellow fever and cholera inoculations are required.

Pets must be fully immunized before arrival, and accompanied by a veterinarian's certificate containing the date of rabies inoculation (neither more than 120 days, nor less than 30 days, before entry). The certificate must be plainly identifiable, authenticated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and stamped with the Liberian Government seal. If a pet is imported from a country without a Liberian diplomatic post, U.S. authorities will advise about policy. Failure to comply with these instructions may require the pet to be quarantined in Liberia. Some areas of Monrovia are infested with tsetse fly, and dogs in these areas are subject to contracting canine sleeping sickness. There is no risk to humans. While this illness in dogs is readily treatable by a veterinarian, there are reoccurrences and some animals have died.

Importation of individual firearms is prohibited.

Religious denominations conducting services in Monrovia include: Episcopal, Assembly of God, Roman Catholic, Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses, Presbyterian, Baptist, Baha'i, Lutheran, Methodist, Seventh-Day Adventist, and Pentecostal. The capital city has Muslim mosques, but no Jewish synagogues or temples; occasionally Jewish laymen hold services in their homes.

The time in Liberia is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

The currency used in Liberia is the Liberian *dollar*. Bills up to and including \$20 denominations are readily acceptable. No limit is placed on the amount of currency taken into the country. Chase Manhattan, Citibank, and International Bank of Washington have branches or affiliates in Monrovia. ATMs are not available and credit cards are not generally accepted. Traveler's checks can be cashed, but transactions are subject to fees.

The English system of weights and measures is used.

The U.S. Embassy in Liberia is located at 111 United Nations Drive, Mamba Point, P.O. Box 10-0098, Monrovia; telephone: (231) 22291/4; FAX: (231) 223710.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1 New Year's Day
 Feb. 11 Armed Forces Day
 Feb. 14 Literacy Day
 Mar. Decoration Day*
 Mar/Apr. Easter*
 Mar. 15 J.J. Robert's Birthday

Apr. National Day of Fasting & Prayer*
 Apr. 12 Redemption Day
 May 14 Unification Day
 May 25 Africa Day
 July 26 Independence Day
 Aug. 24 Flag Day
 Oct. 29 Youth Day
 Nov. Thanksgiving Day*
 Nov. 29 William V.S.Tubman's Day
 Dec. 25 Christmas Day
 *Variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

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 Dunn, D. Elwood and Svend E. Holsoe. *Historical Dictionary of Liberia*. African Historical Dictionaries Series, no. 38. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1985.

Greene, Barbara. *Too Late to Turn Back: Barbara & Graham Greene in Liberia*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1991.

Hope, Constance M. *Liberia. Let's Visit Places & Peoples of the World Series*. New York: Chelsea House, 1987.

Humphrey, Sally. *A Family in Liberia. Families the World Over Series*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications, 1987.

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Nimley, Anthony J. *Government and Politics in Liberia*. 2 vols. Nashville, TN: Academic Publishers International, 1991.

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LIBYA

Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Major Cities:

Tripoli, Benghazi, Misratah

Other Cities:

Darnah, Ghadamis, Marsa-el Brega, Tobruk

INTRODUCTION

The north African nation of **LIBYA** was created from the former Turkish and Italian colonial provinces of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan. Libya was a poor nation until the discovery of oil in the late 1950s brought new wealth and prosperity. Since the ascension to power of Col. Muammar Qadhafi in 1969, Libya has adopted a foreign policy that stresses a strong commitment to Arab unity, a willingness to use oil as a political weapon, and warfare with Israel. Moreover, the Libyans have been accused of sponsoring and offering training facilities for international terrorist groups. Because of its radical policies, Libya has been labeled a renegade nation and treated as an outcast by most of the world community.

MAJOR CITIES

Tripoli

Tripoli is Libya's capital, largest city, and primary seaport. Situated in an oasis between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sahara Desert, Tripoli is a clean city divided into old and new quarters. The old city consists of narrow streets with

small houses of Turkish-Arab design. Wide avenues lined with modern multi-story apartments, villas, and office buildings characterize conditions in the new city. The center of the town consists of a large square, Maidan Ashukada, from which Tripoli's main thoroughfares fan out in all directions. In the last few decades, Tripoli has grown from a sleepy Arab town into a major urban metropolis. In 2000, Tripoli had an estimated population of 2.4 million.

Because Tripoli is located in an oasis, agriculture is possible. Olives, citrus fruit, tobacco, vegetables, and grains are grown near Tripoli. The city is also home to several industries, among them a tanning factory, oil depot, and a gas-bottling plant. Tripoli has an international airport and is linked by road to the Libyan city of Benghazi and Cairo in Egypt.

Education

The Martyrs School (formerly Oil Companies School) is located three miles west of Tripoli. The school was originally designed to meet the educational needs of the major oil companies in Tripoli. However, in recent years, the school has been opened to expatriates not affiliated with the oil industry. The school was founded in 1958 and offers an American-style, coeducational education from pre-kindergarten to tenth grade.

Arabic and French are taught as foreign languages.

Situated on a five-acre campus, the Martyrs School consists of 11 buildings, 47 classrooms, a 14,000 volume library, 2 science labs, a computer lab, auditorium, infirmary, gymnasium, and tennis courts. Students are grouped according to their abilities, with an accelerated study program available for gifted students. The school year lasts from September to June.

In addition to its traditional curriculum, the Martyrs School offers an extracurricular program that includes gymnastics, computers, yearbook, school newspaper, field trips, drama, student council, soccer, tennis, floor hockey, basketball, softball, volleyball, and numerous social clubs. The school's mailing address is P.O. Box 860, Tripoli, S.P.L.A.J. (Libya).

Entertainment

Viewing popular dances and shopping for traditional handicrafts are among the entertainment opportunities available in Tripoli. The National Folklore Group and the Libyan Arab Folklore Group often perform traditional dances in Tripoli. Tripoli is the home of the Islamic Artistic and Professional School, where artisans learn and perfect their craft. The school's loca-



City square in central Tripoli, Libya

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

tion in Tripoli ensures that visitors have ample opportunities to view and purchase handmade carpets, pottery and ceramics, textiles, metal and leather handicrafts, and products fashioned from palm tree fibers.

Recreation

Tripoli has several mosques, museums, and monuments that are often toured by visitors. The Karamanli Mosque (also known as Jama' Ahmed Pasha) is situated in the old quarter of Tripoli. It exhibits a Moorish-style architecture with a line of columns supporting arches, and a roof of domes from which springs a minaret commanding a view of Tripoli. The entrances to the mosque are carved with Arabic inscriptions which praise the mosque's founder, Ahmed Pasha Karamanli. The interior walls of the mosque are covered with blue, green, and yellow Arabic tiles arranged in geometric designs. Scripture writings also adorn the walls. Members of the Karamanli

family are buried in the mosque's courtyard.

The Gurgi Mosque is considered one of the most beautiful buildings in Tripoli. Built in 1833 by a Tripoli merchant, the mosque is situated on a hill overlooking the old city. The mosque has two balconies and one of the highest minarets in Tripoli, which offers spectacular views of the city. The Mosque of the An-Naga is one of the oldest in Tripoli. Destroyed by fire in 1510, it was rebuilt in 1611. Although the building is simple and without adornments, it is worth visiting.

Tripoli has several interesting monuments, among them the Arch of Marcus Aurelius. Erected in 164 A.D., this monument has been used for various purposes throughout history. Its ornaments and inscriptions are beautiful and well-preserved. The most outstanding monument in Tripoli is the Castle. It has witnessed all the historical events of Tripoli during the last five

hundred years. Heavily damaged during a Turkish invasion in 1551, the Turks captured and rebuilt it. For centuries, the Castle served as the seat of Turkish colonial government. In the 18th century, the building served as the residence and seat of government of the ruling Karamanli family. Several previously unknown areas of the Castle were unearthed in recent years during an excavation. Beautiful gardens, courtyards, and marble fountains make the Castle a favorite stop for visitors. The Castle currently houses the Museums of Ethnography and Natural History.

The Libyan Museum of Natural History provides visitors with a picture of the country's natural history resources. Three halls contain the bird collection, with sea and wading birds displayed in their natural habitats. The Sea Life Hall offers excellent examples of the sponges and coral found off Libya's Mediterranean coast. A Reptile and Amphibian Hall contains examples

of turtles, lizards, and snakes indigenous to Libya. An impressive relief map illustrating the geological structure of the country is located in the Geology Hall. Visitors are also welcome at the Archaeological Museum. This museum contains a wide collection of antiquities from ancient times to the present day. It is divided into various sections, according to the ages of antiquity. Among the noteworthy exhibits are a collection of tomb plates dating from the 9th and 10th centuries.

Benghazi

Libya's second largest city, Benghazi, is located on the northeastern coast. Benghazi is built near the site of the ancient city of Hesperides, which was founded by the Greeks around 500 B.C. In 247 B.C., the city was inhabited by the Egyptians and renamed Berenice in honor of Pharaoh Ptolemy III. Around the 3rd century A.D., the Vandals destroyed the city. Benghazi was rebuilt but remained a small town until it was extensively developed by the Italians. During World War II, the city sustained heavy damage after a series of battles were fought for control of Benghazi. The city was finally captured and controlled by the British in late 1942.

Today, Benghazi is a bustling administrative, commercial, and educational center of 1.5 million people (2000 estimate). Like Tripoli, the city consists of two distinct districts. The old city is comprised of clusters of small homes divided by narrow, winding streets. In contrast, new parts of the city offer modern buildings, wide thoroughfares, and public gardens. Benghazi is home to several government ministries. The city's major industries are salt processing, food processing, tanning, brewing, and oil refining. Among Benghazi's major educational centers are the Ghar Younis University and the Benghazi Institute, which serves as a major training center for technicians working in the medical field. Transportation to Benghazi is possible via Benina International Airport, located 20 miles (32 kilometers) east of the



View of Benghazi, Libya

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

city, or by a modern highway system linking Benghazi with other cities along the Libyan coast.

Recreation

Recreational activities in Benghazi are somewhat limited. Many visitors enjoy the city's beautiful bathing beaches, especially those in the Guliana section of Benghazi. Shopping is also possible on Omar Mukhtar Street, the city's main shopping district, or at Suk ad Dalam, a picturesque oriental gallery-market. Handmade wool carpets with beautiful mosaic designs are a popular item among shoppers. Visitors often tour the Roman Catholic cathedral, one of Benghazi's most impressive buildings.

Misratah

Located in northwestern Libya, Misratah (Misurata) is a bustling commercial and administrative center. Like Tripoli and Benghazi, Misratah has two distinct sections. Old Misratah consists of small houses and narrow, arched streets while new areas of the city exhibit modern buildings, tree-lined avenues, and public gardens. Misratah is home to several industries, among them are textiles, hardware, oil refineries, and steel works. A new steel plant was opened in the city in 1990. Due

to irrigation, dates, citrus fruits, wheat, and barley are grown near Misratah. A coastal highway links Misratah with Libya's other major cities and Misratah Airport is an important hub for domestic flights. Misratah is served by modern hospitals, colleges, and teaching institutes. The city has an estimated population of 300,000.

OTHER CITIES

The city of **DARNAH** (also spelled **DERNA**) is located east of Benghazi. Founded in the 15th century on the site of an ancient Greek colony, Darnah today is a modern city of whitewashed homes and palm gardens. It has a small manufacturing base with a garment factory serving as an important employer. Several varieties of fruits and vegetables are grown in oases located near the city. These products are exported through Darnah's small port, which is in the process of being reconstructed. The city is a popular winter resort with an estimated population of 37,000.

GHADAMIS is a city situated in northwestern Libya near the Algerian and Tunisian borders. The city, with its covered streets and whitewashed houses, is in an oasis sur-

rounded by a large wall. Within these walls, various ethnic groups are represented. Fruits, vegetables, grains, and dates are grown in Ghadamis and are an important source of income. The city, known for the warm hospitality of its people, is often visited by tourists. Visitors flock to the city's *souk* or market to buy local products and a comfortable hotel provides tourists with pleasant accommodations. Ghadamis is accessible by air, through organized excursions, or by a paved road.

The small city of **MARSA-EL BREGA** is the site of Libya's first oil pipeline, which opened in 1961. A refinery and natural-gas liquification plant are also located here. Marsa el-Brega is Libya's major petrochemical center. In 1977, an ammonia-processing plant was opened in the city.

TOBRUK is a very important city because it is Libya's only natural harbor and port. Tobruk was occupied by the Italians during the early twentieth century, where they created a powerful military and air base. During World War II, the city was the scene of several major battles and was virtually destroyed. Tobruk was rebuilt after the war and became the site of a major oil terminal, Marsa el-Hariga. This terminal is linked by pipeline with a large oil field 320 miles (515 kilometers) south of Tobruk. The city's population is estimated at 34,200.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Libya is a large country situated on the Mediterranean coast of North Africa. It occupies an area of approximately 679,359 square miles, slightly larger than Alaska. Libya is bordered on the north by the Mediterranean Sea, on the south by Chad and Niger, on the east by Egypt and Sudan, and on

the west by Algeria and Tunisia. Approximately 92 percent of the country consists of barren desert. The narrow strip of land along Libya's Mediterranean coast is more fertile, however. The coastal region has a temperate climate, with mild winters and hot, dry summers. Almost all of Libya's major cities are located along the Mediterranean seacoast.

Because there are no rivers and rainfall is very scarce, Libya suffers from severe water shortages. In an attempt to alleviate this problem, the Libyan government has embarked on a massive irrigation project. This project, called the "Great Man-made River", involves the construction of a series of pipelines that will carry water from huge underground wells in southern Libya to major coastal cities. When completed, it is designed to irrigate approximately 185,000 acres of land and would be the largest irrigation system in the world. The project was started in 1984 and is scheduled to be completed in several years.

Population

The estimated population of Libya is over five million. Approximately 97 percent of the population are Berbers and Arabs. Small minorities of Greeks, Italians, Egyptians, Turks, Maltese, Tunisians, Indians and Pakistanis also live in Libya. Two-thirds of the population live in coastal regions with half of these residing in the city of Tripoli.

A vast majority of Libyans speak Arabic. However, Italian, French, Berber and English are also spoken.

Islam is the official religion of Libya. Roughly 97 percent of the population are Sunni Muslims. The Coptic Orthodox, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches are also represented. The Libyan constitution guarantees the freedom of religion.

History

Throughout its history, Libya has been conquered and settled by various foreign powers. Phoenician sailors visited Libya around 1000 B.C. to trade with native African peoples. They eventually established permanent trading centers, Carthage and Tripoli, on the western coast of Libya. By 517 B.C., Carthage had become a large, prosperous city. This prosperity continued for several centuries until the Phoenicians fought a series of wars with the Romans. The Romans eventually invaded and destroyed Carthage and conquered Libya's western coast.

The eastern coast of Libya was colonized by the ancient Greeks. They founded the city of Cyrene around 630 B.C. and, over time, it became a powerful and wealthy city. In 323 B.C., Cyrene and all of eastern Libya was conquered by the Ptolemies. The Ptolemies, an Egyptian tribe, governed eastern Libya until 96 B.C. In that year Apion, the last Ptolemaic ruler, surrendered control of eastern Libya to the Romans.

Libya enjoyed several centuries of prosperity under Roman rule. By the middle of the fourth century A.D., however, the Roman Empire was rapidly deteriorating. Libya again became a tempting target for foreign invaders. In 431 A.D., a Germanic tribe known as the Vandals invaded Libya and drove out the Romans. The Vandals controlled Libya until 642 A.D., when Arab armies overran the country. The Arab conquest had profound and lasting effects on Libya. Libyans embraced the Arab's culture and Muslim faith. From 642 A.D. to 1517, the Arabs maintained control of Libya.

In 1517, Libya entered a new period of turmoil. The Ottoman Turks invaded Libya, defeated the Arabs, and seized control of the country. The Turks ruled Libya until 1911, and the entire period was marked by oppression, corruption, and bloody revolts. On September 29, 1911, Italy declared war on Turkey

after a series of disputes between the two countries. Italy attacked and invaded Libya. After a brief but bloody war, the Turks surrendered and withdrew from Libya in 1912.

Beginning in the early 1920's, Italy embarked on several programs to develop Libya. The Italian government encouraged many of its citizens to emigrate to Libya and establish permanent settlements. They enlarged and modernized Libya's coastal cities, planted trees, dug wells, and created an extensive roadway system. In 1939, Italy formally incorporated Libya as its colony.

During World War II, Libya was the scene of several battles between Britain and a combined force of Italian and German troops. In early 1943, the Italians and Germans were defeated and driven from Libya. The country was divided into three occupation zones. Britain controlled the western and eastern provinces of Libya. The French were allowed to administer Libya's southern provinces. Following the completion of World War II, Italy signed a peace treaty in which it relinquished all claims to Libya.

In 1949, the United Nations passed a resolution stating that Libya should become an independent nation. After a series of lengthy negotiations, the Kingdom of Libya was declared on December 24, 1951. King Idris I, a man who led Libyan resistance to Italian occupation, was selected as the new leader. In 1959, significant oil deposits were discovered. Libya began exporting oil in 1961. The discovery of oil was a significant event in Libyan history. Money from petroleum sales helped to bring economic prosperity to what had been one of the world's poorest nations.

On September 1, 1969, King Idris was overthrown by a group of military officers. This group, led by Col. Muammar Qadhafi, established the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). The RCC banned the monarchy and ordered all Italian citizens in Libya to leave the country. The

government ordered all foreign-run libraries and cultural centers to close, citing that they promoted anti-Islamic ideals.

During the 1970's, Col. Qadhafi's government pursued a radical foreign policy that promoted violent revolution. Libya provided weapons to revolutionary groups in neighboring Egypt and Sudan and supported terrorist organizations throughout the world. In July 1977, Libya and Egypt fought a short land and air war along their common border. Libya's southern neighbor, Chad, was invaded by Libyan forces in 1979. The Libyans seized the Aouzou Strip, an area of mineral-rich land that both countries claimed as their own. Libyan troops eventually withdrew from Chad in November 1981, but returned a few years later. They were finally driven out by Chadian troops in 1987.

Relations between Col. Qadhafi and the United States government are extremely tense and hostile. The United States has repeatedly accused Libya of masterminding international terrorist attacks, a charge the Libyans have vigorously denied. In 1981, Libya and the United States broke diplomatic relations. On August 2nd of that year, two Libyan jets were shot down over the Gulf of Sidra by U.S. Navy planes. The U.S. Navy was conducting exercises in the Gulf of Sidra which Libya has claimed as its territory.

In early 1986, the United States ordered all Americans living in Libya to leave the country and imposed economic sanctions. In April 1986, the U.S. accused Libya of supporting a series of worldwide terrorist bombings. American warplanes attacked several terrorist-related targets in Tripoli and Benghazi.

Qadhafi did not support Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Instead, Libya joined other Arab nations in an attempt to resolve the conflict peacefully.

In 1993 the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on Libya following Qadhafi's refusal to surrender two men suspected of involvement in the 1988 terrorist bombing of a Pan American passenger jet over Lockerbie, Scotland. UN sanctions were suspended in 1999, but U.S. sanctions remain in place.

Government

From 1969 to 1977, Libya was governed by the Revolutionary Command Council under the leadership of Col. Qadhafi. In March 1977, the Revolutionary Command Council disbanded. Before doing this, they instituted a new form of government known as the "Jamahiriya" (state of the masses) and changed the country's official name to the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

The Jamahiriya is designed so that every adult citizen can help shape government policy. Citizens submit suggestions and ideas to the Basic People's Congress of which there are some 2,000 throughout Libya. All provincial and urban affairs are handled by Municipal People's Congresses. Members of these two Congresses appoint Popular Committees to execute policy. Officials of these congresses and committees form the General People's Congress.

The General People's Congress is the highest policy-making body in Libya. It meets each year for one week. The General People's Congress appoints its own General Secretariat and the General People's Committee, whose members head 13 government departments which implement national and international policy.

Although the General People's Congress exercises great political power, Col. Qadhafi still has supreme authority. He holds the honorary title "Leader of the Revolution" and heavily influences all government decisions.

The flag of Libya is solid green. Green is the traditional color of Islam.

Arts, Science, Education

The Libyan government requires all children between the ages of six and fifteen to attend school. Primary education begins at age six and lasts for six years. At twelve years of age, a student enters secondary education. Secondary education lasts for six years and is comprised of two cycles of three years each.

The University of Libya opened in Benghazi in 1958. In 1973, the university was divided into two separate schools. One is Al-Fatah University and is located in Tripoli. The other university is Ghar Younis University in Benghazi. A third university, the University of Technology, is located in the town of Marsa-el Brega.

In 1995, an estimated 76 percent of Libyans age 15 and over could read and write.

Commerce and Industry

Only five percent of Libya's land area is suitable for farming. Most fertile land is located along Libya's northern coast, especially around the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi.

Although most of Libya's land consists of barren desert, there are several oases that have fertile soil. The most important oases are Ghadames, Ghat, Socna, Sebha, and Brak. Libya's main crops are barley, dates, wheat, oats, almonds, tomatoes, potatoes, olives and citrus fruits. The country used to have adequate supplies of fruits, vegetables and dairy products to feed its population, but now Libya must import about 75 percent of its food. Approximately 17 percent of Libya's work force is involved in agriculture.

Libya's most important industry is crude oil production, which accounts for 25 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product and nearly all the country's export earnings. Libya is the second largest oil producer in Africa after Nigeria. Primary oil refineries are located in the cities of Misratah, Ras Lanuf, Brega, and Zawia.

Libya has many rich mineral deposits, especially iron ore, magnesium, sulphur, potassium and gypsum. Many of these deposits remain untapped, however, because mining costs are extremely high.

Since coming to power in 1969, Col. Qadhafi has tried to develop Libya's industrial base. Nearly 30 percent of the country's work force is involved in non-oil related industries. These industries include the manufacturing of building materials, textiles and footwear, and food processing. The continued growth of Libyan industries was hampered by the steady decline in world oil prices. With less oil revenue coming into the country, many new industrial projects were delayed or cancelled. However, oil prices rose again in 1999 and 2000, stimulating the economy.

Nearly all of Libya's exports consist of crude oil or refined petroleum products. Other exports include peanuts, olive oil, and hides. Most Libyan exports are purchased by Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Belgium, Turkey and Romania.

Libya's primary imports include machinery, transport equipment, manufactured goods, foodstuffs and chemicals. Italy, Germany, France, Great Britain, Japan and South Korea provide the bulk of Libyan imports.

The unit of currency is the *Libyan dinar*.

Transportation

All major cities, towns, and desert oases in Libya are accessible by car. The most important road in Libya extends across northern Libya

between the borders of Tunisia and Egypt. It passes through the major cities of Tripoli and Benghazi and provides excellent access to the towns of Sebha, Ghat, Ajdabiyah and Kufra. Other roads link Libya's cities to the country's borders with Algeria, Chad and Niger.

It is possible to obtain bus services between Libya's major cities. Local buses also operate in Tripoli and Benghazi. However, buses in Libya are often crowded and unreliable.

Libya's national airline is the Jamahiriya Libyan Arab Airlines. Domestic flights are available between Libya's main cities. The cities of Benghazi and Tripoli are linked by Libyan Arab Airlines and other international airlines to Athens, Rome, Madrid, Malta, Moscow, Paris, Amsterdam and Frankfurt. Libya's main airport is Tripoli International Airport, located 21 miles southwest of Tripoli at Ben Gashir. Travelers to eastern Libya are serviced by Benina Airport near Benghazi.

Because of its location on the Mediterranean Sea, Libya has several excellent deep-water ports. These ports are located at Benghazi, Tripoli, Marsa-el Brega and Misratah.

To date, no commercial railway system is available in Libya.

Communications

Libya's main radio station is the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya Broadcasting Corporation. Arabic and English programs are broadcast daily from stations in Tripoli and Benghazi.

In December 1968, a national television service was created. The majority of programs are broadcast in Arabic, although some English, French, and Italian-language programs are shown periodically.

Newspapers and magazines are published by the Jamahiriya News Agency (JANA). The main newspapers are *Arraid* and *El Balaq*.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passports and visas are required. On December 11, 1981, U.S. passports ceased to be valid for travel to, in or through Libya and may not be used for that purpose without a special validation. Passport validation requests for Libya can be forwarded in writing to the following address:

Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Passport Services
U.S. Department of State
1111 19th St., NW, Suite 260
Washington, DC 20522-1705
Attn.: Office of Passport Policy
and Advisory Services
Telephone: (202) 955-0231 or
955-0232
Fax: (202) 955-0230

Without the requisite validation, use of a U.S. passport for travel to, in or through Libya may constitute a violation of 18 U.S.C. 1544, and may be punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment.

Persons contemplating travel to Libya should be aware that there is no U.S. mission in Libya and that our interests are being protected and represented by the government of Belgium. This protecting power can provide only limited emergency services, and the normal protection of U.S. diplomatic and consular representatives cannot be provided to Americans traveling in Libya.

On January 7, 1986, the United States imposed economic sanctions against Libya which broadly prohibit U.S. persons from engaging in unauthorized financial transactions involving Libya, including, in part, the following: the exportation to Libya of all goods, services, or technology; the importation of goods or services of Libyan origin; engaging in the performance of a contract in support of an industrial, commer-

cial, or governmental project in Libya; or dealing in any property in which the Government of Libya has any interest. The economic sanctions, in part, prohibit U.S. persons from working in Libya.

These restrictions also prohibit U.S. persons from engaging in unauthorized travel-related transactions to and within Libya. Please note, however, that transactions relating to travel for journalistic activity by persons regularly employed in such capacity by a news gathering organization is exempt from the prohibition. Please note as well that U.S. persons may engage in travel-related transactions for the sole purpose of visiting immediate family members in Libya, provided that the U.S. persons seeking to travel register with the Office of Foreign Assets Control or the Embassy of Belgium in Tripoli.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| March 3 | Declaration of Authority's Power |
| March 28 | Evacuation Day (British) |
| June 11 | National Day |
| July 23 | Egyptian Revolution Day |
| September 1 | Revolution Day |
| October 7 | Evacuation Day (Italian) |
| | Id al-Adah* |
| | Hijra New Year* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |

*variable, based on the Islamic calendar

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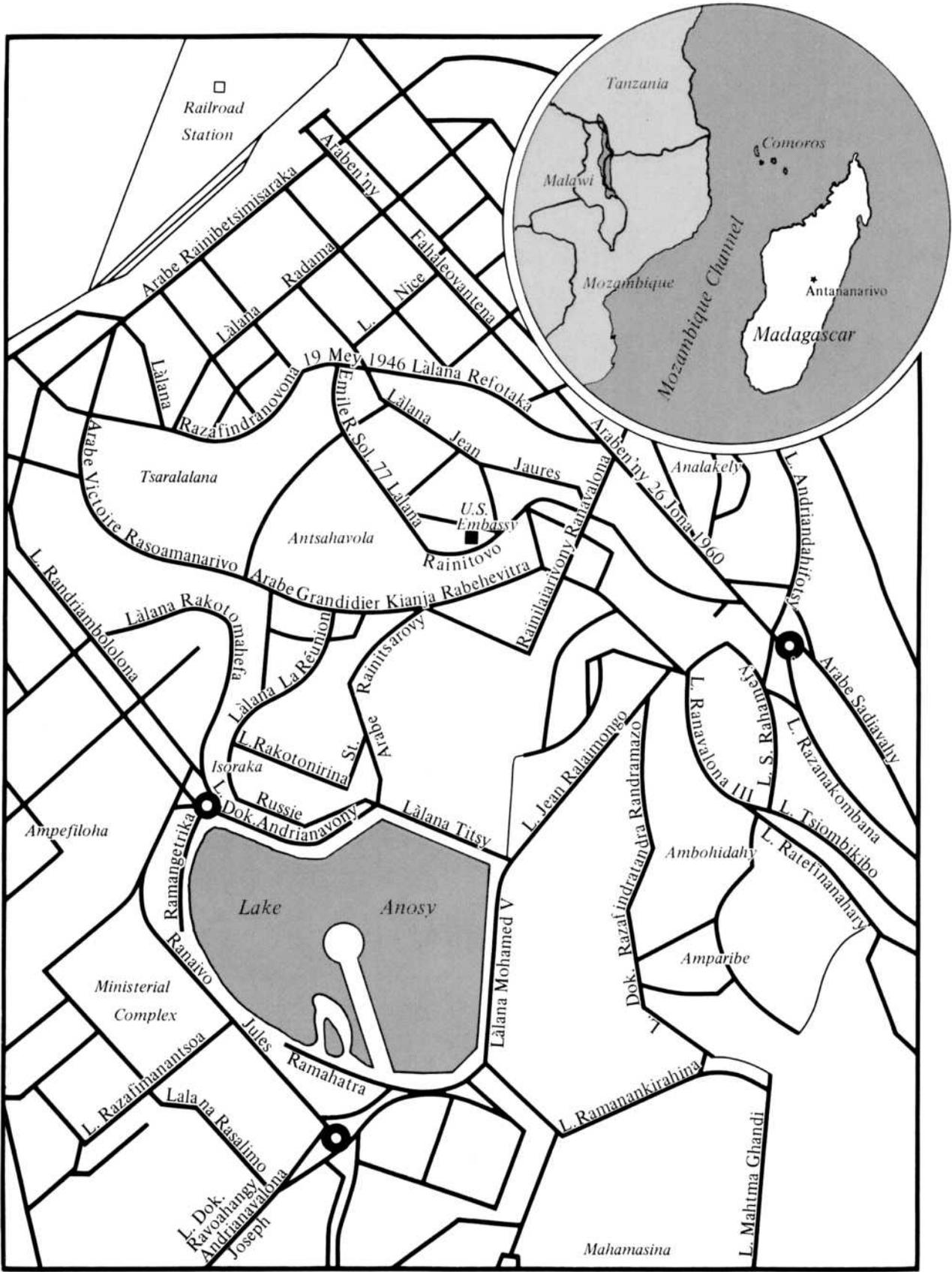
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Antananarivo, Madagascar

MADAGASCAR

Democratic Republic of Madagascar

Major City:

Antananarivo

Other Cities:

Antsirabé, Antsiranana, Fiananrantsoa, Mahajanga, Mananjary, Taolanaro, Toamasina, Toliary

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated March 1992. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Madagascar is a fascinating island. The people, whose origins are a combination of Malay-Polynesian, African, and Middle Eastern, have developed their own culture and traditions that reflect that diversity as well as some unifying aspects, including a common Malagasy language.

Madagascar's long history as an isolated area has contributed to the development of a Malagasy psychology. Although politically associated with the African states, Madagascar is not African; it is not Asian; and in spite of more than 50 years of French colonization, it is not European.

It is thought that the island, as part of Gondwanaland, may have broken from the African Continent some 100 million years ago. Its isolation has led to the development of flora and fauna not found anywhere else in the world, making Madagascar a naturalist's dream.

Antananarivo, the picturesque capital of Madagascar, has proven to be a very special assignment for many Americans, although not an easy one. Americans must be resourceful to adjust to the isolated environment, the language and cultural barriers, and the difficulties of life in a developing country whose economy is severely strained. But the pleasant climate, the abundant fresh food, the flowers, the friendly and unique people, and the uniqueness of all aspects of Malagasy life make a visit here a fondly remembered experience.

The name of the country is the Democratic Republic of Madagascar. The word "Malagasy" is used as a noun only when referring to the people of Madagascar or the language they speak; e.g., the Malagasy speak Malagasy. All other uses of the word "Malagasy" are as adjectives; e.g., "The Malagasy community."

MAJOR CITY

Antananarivo

Antananarivo is the capital city and principal population center (about 2,000,000) of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar.

Centered geographically in Madagascar's central highlands, it has successively been a tribal, monarchical, colonial, and national capital since 1794. Known as Tananarive during the period of French colonization, the city's name was restored to its Malagasy spelling in 1975. For those who know it well, the city is fondly referred to as Tana.

European and traditional Malagasy elements mingle intimately in the streets. On a relief map, the city looks roughly like an enormous letter Y made up of steep, granite hills. Between these hills is the lower town (central district) with its European architecture and wide avenues. The heights are reached by webs of narrow streets or steep stairways and feature balconied, brick buildings clinging precariously to the steep slopes. Rice fields, marshes, lakes, and growing suburbs flood the vast and fertile plains surrounding the city.



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Downtown street scene in Antananarivo, Madagascar

Madagascar achieved independence from the French in 1960. Since that time, many of the buildings (in fact, much of the infrastructure) has not been changed or improved. Although new roads have been built, the majority of the old ones have not been repaired or upgraded. Since the capital's population has burgeoned, many of those who work and live on the streets lack housing. Public facilities are inadequate; walk gingerly, especially women climbing the many staircases.

Food

Madagascar is almost exclusively an agricultural country. Antananarivo abounds with fresh, locally grown vegetables including potatoes, lettuce, cabbage, onions, cucumbers, cauliflower, beets, beans, carrots, avocados, and tomatoes. Madagascar's varied climate permits the growing of tropical fruits including papaya, mangoes, lychees, guava, and passion fruit, as

well as temperate climate fruits such as apples, peaches, plums, and strawberries. Most fresh produce is seasonal and may not be available year round.

Beef is plentiful, but leaner than American prime. Fresh pork, chicken, duck, lamb, and veal are available. The quality is not uniform. Fresh fish, lobster, carp, oysters, and shrimp are available in the early morning at the downtown fish market.

Luncheon meat, sausage, ham, and bacon are available at a high price, but are not necessarily to American taste. Live turkeys can be bought, but require a great deal of fattening before they resemble the North American version.

Imported processed food, mainly from France, can be found on the local market. Also available are locally processed products including

meat, vegetables, pineapple and passion fruit juice, flour, sugar, and spices. Three main supermarkets offer a varying supply of goods. Three or four varieties of cheese are made in Madagascar. Bread, long-life milk, pasteurized milk, and eggs are available. Canned beer, juice, candy bars, and chocolate from South Africa are sold in supermarkets. The local wine is quite good but varies considerably in quality and taste. There are about six varieties of Malagasy wine. French wine can be found on the market but is expensive (about \$10 a bottle). Good quality beer, soft drinks, and soda and tonic water are bottled locally, but are not always available. Local liquor prices are high.

To obtain the best value for your dollar, experienced members of the community suggest shipping or ordering from mail-order houses the following foods and supplies: syrup; molasses; nuts; raisins; spices; bak-

ing powder and bicarbonate of soda; canned ham; tuna; canned bacon; shortening; cake mixes; peanut butter; flour; pasta products; powdered milk. cranberry sauce; olives; hors d'oeuvre needs such as crackers, toothpicks, and nuts; bartending supplies such as maraschino cherries, cocktail onions, bitters, and drink mixes; all paper products such as toilet paper, facial tissues, napkins, and paper towels; aluminium foil and plastic wrap; insecticides; American-style mustard and catsup; instant coffee; cleaning supplies such as soaps, silver polish, and sponges. Bring preferred brands of all personal needs such as razor blades, shampoos, deodorants, toothpaste, sanitary napkins, and tampons.

Clothing

Cotton and other washable materials are suitable for summer clothing. A lightweight raincoat and umbrella are needed during the rainy season. Since homes in Antananarivo do not have central heating and are quite drafty, bring wool sweaters, long pants, and warm socks to ensure indoor warmth, and medium-weight jackets for outdoor wear. Fur coats are not worn. Evening wear is not formal in Antanananvo, and weekend clothing is casual.

Ready made blouses, skirts, and dresses are available, both in stores and in the marketplace. Prices are quite reasonable in the marketplace, where you always bargain. Tailors and dressmakers can make anything and good imported material can be found in the market. You can also order clothes by mail-order through the pouch. The rough cobblestone streets are hard on shoes, so bring a generous supply, particularly if you or your dependents cannot wear European-sized shoes.

Men: Wool suits are appropriate for winter; a sweater can be added when necessary. A dark suit is appropriate for evening occasions. If you have a dinner jacket, bring it for the occasional gala event. Formal wear cannot be rented; tails are never worn.

Women: Sweaters, skirts, or warm dresses with closed shoes are worn in winter. Evening wear varies and includes suits, tailored dresses, dinner dresses of rich fabrics, and long or short skirts. Long dresses are usually worn at the occasional dinner dance. Hats and gloves are rarely seen. Shorts are not worn in town during summer, but slacks are fine.

Children: Children's wear is much the same as in the U.S., but short pants are popular for boys. Remember to bring warm pajamas, bathrobes, and slippers for winter evenings.

Supplies and Services

The rule of thumb on personal and household products is to bring what you know, trust, like, and would miss if you lacked it! Bring a supply of toiletries; when available, the few products found in stores are expensive. Insect repellent is useful and recommended, especially around coastal areas. Bring stationery supplies, gift wrapping paper, ribbon, glue, tape, greeting cards, playing cards, shelf paper, nails, clothespins, small hardware items, kitchen utensils, flashlight batteries, coat hangers, car-care needs, household linens, gardening supplies, picnic equipment, and home repair tools. Local floor wax, scouring powder, and other cleaning supplies are available, but not of the highest quality. Cleaning products imported from France are expensive. To avoid the problems of dry cleaning, bring spot remover.

Bring a good supply of over-the-counter medications and prescription medicines, as they are difficult to obtain here.

Infant furniture, baby bottles, and other supplies are expensive and of poor quality; most families import these items. Toys are expensive, and you may want to order items from the U.S. well in advance of Christmas and birthdays.

Most laundry is done in the home by servants. Dry cleaning is of marginal quality, expensive, and unreli-

able. Barbershop services are satisfactory; beauty shops may not always have hair-coloring products, so it's best to bring your own supply.

Repair services are scarce to nonexistent. Spare parts are usually not available and must be ordered from the U.S. or South Africa. Tailors and dressmakers are available at reasonable prices, but bring a supply of material and notions. Shoe repair is available but of poor quality and workmanship. Reupholstering of furniture is quite good if you provide the fabric. Local products are of poor quality. Imported items are expensive.

Religious Activities

The Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Congregational, Baptist, Seventh-Day Adventist, and Greek Orthodox denominations are represented in Antananarivo. Most services are in the Malagasy language. There are also several mosques. French language services are available at three Catholic parishes and at the International Protestant parish of Andohalo. The Anglican Cathedral has monthly communion and a monthly vesper service in English. American missionaries (Baptist, Lutheran, Roman Catholic) are available for counseling.

Domestic Help

While it is not a necessity, it is helpful to hire domestics. Some families employ two domestics: someone to do the cooking and grocery shopping and a second person to do the housework, washing, and ironing.

Domestics usually work a 5½-day workweek and get 30 days paid vacation after being with an employer one year. It is customary to give a bonus at Christmas and/or presents. Salaries are usually less than \$100 per month, and employers provide lunch, bus fare, and uniforms. Some servants will live in, but most do not because of the importance of family life in the Malagasy culture. All servants must be covered by work-accident insurance and social security. Annual physical examinations, including x-rays and

tuberculosis testing, are recommended for all servants.

Extra help for cocktail or dinner parties can usually be arranged without difficulty.

Education

Madagascar's school system, formerly based on the French system, is Malagasized, and would not be useful to American children.

The American School of Antananarivo was founded in 1969 as an independent coeducational school. It offers an American education from Kindergarten through grade 9. Music, art, French, and physical education are offered to all students. The grade school program is recognized and supported by the Office of Overseas Schools of the Department of State.

The academic year, which is divided into four quarters, is from early September through mid-June. The school day runs from 8:00 am to 2:30 pm. Children do not go home for lunch, but bring a snack and pack a lunch for school. Uniforms are not worn. Children wear the same clothes as they would in the U.S. All books and school supplies are provided by the school. Transportation is the responsibility of the family.

The school is located in the suburb of Ivandry, four miles away from Antananarivo. It has seven classrooms, a library/computer center/video center, an assembly/activities room, a large playground, and a playing field. The American School is accredited through the Middle State Association.

Several private primary and secondary schools are available with French instruction; some are Catholic supervised and provide Catholic religious instruction. Non-religious schools include the Ecoles Primaires Francaises for grades 1 to 5, and the French Government Lycee for older children.

It may be difficult for older children not fluent in French to transfer into the French system, and it takes

time to learn the intricacies of French grammar and mathematics. Tutoring is available for about \$8 an hour. American children find the French system more rigid, with more homework and less emphasis on sports and extracurricular activities.

Some parents send their older children to school in the U.S. or to boarding schools in other countries. Others employ a correspondence school system and teach their children at home.

Special Educational Opportunities

The Alliance Francaise offers a French language instruction program. Malagasy language instruction is also available. Lessons in music and ballet can be arranged. Swimming, tennis, horseback riding, and golf lessons are also available through one of the private sports clubs.

Sports

Most sports facilities are available only through membership in a private club. A Golf Club, about 15 miles from the city, has a good 18-hole course and a competent instructor who speaks English. Lunch and dinner are served in the clubhouse, and one large swimming pool is used from September to May.

The Association Culturelle et Sportive d'Ambohidahy (ACSA) in the city's center is a popular spot for lunch. The club offers tennis, squash, swimming, billiards, and bridge.

Club Olympique, about 5 miles from the city, offers good tennis courts, swimming, and excellent horseback riding instruction (in French).

The Hilton Hotel has a swimming pool with a nominal entrance fee.

Coastal waters of Madagascar offer snorkeling and scuba diving opportunities, but care must be taken to avoid sharks. The waters near Nosy-Be and Toliara (formerly Tulear) are considered safe. However, an airplane is required to get

to the island of Nosy-Be. If you decide to drive to Toliara instead of flying, a four-wheel-drive vehicle is needed.

Registration and licenses for firearms and hunting are relatively simple formalities. Madagascar offers a variety of game, including duck, guinea fowl, partridge, quail, and pheasant. Wild boar and crocodile are hunted in remote places with rifle and shotgun.

Fishing is a common pastime in and around Antananarivo. Black bass and tilapia (a small, perch-like fish) are the usual catches, as is trout.

A number of interesting camping, hiking and picnic spots in the immediate area of Antananarivo are made more inviting by the lack of poisonous snakes and dangerous animals.

Bring all sporting equipment with you since it is scarce and extremely expensive here. Whites are generally worn on tennis courts, and are required at some clubs.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The variety of climate, scenery, and vegetation found on Madagascar is fascinating and a constant challenge to photographers and nature lovers in search of orchids, animals, minerals, or scenery that is not found anywhere else on earth. Some treks require a four-wheel-drive vehicle, but a number of interesting spots can be seen within the 120-mile radius of paved highways near Antananarivo, or along the 350-mile hard surfaced road from the capital to Fianarantsoa.

A breathtaking but arduous 4-day trip can be made during the dry season to Toliara and Taolanaro (formerly Fort Dauphin) in the south. Both cities have beautiful beaches and shark-free swimming. Cottages may sometimes be rented from American missionaries in Taolanaro; adequate hotels are also available.



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Zoma market scene in Antananarivo, Madagascar

The coastal city of Toamainsa (formerly Tamatave) is now a 6-hour drive from Antananarivo on a Chinese-built highway. Other cities—Antseranana (formerly Diego Suarez) and Majunga—offer a change in altitude, climate, vegetation, and pace from the activities of Antananarivo.

Nosy-Be, a beautiful island to the north-west of Madagascar, has good vacation facilities.

Mauritius, Nairobi, Reunion, and the Seychelles are the nearest vacation spots off the island and are serviced by Air Madagascar, Air France, and Air Mauritius. Mauri-

tius and Reunion are served by Aix Madagascar and Air France.

Entertainment

Among the restaurants in Antananarivo, one can choose Malagasy, French, Vietnamese, Chinese, Indian, and Italian food.

Several nightclubs are in and around Antananarivo; several casinos are also available.

Soccer matches are played at the large stadium in Antananarivo on Saturday and Sunday afternoons during winter. Horse racing also takes place at the stadium on Sundays.

Dinner and a video show is a popular form of entertainment among the Americans.

The city has a small zoo featuring lemurs, birds, crocodiles, and tortoises indigenous to Madagascar, and a small anthropology museum is located within the zoo's perimeters. The Queen's Palace is now under renovation after a fire in November 1995.

The quality of the light, the hazeless skies, and wealth of subject matter make Antananarivo a delight to the photographer. Bring a good supply of all photographic needs. Film can be processed here; however, there are times when the paper and chemicals needed for developing film are not available. Some staff members prefer to send their film back to the U.S. via pouch for processing..

OTHER CITIES

ANTSIRABÉ, population around 220,000, is situated in the Ankaratra Mountains, in the central part of the country. Thermal springs are located in the area. Industries in the city include spinning and weaving, cigarette making, and food processing. An American Lutheran missionary school, founded in 1916, is in operation here.

ANTSIRANANA, once called Diégo-Suarez, is a harbor town at the northern tip of Madagascar. The deep-water port was a tactical asset to the Western allies in World War II, when they occupied the country. The city's main industries are ship construction and repair. Other industries include soap and salt manufacturing, chemical production, and food processing. Today, the population is about 220,000. Antsirana exports coffee and peanuts.

FIANANRANTSOA, with a population of nearly 300,000, is located in the rich agricultural region of southeastern Madagascar. The main crop is rice. Beans, peanuts, corn, cassava, potatoes, yams are

also grown. Cattle herding is also important. It is about 200 miles south of Antananarivo on the island's main north-south road.

MAHAJANGA, once called Majunga, is a seaport town of nearly 200,000 in the northwest corner of Madagascar, on Bombetoka Bay. It is an important transshipment port, and was the base for the French expeditionary force in 1895. Like Toamasina, Mahajanga offers a different atmosphere from that found in Antananarivo, but lacks the hotel or recreation facilities to make it a vacation resort. Mahajanga is accessible by air, or by a one-day drive over difficult roads. Mahajanga's industries include the processing of agricultural products, meat canning, and soap, sugar, and cement manufacturing.

Situated near the Mananjary River about 150 miles southeast of the capital, **MANANJARY** has close to 15,200 residents. As a port city on the Indian Ocean, it directs shipments of olives, coffee, cacao, rice, and vanilla.

TAOLANARO, formerly Fort-Dauphin, is located at the southeast tip of the island on the Indian Ocean. It is a small town that offers attractive beaches, shark-free swimming, and a quiet holiday atmosphere. Taolanaro can be reached by air in two hours, or by car during the dry season in three days. The drive is a scenic but arduous trip. Cottages may be rented from American missionaries in Taolanaro.

TOAMASINA, formerly Tamatave, located on the east coast of Madagascar, is the principal seaport for the country. Founded by the Portuguese in the 17th century, Toamasina has a population of approximately 130,000. As the terminus of the railroad from Antananarivo, it ships coffee, pepper, cloves, and vanilla from its port to other parts of the world. Its industries include sugar refining, rum distilling, food processing, and meat packing. Graphite, quartz, and chromites are mined nearby. Toamasina was rebuilt after being

destroyed by a hurricane in 1927. While it offers a change in altitude, climate, flora, and pace from the activities of the capital, Toamasina has little else in the way of recreational activities. The city can be reached in one hour by air or in 12 hours by train. There is no ocean bathing here because of sharks, but there are good beaches and modest hotel facilities at Foulpointe and Ambila, 30 and 60 miles, respectively, along the coast in opposite directions from the city.

TOLIARY (formerly called Tuléar) is a shipping center for marine products and the agricultural products of the interior. The city is located in the southeast on the Mozambique Channel. There are deposits of coal, mica, copper, and gold near Toliary. The estimated 50,000 residents enjoy year-round sunshine and white sand beaches.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Madagascar, the world's fourth-largest island, is situated in the Indian Ocean 250 miles across the Mozambique Channel from the southeast coast of Africa. Covering 230,500 square miles, it is 995 miles long and 360 miles across at its widest point. If it were transposed onto a map of the U.S., it would occupy the area from South Carolina north to New York and from the Atlantic Ocean west to the Appalachian Mountains.

A range of mountains that runs north to south the length of the island creates a distinct geographical division. Cliffs that lead sharply down through dense forests to narrow coastal plains lie to the east. The coastal climate is hot and tropical, with periodic cyclones that cause considerable damage. The descent from the central highlands is more gradual to the west, creating large plains and sweeping

savannahs that gently end in a coastline of many inlets. In the south and southwest, these plains become semi-desert where the main vegetation is thorny scrubs and magnificent baobab trees. In the far north, the Tsaratanana Mountain massif (rising 9,468 feet) creates a wet, tropical climate, and separates Diego Suarez, one of the world's greatest natural harbors, from the rest of the island. Along the crest of this ridge lies a high plateau region with rice-growing valleys nestled among barren hills. Here, the crust of red laterite that covers much of the island has been exposed by erosion, showing why the country is known as "the Great Red Island."

Antananarivo lies at the center of the high plateau. It was built on and around steep hills that are surrounded by mountains averaging 6,000 feet in altitude. The city ranges in altitude from 4,046 feet in

the newer part of the city to 4,770 feet in the older sections. Antananarivo enjoys a temperate climate and has two main seasons for which there are more exceptions than rules. Winter is from May to early September, when temperatures average 69°F during the day and 35°F at night. Little rain falls at this time, but abrupt drizzles are frequent. Winter days have warm sunshine at midday, but mornings are brisk and evenings are quite chilly. Summer, from December to February, comprises the rainy season. Daily thunderstorms occur in late afternoon and occasionally in the morning. Cyclones along the coastal areas do not reach the capital, but can bring week-long periods of constant rain. Summer temperatures average 79°F during the day with hot midday sun and 59°F at night. Umbrellas are more useful in this climate than raincoats.

Population

When the first immigrants to Madagascar arrived is uncertain, but it is assumed they came from Indonesia in the first century A.D. by way of southern India and east Africa. Immigrants landed on the eastern



Taxi service in Madagascar

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

coast and spread throughout the island, resulting in the extinction of an aboriginal population. Successive immigrations occurred from Polynesia and the Arabian Peninsula in pre-Islamic times. The Islamic strain arrived later, bringing slaves from continental Africa, followed during the 16th century by Europeans, particularly pirates. The 20th century brought an influx of Chinese, Indo-Pakistani, and a large number of French colonialists. Present-day Malagasy are descendants of a truly mixed race, and the variety of their physical appearance mirrors the variety of their ethnic origins. Asian features predominate in the groups inhabiting the central highlands, whereas the coastal people show more evidence of African origin. As with many aspects of Madagascar, exceptions abound, and it is best not to generalize except to note that the Malagasy are a handsome people.

About 50% of the Malagasy are Christian, divided almost evenly between Roman Catholic and Protestant. An historical rivalry existed between the coastal people, Cotiers, considered to be underprivileged, and the Merina of the high plateau region who are still predominant in the civil service, business, and the professions. The announced goal of the government is that nationalism should overcome ethnic rivalries.

Most people (including Christians) practice a form of traditional religion combined with ancestor worship. They believe death is but a passage to another life from which the ancestors can advise and protect the living. This spiritual communion is celebrated on the high plateau by funeral rites during which tombs are opened for a day and the dead are exhumed so that the tomb may be cleaned, the shroud replaced, and the ancestor joyfully reunited with his family. Although the timing of

exhumations varies across the island, the majority of Malagasy try to have the ceremony at least once every five years, funds permitting. These are very important and expensive occasions, since it falls to the family whose tomb is being opened to entertain all guests with food and drink; there is also the expense of new shrouds.

The principal language of the island is Malagasy, a soft, pleasant-sounding language grammatically akin to Indonesian. It is written in the Roman alphabet, using 21 letters. Regional dialects exist but are more a matter of vocabulary and accent than basic linguistic differences. This uniformity of language has been a major factor in creating a national sense of unity among people of diverse cultural characteristics. The Malagasy have had a greater difficulty in switching their thinking and speaking when saying numbers than nonmetric system

users have had in attempting to adapt to the metric system. In the Malagasy language, 4,342 is said with the last, i.e., smallest valued, number first.

Many people speak French fluently in the larger towns, but official publications are frequently in both languages, as are the daily newspapers of Antananarivo. The influence of British missionaries during the 19th century resulted in a greater percentage of English speakers found in Madagascar than in former French colonies.

The population of 13 million, currently growing at 2.8% annually, comprises about 8,000 French nationals and sizable Indian and Chinese communities. More than 47% of the population is under the age of 14 years. More than 82% of all Malagasy live in rural areas, and agriculture comprises 41% of the gross domestic product. The country is 99% self-sufficient in agricultural food production. The average Malagasy has an annual per capita income of \$223.

Public Institutions

Based on the 1992 Constitution, the executive branch of the Republic of Madagascar is composed of the Presidency and the Government. The President selects the Prime Minister from a list of names presented by the National Assembly; day to day management of government is performed by the Prime Minister and a 29-member Cabinet. The Senate and the National Assembly compose the Legislative Branch, which approves appropriations and bills proposed by the government; however, only the National Assembly with its 138 members is in place to date. The Judicial Branch is not fully implemented. The last presidential election was held in December 1996. Admiral Didier Ratsiraka was elected president, he nominated one Prime Minister and three Vice Prime Ministers. Elections of the National Assembly members and part of local government councils will soon take place.

Arts, Science, and Education

Like most developing countries, educational, scientific, and cultural activities in the Western sense are in a formative stage. The University of Madagascar is decentralized with different disciplines taught in the six provincial capitals, including Antananarivo. Public education, once based on the French system, has been Malagasized. Church-related primary and secondary schools are an important part of education, as they have been for over 150 years. Unfortunately, all levels of Malagasy schools suffer from a shortage of books and supplies. Although education is highly valued and most Malagasy remain in school for only 4-5 years, the overall literacy rate is estimated at 78%. Antananarivo has French-sponsored schools as well as an American-sponsored school.

Malagasy culture is ancient, rich, and varied. It plays a prominent and now reemphasized role in the life of the country. Several organizations, with the active support of the Government Ministry of Art and Culture, are working to preserve traditional music and dance and to record the popular history of the island.

Antananarivo has small museums of national history and anthropology, a tiny but popular zoo, and a botanical park. For more contemporary recreation, Antananarivo has a large sports complex. The French Cultural Center hosts interesting performing events each year. In conjunction with the National Library, the American Cultural Center holds occasional exhibits, forums, and lectures with visiting scholars.

Commerce and Industry

Agriculture forms the basis of the Malagasy economy. Including fisheries and forests, the agriculture sector employs 88% of the population and earns 80% of the country's export receipts. Rice is the most

important staple food, with some 70% of the population involved in its cultivation. In recent years, Madagascar has had to import substantial quantities of rice, putting a serious dent in its limited foreign exchange earnings. The most important export crops are coffee, vanilla, and cloves.

Fish and seafood rival vanilla as Madagascar's second most important export earner. Principal production is dominated by food processing, textile, and apparel industries, and accounts for less than 15% of the gross domestic product. Principal mineral exports are chromite, graphite, and mica. Local stones and gems, from aquamarines to tourmalines, are often breathtaking.

The government has backed away from its socialist policies of the 1970s and 80s and has embraced structural adjustment and free market economics. Recent enactment of a strong investment code and export processing zone legislation has positioned Madagascar to receive foreign investment, notably from France, Mauritius, South Africa, and southeast Asia.

Since 1996, the reform of the business and investment environments tackled the regulatory tax constraints impeding private sector development, particularly for small and medium sized local enterprises and foreign investors. It introduces a more transparent, security-enhancing legal framework and eliminates public enterprise monopolies.

The U.S. is the second-largest importer of Malagasy products after France and consumes most of the country's vanilla exports.

Transportation

Automobiles

In Madagascar, one drives on the right side of the road, yielding the right of way to vehicles coming in from the left. Most major intersections and traffic circles have police

directing traffic. If the policeman has his back to you at an intersection, you are required to stop. Seat belts, child safety seats, and motorcycle helmets are not required in Madagascar. If you are caught driving under the influence of alcohol, your car will be impounded for a few days, and you will have to pay a fine. If you are involved in an accident involving injuries and/or deaths, there is a mandatory court case. The losing party of the court case must then pay all costs.

Except for Antananarivo's main streets and a few well-maintained routes to outlying cities, most roads are in disrepair. For those traveling by road between cities, travel at night is not recommended. Roads tend to be narrow and winding with many one-lane bridges and blind curves. Most vehicles tend to drive in the center of the road unless another vehicle is present. Local practice is to blow the horn before going around a curve, to let others know of one's presence. Few pedestrian crosswalks or working traffic signals exist.

Travel within Antananarivo can be difficult with poor road signage and an abundance of one-way streets. Taxis are plentiful, and they are generally reasonably priced. Expect to bargain for the fare prior to getting into the vehicle. Most accidents are pedestrian-related, due to narrow roads and lack of sidewalks on many streets.

Rental cars generally come with a driver who is responsible for maintaining the vehicle and sometimes acts as a tour guide. Public transportation is unreliable, and the vehicles are poorly maintained. Rail services are very limited and undependable. The Malagasy presidential election in 2001-2002 has led to large demonstrations and a slowdown in the transportation system. However, arrangements can be made for a private train to travel to certain destinations.

Repair facilities exist for all French makes, most Japanese makes (Toyota, Mitsubishi, Isuzu), Chevrolet,

Ford, Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz, and BMW. However, the vehicles shipped to developing countries are sometimes different from the models sold in the U.S. or elsewhere. There are no American automobile representatives here. Bring extra tires, spark plugs, fan belts, oil filters, fuel and air filters, oil, automatic transmission fluid, power steering fluid, brake fluid, etc., since these are usually unavailable and exorbitantly expensive, even if available. Two or three jerry cans and a funnel may also prove useful. A battery charger and a 12-volt air pump are useful, as gasoline stations do not charge batteries or provide air. Small, economical vehicles are preferred since gasoline (leaded only, regular or premium) is expensive. Diesel fuel is much less expensive than gasoline but is sometimes difficult to find.

Avoid bringing in vehicles with fuel injection engines, or computerized/digital controls, as repairs on such features are sketchy at best. Rule of thumb: If the feature is modern by American standards, service will be difficult or impossible to find.

International drivers licenses are recognized, but are only valid for one year and cannot be renewed for use in Madagascar.

Third-party auto insurance is obligatory and must be obtained from a company operating in Madagascar. It is not expensive. Driving in and around Antananarivo is hazardous. Great caution is required to avoid accidents, especially involving pedestrians, small children, and livestock. Drive with caution as you circumnavigate potholes, ox-carts, and pedestrians. City streets and several highways are paved, but are often in very poor condition.

Many suburban streets and country roads are unpaved, deeply rutted, and rocky. Consider installing heavy-duty shock absorbers and steel-belted radials on your car. Antananarivo's narrow, winding streets make maneuvering large cars difficult. The best vehicle for Tana's winding streets is a small,

front-wheel-drive car with a relatively high clearance. Low-slung sporty models would ride too close to many of the local streets, inviting oil pan punctures, etc.

Some purchase four-wheel-drive vehicles; although not necessary for driving to and from work, they are essential for exploring some parts of the island.

Local

Public transportation is inadequate and unsafe. Buses are crowded and rarely used by Americans.

Taxis are plentiful in Antananarivo and inexpensive - \$1 or \$2 for a ride within the main part of the city during the day. Taxis will take you from the city to the suburbs, but are difficult to find in suburban areas and in the evening.

Regional

Madagascar has three railway lines: Antananarivo to Antsirabe, Antananarivo to Toamasina, and Fianarantsoa to Manakara. Railway cars are spartan and usually crowded and subject to frequent cancellations.

Air Madagascar has almost daily flights to most provincial capitals.

For the adventurous, a network of taxibrousse (private cars in which you can rent a space) links Antananarivo to most towns.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local phone service is fair. Residential bills, average \$12 per month plus any long-distance charges. Worldwide telephone communication is available 24 hours daily from home phones through the international operator. A 3-minute call to the U.S. costs about US\$26, with each additional minute costing about US\$9, if you use the local system. Telephone access changes on a daily basis with more and better companies offering a myriad of services.

Mail

Weekly international airmail deliveries are scheduled to and from Europe and the U.S. International mail to and from Europe takes about 5 days, and averages from 10 days to 3 weeks to and from the U.S.

Radio and TV

Antananarivo has ten radio stations. Malagasy is the major language broadcast but many have some news programs in French and English including VOA.

A shortwave radio is needed for other overseas broadcasts.

National Television, TVM, can be watched in most parts of the country. Reception difficulties may occur, however, because of weather and topography. Malagasy is the main language, but French and English are used for news broadcasts. Entertainment programs are often in French. Madagascar Television, MA-TV, is broadcast in UHF in the Antananarivo area. News is in French and Malagasy. A cable network, Televiziona Fialam-boly, TVF, broadcasts CNN, TNT, and two French stations. The signal is SECAM D K. In addition, two other stations have recently started.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Virtually no English-language magazines or newspapers are sold in Madagascar. Some current French periodicals are available. European airmail subscriptions to Time, Newsweek, the International Herald Tribune, etc., arrive within 2-3 days of publication, but are expensive.

Several major independent newspapers are published in French and Malagasy daily except Sunday. At least one page is devoted to international news, usually articles taken from Agence France Presse or Novosti and from foreign government press services, including USIS.

The Malagasy Government Ministry of Information prepares a daily

mimeographed news bulletin in French. A French language sampler of stories from the Malagasy press is published weekly. Other small Malagasy-language papers present local and international news from various political or religious points of view. Coverage of international events has improved in the past year.

The American Cultural Center library has about 4,000 books in the circulating collection, and 1,500 books and 60 periodicals in the reference room.

Madagascar University's Department of Modern Languages has several hundred volumes in English, but they are for student and faculty use. The National Library has 75,000 books, but few in English.

No English-language books are sold in Antananarivo. Major bookstores have stocks of French classics and paperbacks at high prices. Several Washington and New York bookstores accept mail orders for delivery by package pouch.

Health and Medicine

Health Concerns

Malaria, hepatitis, schistosomiasis, rabies, typhoid, intestinal parasites, cysticercosis, poison shark meat, and plague. Automobile accidents are common and local facilities poorly equipped. AIDS has been documented in low but growing numbers.

Medical Facilities

The Military Hospital has one French physician per Department, but no coverage during leave. Serious medical problems are evacuated to either South Africa or Reunion. Basic dental services are available. Have any dental work done prior to arrival.

Preventive Measures and Community Health

Yellow Fever immunization is required for transit through Africa -

no YF here. Recommended are Hep A&B, Rabies, DT, Polio, Typhoid.

Malaria Prophylaxis Mephloquine (appropriate dose for age) given weekly or Doxycycline daily is recommended for longer stays. Although there are infrequent outbreaks of Malaria in the capital, there are cases. Insect repellent for adults (33%) available in the HU but 10% for children should be brought with you.

Fluoride Supplementation to prevent tooth decay is recommended for children.

No blood bank facilities are recommended in the country.

Fruit and vegetables should be soaked in chlorine for 15 minutes. Avoid wading in fresh water to prevent schistosomiasis. Avoid strawberries grown in pig manure to prevent cysticercosis. Bring flea control for pets to avoid plague fleas. Avoid ingesting any shark meat to prevent ciguatera poisoning. Avoid undercooked foods or cold foods eaten in restaurants.

Bring adequate supply prescription drugs plus forms to order more from your insurance plan, extra pair of glasses, lens prescription and sufficient contact lens supplies for tour. Sunscreen, insect repellent. Most over-the-counter medications are available from French companies.

The Clinique des Soeurs hospital has a fairly high standard of cleanliness, but suffers from a shortage of supplies and inadequate services.

Most problems requiring sophisticated diagnostic procedures or surgery are evacuated to Pretoria or Nairobi where regional medical officers are posted. South Africa offers excellent medical and hospital facilities, as does Kenya and the nearby island of Reunion.

Madagascar is suffering from a chronic shortage of pharmaceuticals. Bring any medications prescribed for you and your dependents.

Dentistry standards in Madagascar are not equivalent to U.S. standards, but some Americans have received adequate dental treatment here. Bring an extra pair of eye-glasses or contact lenses and leave your prescription on file in the U.S., should you need to replace them.

Antananarivo's temperate climate is subject to sudden changes and contributes to a high incidence of respiratory infections. Fluctuating temperatures linked with the high altitude and sudden rainstorms create a climate French physicians term "pleasantly unhealthful." Upon arrival, a brief period of sleeplessness may occur, but this should pass in a couple of days.

Antananarivo's water supply is from impounded surface water. The distribution system is quite ancient, and the possibility of illness from contaminated water is serious, especially during the rainy season. The sewage system is poor. Boil all water before using or use your distiller.

Infectious hepatitis is quite common, especially among the foreign population, and is usually transmitted by improper food preparation. It is advised to receive gamma globulin injections regularly at 6-month intervals. Bilharzia (schistosomiasis of both the mansoni and otobium types) exists in fresh water around Antananarivo. It is transmitted through a snail-borne fluke that enters the body through the skin. Therefore, you should stay out of still waters.

Long-life shelf milk in rectangular cartons is available and imported from France. All fruits and vegetables must be carefully washed and treated, as hygiene standards are poor. Fresh meat should be washed and thoroughly cooked to avoid contracting parasites.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

As there is no direct commercial air service by local carriers at present, nor economic authority to operate such service between the United States and Madagascar, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not assessed Madagascar's Civil Aviation Authority for compliance with international aviation safety standards.

For further information, travelers may contact the Department of Transportation within the United States at telephone 1-800-322-7873, or visit the FAA's Internet web site at <http://www.faa.gov/avr/iasa/>. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) separately assesses some foreign air carriers for suitability as official providers of air services. For information regarding the DOD policy on specific carriers, travelers may contact DOD at telephone (618) 229-4801.

Domestic and international air services operate regularly, but they are subject to delays and occasional breakdowns. Air Madagascar often changes in-country flight schedules, based on how full the flight is, with little or no prior warning to passengers. Overbooking is also common.

A passport and visa are required. Visas should be obtained in advance, although airport visas are available in Antananarivo, which is the only city with an international airport. Travelers who opt to obtain an airport visa should expect delays upon arrival. Evidence of yellow fever immunization is required for all travelers who have been in an infected zone within six months of their arrival in Madagascar.

Travelers may obtain the latest information and details on entry requirements from the Embassy of the Republic of Madagascar, 2374 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008; telephone (202) 265-5525/6; web site: <http://www.embassy.org/madagascar>; or

the Malagasy Consulate in New York City, telephone (212) 986-9491. Honorary consuls are located in Philadelphia, San Diego and Houston. Overseas, inquiries may be made at the nearest Malagasy embassy or consulate.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy in Antananarivo, where they may obtain updated information on travel and security in Madagascar. The U.S. Embassy is located at 14 and 16 Laiana Rainitovo, Antsahavola, Antananarivo. The mailing address is B.P. 620, 101 Antananarivo, Madagascar. The telephone number is (261) 22-200-89; the fax number is (261-20) 22-345-39.

Pets

Quarantine requirements differ according to the type of animal. A health certificate, issued within three days of arrival in Madagascar, from a veterinarian in the country in which the animal was located, must be provided. Dogs must have a valid rabies vaccination within the past six months.

Firearms and Ammunition

Importation of firearms or ammunition is strictly controlled by the Malagasy Government. Hunting firearms can be carried only in open season with possession of a hunting permit. For additional information, refer to 6 FAM 168.5.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The official currency unit is the Malagasy franc (FMG). The rate of conversion, is about 5,400 FMG=US\$1.

No limit exists on the amount of foreign currency you may bring into the country. However, customs officials usually require declarations of all monies brought in, diplomatic personnel excluded. Conversion of all currencies is strictly controlled; Malagasy currency is not convertible. If any trips outside Madagascar are anticipated, you will find some dollars useful.

Madagascar uses the metric system of weights and measures.

Disaster Preparedness

Madagascar is prone to tropical storms. Storm season is generally January through the end of February. Storms primarily affect the eastern coast, although large storms may reach the capital of Antananarivo. Storms which affect the shipping ports may limit fuel and food supplies elsewhere in the country. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov/>.

Security

The Ministry of Public Works (tel. [261] (20) 22-318-02) is Madagascar's authority responsible for road safety. During an emergency, visitors to Antananarivo can contact local police by telephoning 17, by dialing 22-227-35, or by dialing 030-23-801-40 (cellular). American citizens can also call the U.S. Embassy at telephone 22-212-57/58/59 if assistance is needed in communicating with law enforcement officials. Ambulance services are available in Antananarivo only with Espace Medical at telephone 22-625-66 or 22-219-72.

The major concerns for visitors to Antananarivo are street crime and theft from residences and vehicles. Although not generally violent, incidents involving violence by assailants, particularly when the victim resists, are on the rise. Walking at night, whether alone or in a group, is not considered safe in urban areas, including in the vicinity of Western-standard hotels. Organized gangs of bandits are known to patrol areas where foreigners who are perceived to be wealthy congregate. Wearing expensive jewelry or carrying expensive items such as cameras while on foot or while using public transportation is strongly discouraged. Valuable items should never be left in an unattended vehicle. Although crimes such as burglary do occur in areas outside the capital, the threat of confronta-

tional crime is less common in rural areas. Night travel in private or public conveyances outside Antananarivo is discouraged due to poor lighting and road conditions.

The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to local police and to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. The pamphlets, *A Safe Trip Abroad and Tips for Travelers to Sub-Saharan Africa*, provide useful information on protecting personal security while traveling abroad and on travel in the region in general. Both are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, via the Internet at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs, or via the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page at <http://travel.state.gov>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Mar. 29 | Martyrs' Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| May/June | Ascension Day* |
| May 25 | African Liberation Day |
| May/June | Pentecost* |
| May/June | Pentecost Monday* |
| June 26 | Independence Day |
| Aug. 15 | Assumption |
| Sept. 27 | St. Vincent de Pauls Day |
| Nov. 1 | All Saints' Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| Dec. 30 | Republic Day |
| | *variable |

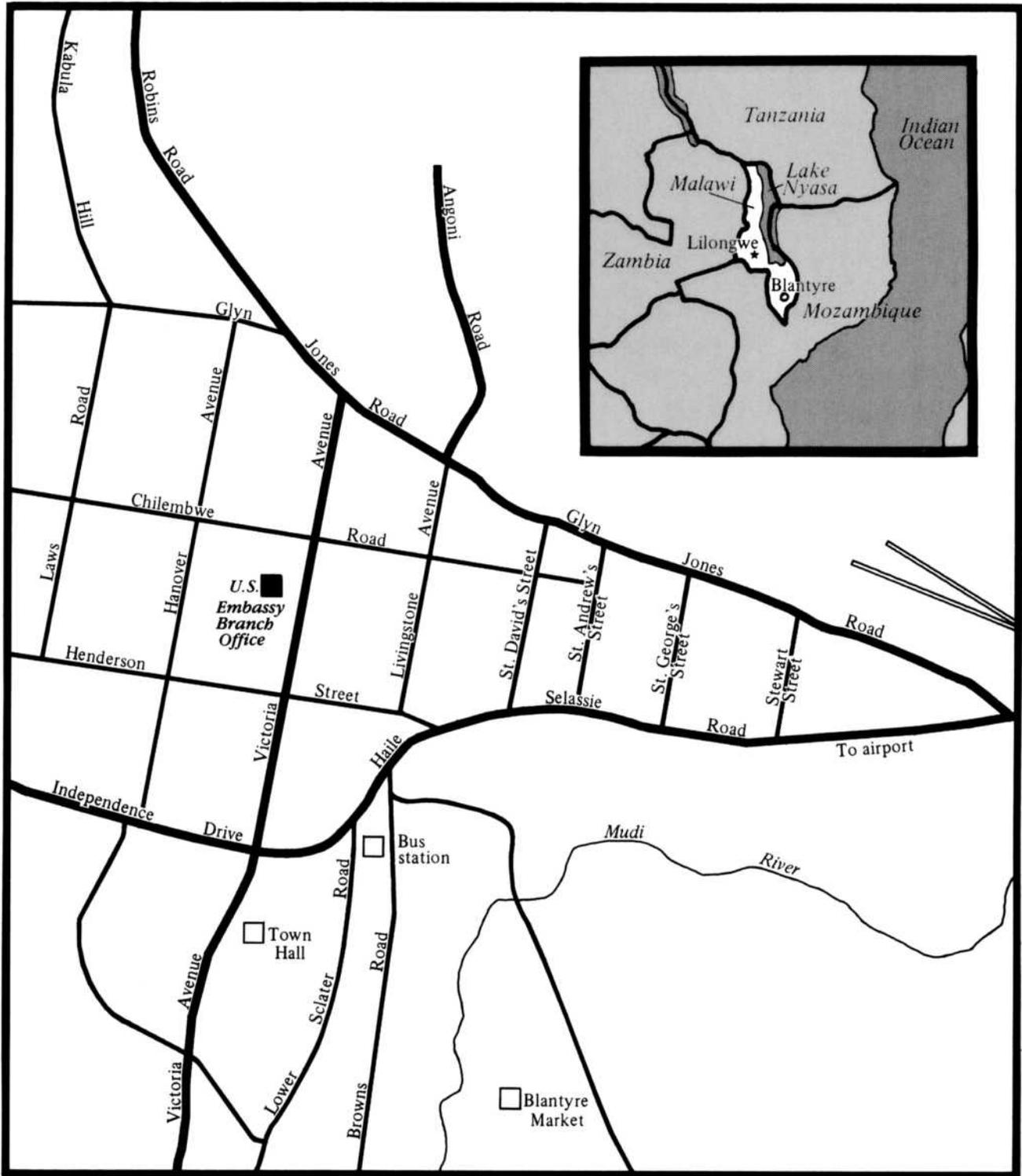
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Blantyre, Malawi

MALAWI

Republic of Malawi

Major Cities:

Lilongwe, Blantyre

Other Cities:

Dedza, Karonga, Mzuzu, Nkhotakota, Nsanje, Zomba

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated July 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of **MALAWI**, once part of the Federation of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland, achieved its independence in July 1964, and was organized into its present political entity two years later. In the middle of the last century, the area that is now Malawi came into the sphere of British influence through the antislavery zeal of David Livingstone, Scottish missionary and explorer in Africa. It was established as the Protectorate of Nyasaland. Its present name, assumed at the time of independence, is derived from the Maravi, a Bantu tribe who crossed Zambia from the southern Congo and entered the territory approximately five centuries ago.

MAJOR CITIES

Lilongwe

The Embassy, USIS, and USAID are located in Lilongwe, which became the capital on January 1, 1975. The original town of Lilongwe was a modest trading center with a population of 4,000 in 1970. Planning for the new capital began in the late 1960s in response to a long-standing wish of the president to move the capital to a more central area, shifting northward the development pattern, which had previously heavily favored the southern Blantyre-Zomba region. The relocation also placed the capital in the home area of the predominant Chewa tribe.

The new capital site is located about 5 miles from Lilongwe "Old Town" and was literally carved out of the bush. Even with a population of 437,000, the atmosphere in Lilongwe is one of a small, isolated settlement in the middle of a rolling savanna.

Lilongwe has an expatriate colony, mostly of U.K. origin, of approximately 2,000. Many work for the Government of Malawi; others are connected with diplomatic missions, the construction business, or missionaries. The American community

in Lilongwe includes Embassy personnel, Peace Corps volunteers, a few professors, UN personnel, consultants, and missionaries.

Food

Locally grown vegetables and fruits are plentiful and inexpensive, but availability varies seasonally. Most people augment their supply with vegetable gardens. A good selection of vegetable and flower seeds is available locally, although many people prefer to bring seeds or order them from the U.S. Canning and freezing supplies are not available.

Food prices in general have increased steadily in the last few years. The cost of fresh meat, including beef, chicken, pork and lamb, or mutton, is generally lower than in the U.S. for comparable cuts, but periodic shortages occur. Canned or imported meat is much more expensive. Good quality fish from Lake Malawi, including a delicious type of tilapia called chambo, is available most of the year at reasonable costs.

Staples such as flour, sugar, salt, and oil are available locally, but are inferior in quality. Canned goods, like other processed foods, are much more expensive than in the U.S. Most are imported from the U.K. or South Africa. Laundry detergent, cleaning supplies, and paper prod-

ucts such as tissues, paper towels, napkins, and toilet paper are of poor quality and are priced very high. Baby products and convenience foods (cake mixes, prepared foods, etc.) are limited in availability and selection.

The local bakeries sell a variety of white and wheat breads. Pasteurized reconstituted milk is available and safe to drink. Eggs, butter, yogurt, cottage cheese, mild cheddar cheese, and other dairy products are available, but periodic shortages occur. People stock up on standard items to tide them through the frequent shortage periods.

Two supermarkets and numerous branch "superettes" carry a limited selection of canned and bottled goods, dairy products, meats, some fresh fruits, and vegetables. The Lilongwe open market sells all seasonal fruits and vegetables, as well as rice, flour, salt, peanuts, fish, meats, and other miscellaneous goods. Local Asian stores also sell a variety of canned and bottled goods, as well as spices, dried fish, and some specialty items.

Clothing

General: Clothing is expensive, often of poor quality, and very limited in selection. Bring sufficient clothing for all family members or order it from the U.S. Simple, practical clothing is best suited to Lilongwe life. Washable fabrics are suitable for all but the most formal occasions. Summer clothing is worn from September to April. Most winter days (from May to August) are cool with evening temperatures dipping to 40°F. Because houses and offices become chilly during this period, bring plenty of sweaters, sweatshirts, and light jackets. A light-weight raincoat or umbrella is essential during the rainy season.

Although dry-cleaning facilities are available, work varies from poor to adequate. The dry-cleaners refuse to clean some items, such as silk dresses, and do not give guarantees on larger items such as bedspreads. Some people do their own dry-cleaning with locally purchased benzine.

Others take their dry-cleaning with them on trips to more developed countries.

The choice of shoes is also very limited, but ladies sandals and children's shoes are usually available.

Lilongwe has a few dressmakers and tailors, but the quality of their work varies.

Men: Due to unreliable local dry-cleaning facilities, wash-and-wear suits are more practical, but other light-weight suits are also worn. Dress is conservative in Malawi; coats and ties are the rule in government offices, most business meetings, and some restaurants for dinner. Some businessmen wear safari-type suits, but they are not generally regarded as adequate alternatives to coats and ties, as is the case in some other African countries.

Women: Women will find cotton dresses and skirts suitable for most occasions, including work. Synthetics can be worn comfortably on all but a few of the hottest days. Sweaters and woolen dresses or suits are useful for the cooler months. Women may find light-weight coats or warm shawls necessary for some evenings. Very few occasions call for long dresses and elaborate hostess gowns are not needed. Cotton lingerie is more comfortable in the hot season than nylon.

Children: Children need both warm and cool weather clothing for the varying temperatures throughout the year. Bring a good supply of shorts, pants, short- and long-sleeved shirts, sweatshirts, light jackets, sturdy shoes, socks, summer and winter pajamas, slippers, raincoats, and umbrellas. Although girls can wear shorts or pants in their own homes and in the homes of other Americans, be sure to bring an adequate supply of skirts or dresses that cover the knee for trips to the stores or other public areas. The school requires a very specific uniform that can be purchased locally at a reasonable cost. However, you should bring with you the

required black or brown leather-type shoes that all students must wear, plus sports shoes for physical education.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: European and South African cosmetics and pharmaceuticals are usually available; however, selection is limited, and prices are high. Bring personal items, including favorite brands, with you. Many common nonprescription drugs and medicines are available (aspirin, vitamins), but again, high prices, shortages, and limited selection are constraining factors. Plan to have special prescriptions filled from the U.S.

Locally made cigarettes are inexpensive. Pipe tobacco and cigars are expensive, and selection is limited. Locally produced beer and gin are good and reasonably priced; most other liquors are expensive.

Basic Services: Most basic services are available, although quality of work varies. Several beauty shops offer haircuts for both men and women. Shoe repair is not good, but reasonable tailors can be found for alterations and dressmaking. Dry-cleaners are available, but unreliable.

Religious Activities

The Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Roman Catholic churches conduct English-language services in Lilongwe. Other denominations, including the Church of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Seventh-day Adventist, and Southern Baptist are represented. Islamic and Hindu places of worship are also located in Lilongwe.

Education

Expatriate children can attend only "designated schools" which are run by the Government of Malawi. In Lilongwe, most children of American families attend the Bishop Mackenzie School (BMS), which offers coeducational instruction for Reception (age 4) through Form 5 (equivalent to 10th grade). The curriculum is designed according to the

British system, and the teaching staff is predominantly British. The school year consists of three terms extending from September to mid-December, mid-January to early April, and mid-April to early July. There are 40 classrooms plus a library on 25 acres of land that also includes three sports fields, two tennis courts, a playground, a swimming pool, and a large, newly constructed school hall.

Uniforms are required and can be purchased locally at reasonable cost.

Private kindergartens are also available for 2–5 year olds in Lilongwe. There are waiting lists, however, and it is best to write in advance to secure a place for your preschooler.

Special Educational Opportunities

The University of Malawi at Zomba offers extension courses in languages, anthropology, literature, and history. The French Cultural Center in Lilongwe offers French-language courses.

Sports

Malawi's good weather and facilities combine to make a wide variety of sports available in Lilongwe. The Lilongwe Golf Club offers an 18-hole golf course, squash, swimming, tennis, and other sports facilities. The Capital Hotel also has swimming and squash facilities.

Volleyball, basketball, and softball games are organized weekly on an informal basis at various locations in Lilongwe. The Hash House Harriers running group can be seen each week running/walking throughout the neighborhoods of Lilongwe and are always seeking new members. Horseback riding is also possible for those interested.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

You can swim, dive, sail, boat, and fish on Lake Malawi. The Livingstonia Hotel, near Salima, offers a swimming pool plus private

beach for hotel residents with free use of its facilities and maritime equipment, including sailboats, paddleboats, kayaks, wind surfboards, scuba, and snorkeling equipment. Further south on the lake are Cape Maclear and Monkey Bay with excellent beach-front hotels nearby. The Lake Malawi National Park, a maritime park, is located at Cape Maclear. Here the most beautiful, crystal-clear water with over 400 different species of freshwater tropical fish creates a snorkeling paradise. In addition to a wide variety of maritime recreation, there are also nature trails for hiking in an area where birdlife is prolific.

Malawi Railways operates several lake steamers, and one, the Ilala, features limited cabin accommodations. Trips on the Ilala can be made for up to 7 days. In addition, the boat can load one car on board, although reservations must be made far in advance.

Malawi has several game parks and reserves, and although the facilities are not greatly developed, most parks do offer beautiful landscape and good game viewing. Kasungu National Park is about a 3-hour drive from Lilongwe on good roads, although roads inside the park are unpaved. You will see a wide variety of game, and accommodations, inclusive of meals, are comfortable. Lengwe Park in the southern region (Lower Shire) offers game viewing and modest accommodations; a cook is available, but you must provide your own food. Nyika Park is located in the northern region on a high plateau and offers spectacular scenery and many different types of game. It is, however, the most remote of the parks and is difficult to reach; accommodations are pleasant. The country has other game reserves, but these do not offer facilities for overnight accommodations. Reservations for all parks and reserves are handled through the central Forestry Office in Lilongwe.

Tiger fishing is possible on the Lower Shire River, and hunting is popular in the Central Region,

where good opportunities for guinea fowl, francolin, and duck shooting are found.

The town of Zomba is about 4 hours south of Lilongwe, and Zomba Plateau is a popular area for outings. It offers a mountain atmosphere with evergreen forests and is considered an excellent spot for hiking. In addition, within the area are several spots for trout fly fishing. The KuChawe Inn, a small hotel, is located nearby.

A trip to Blantyre, which is 191 miles from Lilongwe and a 4-hour drive, offers a welcome change. Blantyre is the country's main commercial and industrial center with an urban population of some 400,000. Set in the hilly country of the Shire highlands, Blantyre hosts a broader selection of good restaurants and shops than can be found in Lilongwe.

It is possible to travel by road to Zambia and on to Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa, although current visa and transit policy should be checked in advance. Lusaka is a 1-day drive from Lilongwe, and Harare or Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe can be reached in another day. These roads are paved but are generally in fair-to-poor condition, with potholes and/or deteriorated surfaces in some sections. Malawi is also linked by air to neighboring countries and South Africa, and excursion fares and package holidays are sometimes available at a reduced price.

Entertainment

The Lilongwe Golf Club, and to some extent the Capital Hotel, serve as social centers. Lilongwe service clubs, such as Lions, Rotary, Round Table, and several women's associations frequently sponsor special events, including casino nights, dinners, and discos. Local amateur groups present productions throughout the year. Many other clubs, such as a music society, garden club, and wildlife society, are also active.

There are no cinemas currently operating in Lilongwe. However, the Defense Attache's Office shows a weekly videotaped movie at the USIS Center open to Americans and their guests free of charge.

Social Activities

Among Americans: Most entertaining and social relationships among Americans consist of small informal lunches or dinners and cocktail parties. Given the relative lack of variety of social centers in town, a great deal of home entertaining takes place, ranging from relatively formal receptions to very casual barbecue-type lunches.

International Contacts: Good opportunities exist to develop contacts with both the resident expatriate community and Malawians, primarily through home entertaining. In addition, service clubs and other associations provide settings for international contacts. The resident diplomatic community is small, but a good deal of contact and entertaining exist within it. Business and government groups are more differentiated, but it is also possible to develop good contacts on a social level, as well as a professional level with these groups.

Blantyre

Blantyre remains both the largest city and the major commercial center of Malawi, with an urban population estimated at 402,000. Situated in the Shire Highlands at an elevation of 3,500 feet above sea level, it is the oldest township in the country. The city grew from the establishment in 1876 of the Church of Scotland's mission on that site, and is named for the Scottish birthplace of Dr. David Livingstone. It became a municipality in 1885. Later, the town of Limbe developed about five miles away, around the headquarters of the Malawi Railways and the Imperial Tobacco Company, and was declared a township in 1909. As the two townships grew, most of the in-between area was built up and a single municipality was formed in



Marketplace in Blantyre, Malawi

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March 1956. A charter was granted to the combined unit as the City of Blantyre in 1966. Sister-city relations have been established with Independence, Missouri, U.S.A.; Hanover, Germany; and Ndola, Zambia.

Blantyre, covering an area of about 77.5 square miles (129 square kilometers), retains the greatest share of industrial activity in the country. Establishments in the city's Chichiri and Chirimba areas, designated for industrial development, include firms manufacturing textiles, fertilizers, shoes, matches, and drinks. Modern service roads, water pipes, and sewage systems have been installed.

The aesthetics of the community are maintained in the many landscaped parks and gardens, and a horticultural school (open to the public) is operated by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Education

As in Lilongwe, expatriate children attend only "designated," privately-run schools. St. Andrews in Blantyre is one of these, and offers a British-based curriculum in a primary school through the seventh grade, and a secondary-school pro-

gram for Forms I-V, roughly corresponding to grades eight-12. This latter program is designed to lead to the "O" level examination of the General Certificate of Education. St. Andrews has a boarding facility, and most children who live outside the Blantyre area attend the school here.

A three-term schedule is followed, from September to mid-December, mid-January to early April, and the end of April to the end of June. Uniforms are required, and can be obtained locally at reasonable cost. Many parents choose to supply supplementary aids, texts, and reference material from home.

Situated on 35 acres of picturesque African countryside overlooking Mulanje Mountain, St. Andrews offers weekend trips to nearby forests, rivers, and game parks. The school also has an extensive sports program featuring swimming, basketball, golf, squash, and many other sports. Music and art are also offered as extracurricular activities.

Admission to St. Andrews is tightly controlled, and will not be made unless a vacancy exists; a waiting list is frequently encountered, making early application advisable. Contact with the school can be made by writing to St. Andrews Primary

School, Box 593, or to St. Andrews Secondary School, Box 221, both in Blantyre, Malawi.

Blantyre has several private nursery schools, usually crowded, but generally considered adequate.

The University of Malawi at Zomba offers extension courses in languages, anthropology, literature, and history.

Recreation

Blantyre and Limbe have clubs with 18- and 12-hole golf courses, respectively. Other sports offered in the area include rugby, soccer, cricket, tennis, swimming, squash, badminton, flying, fishing, and boating. Schools provide opportunities for children to participate in numerous games and sporting activities.

Swimming, sailing, boating, and fishing are possible on Lake Malawi. In the Mangochi area, about a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Blantyre, recreational facilities can be found at Nkopola Lodge and at Club Makokola. Tiger fishing is possible on the lower Shire River, and trout fishing (fly rods only) on the Zomba Plateau, about an hour away from Blantyre.

General information about game parks, reserves, and touring activities is included in the section on Lilongwe.

Entertainment

Active organizations and clubs in or near Blantyre include the Blantyre Sports Club, Limbe Country Club, Council of Social Services, Mulanje Mountain Club, Sailing Club, Rotary and Lions clubs, Camera Club, Round Table, Jaycees, and Malawi Society. The latter group organizes lectures on Malawi's history and other related subjects; among its achievements is the creation of the Malawi Museum. The Board of Hotels and Tourism sponsors a Malawi arts and crafts center.

Blantyre and Limbe have several cinemas which frequently show recent popular films, generally in English. A number of private clubs

in the area provide dining facilities and bars and lounges.

Amateur dramatic and music societies give occasional public performances and exhibitions. Dances are sometimes held in the hotels or clubs, and some social activities are sponsored by service clubs, such as Rotary and Lions.

The American community in Blantyre is small, thus making its own activities somewhat limited. There is, however, a sizable expatriate community, and frequent occasions arise (usually dinners or parties) to meet other foreign residents, as well as Malawian business and government leaders. Most social events tend to be informal, normally calling for business apparel for men, and the required below-the-knee dress for women. Black-tie/formal gown events are rare.

Volunteer activities also provide an opportunity for international contact through a variety of organizations, including the Red Cross and the service clubs.

OTHER CITIES

At the foot of Dedza Mountain, the city of **DEDZA** is located in the central region of Malawi, on the country's western border with Mozambique. Less than 50 miles from Lilongwe, its cool climate and mountain water make Dedza ideal for growing rice and potatoes. Forestry is an important industry because of the plentiful softwood on Dedza Mountain. There are sawmills and a forestry training school nearby. Dedza was sparsely inhabited until the 1920s and 1930s. Tourism is minimal in this city of about 5,500 residents.

KARONGA, a trading port with a population of 13,000, is situated at the northern end of Lake Nyasa in the Great Rift Valley. The economy, based on the cotton and rice production along the lake and on coffee and livestock in the west, is augmented by subsistence fishing. It was used

as military headquarters during World War I.

MZUZU was founded in 1949, and is the chief urban center of the Northern Region. It is approximately 200 miles north of Lilongwe. The city was once an administrative center and is now attracting industries such as grain factories and bakeries. A tung oil extraction plant is also located here. Mzuzu has a population of just over 40,000.

NKHOTAKOTA (formerly called Kota Kota) is an administrative center in the central region of Malawi, about 75 miles north of the capital on the shores of Lake Nyasa. Once a place where Arab slave traders worked, Nkhotakota is Malawi's largest traditional African city. Nkhotakota trades corn, cotton, fish, and rice. Tourist spots include a rest house and hot springs.

NSANJE (formerly called Port Herald) is located in the southernmost part of Malawi, near the Mozambique border. It is a trade and transportation center. Major products produced in Nsanje include tobacco, rice, corn, and cotton. The population is estimated to be 6,400.

ZOMBA is located in southern Malawi's Shire Highlands, 70 miles south of Lake Nyasa and about 40 miles north of Blantyre. For many years it has been a popular summer resort. The city, founded by European cotton planters in 1880, was the capital of what is now Malawi during the early days of the former British administration. When Lilongwe became the capital on January 1, 1975, Zomba developed into a university town. Zomba is also a commercial center where farmers from the surrounding area sell their tobacco and dairy products. The town also trades rice, corn, fish, and softwoods. The main campus of the University of Malawi is located here. Zomba's population is 43,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Completely landlocked in southeast Africa, Malawi borders Zambia, Tanzania, and Mozambique. Malawi's southern tip lies 130 miles inland from the sea. Altitude varies from less than 200 feet above sea level at Nsanje in the south to almost 10,000 feet at the peak of Mount Mulanje. Malawi's topography consists of high, well-watered plateaus broken by large hills.

Malawi covers 46,066 square miles and is about the size of Pennsylvania. A deep depression, its chief physical feature, runs through the center and forms part of the Great Rift Valley. In this depression are Lake Malawi and the Shire Valley. Lake Malawi, about 1,500 feet above sea level and 380 miles long, is Africa's third largest lake and Malawi's major tourist attraction. In Malawi's north and central areas are the Nyika, Vipya, and Dedza uplands, rising from 5,000 to 8,000 feet above sea level. In the south, the Shire Highlands plateau averages 3,000–4,000 feet, with occasional peaks such as Zomba (7,000 feet) and Mulanje (10,000 feet). Malawi has wet and dry seasons. The wet season is from November to April; the heaviest rainfall occurs between December and March. The dry season begins in May and lasts until November. It is hottest just before rainfalls begin.

The capital, Lilongwe (altitude 3,400 feet) is in a high, central plateau area. The average daily temperature in Lilongwe during October is 84.6°F. June, July, and August are the coolest months, and nights can be quite chilly when temperatures drop to between 41°F and 57°F. Frost occasionally occurs in Lilongwe. During the dry season, particularly September and October, high winds and some dust occur. The annual mean temperature in Lilongwe is 67.4°F, and the annual

rainfall is 31.9 inches. Nights are generally cool and pleasant in Lilongwe, even during the hottest weather. Dry season days are generally sunny and warm; rains during the wet season are brief. The Blantyre area is more mountainous, and its weather more humid.

Population

Malawi, with an estimated population of 10.1 million (2000), is one of Africa's most densely populated countries. The population includes over 9.5 million Africans, 5,000 Europeans, and 7,000 Asians. Most Europeans are of British stock from the U.K., South Africa, or Zimbabwe, and many are involved in missionary work, business, or farming. In addition, since 1987, Malawi has hosted large numbers of Mozambicans fleeing that country's civil war. Mozambican refugees in Malawi totaled more than 1 million in late 1992, and in some areas of the country, Mozambican refugees outnumber native Malawians. Americans living in Malawi include missionaries, U.S. Government officials, engineers, construction workers, and Peace Corps volunteers.

The African population includes six principal tribes. Although language and customs are still distinct, tribalism is not as evident here as in other African countries. English is one of the official languages; all educated Africans speak it. More than 50 percent of the people speak Chichewa, the other official language, and almost everyone understands it. The second most important African language, Tumbuka, is spoken in the north.

In the past, many Malawians worked abroad, but fewer South African mine labor contracts have decreased this number greatly. Sizable numbers of Malawians still reside and work in Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Malawian customs and mores have grown out of a tradition of individual worth combined with a spirit of community. The gentle arts of courtesy and cooperation are valued,

and Americans will find little trouble relating to the basic warmth and politeness of Malawians. The traditional Malawian extends both hands to receive or give a gift, kneels to address a superior, and waits for permission before leaving. These expressions of politeness are still common in certain situations. Extended hand-holding is a common sign of friendship.

Public Institutions

Malawi came under British influence through the antislavery missionary zeal of David Livingstone. Missionaries and traders followed, and later a British consul was appointed. Under British consul Harry Johnston, military attempts to end the slave trade took place during the late 19th century. However, slave traffic did not end until 1895 with the capture and execution of the Arab slavers at Karonga, Nkhotakota, and Jumbe.

The former Protectorate of Nyasaland became a part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in September 1953, and seceded in December 1962. It gained full independence on July 6, 1964, under the name of Malawi and became a Republic on July 6, 1966.

After nearly 30 years of single-party rule, Malawi held multi-party elections in 1994 resulting in the election of businessman Bakili Muluzi as president to a five year term. He was reelected in 1999. The National Assembly has 193 Members. A new constitution was approved in May 1994.

The judicial system comprises a high court and magistrate courts patterned after the British system and African traditional courts. In 1993, the role of the traditional courts was greatly diminished.

Arts, Science, and Education

Artistic attractions are principally tribal dancing, arts and crafts, and a small museum in Blantyre. A

French-Canadian Catholic priest, resident in Malawi for 25 years, has an extensive collection of decorative masks worn by Malawians during their various tribal dances. He is building a museum near his mission in southern Malawi to house these artifacts. Diplomatic missions occasionally sponsor concerts by visiting musicians or shows by visiting artists. "Disco" has become quite popular among Malawians, and hotels usually have a live band for dancers. Chancellor College, the liberal arts branch of the University of Malawi, is located in Zomba. Bunda College of Agriculture and the Kamuzu College of Nursing are in Lilongwe, and Blantyre hosts the Polytechnic College; each is a branch of the University of Malawi.

Commerce and Industry

Malawi's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which accounts for 37 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 85 percent of export earnings. Important exports that earn the bulk of Malawi's foreign exchange are tobacco, tea, coffee, peanuts, cotton, legumes, and sugar.

Malawi's few manufacturing industries are concentrated around Blantyre. These include manufacturers of soap, agricultural tools, edible oils and fats, breads, candy, beer, bricks, shoes, hair oils, cigarettes, gin, clothing, furniture, fishing nets, nails, automobile batteries, blankets, rugs, light metal work, textiles, farm trailers, bus and truck bodies, tankers, coaches, low-loaders, leather, ceramics, and wood carvings.

Inflation is very high, at 29.5 percent as of 2001. Malawi is heavily dependent on economic assistance from donor organizations and countries. The country currently faces the challenges of developing a true market economy, improving its educational facilities, and dealing with the ever growing problem of HIV and AIDS.

Transportation

Local

Local bus service in the Lilongwe area will not meet daily needs for getting to work, shopping, or recreation. Taxi service is limited in the new Capital City section of Lilongwe. Rental cars are available in both Blantyre and Lilongwe, although choice of model is limited. Rental rates are comparable to those in many parts of the U.S.

Regional

The international airport in Malawi is Kamuzu International Airport located approximately 16 miles from the Capital City section of Lilongwe. Blantyre is served by domestic flights only; flying time from Lilongwe is about 50 minutes. Limited international flights link Lilongwe with neighboring countries, South Africa and Kenya. Direct European service is currently limited to a Saturday flight to London (British Airways), a Tuesday flight to Paris (Air France), and Thursday and Sunday flights to Amsterdam (KLM). Connections to other international locations can be made in Nairobi, Johannesburg, Lusaka, and Harare.

A two-lane paved highway connects the major population centers of Lilongwe, Zomba, and Blantyre. Driving time from Lilongwe to Blantyre or Zomba is approximately 4 hours. The road is good but narrow, and drivers must be cautious as cattle and other farm animals wander onto the road. Good quality, two-lane roads also connect Lilongwe with the Zambia border and Mzuzu and Karonga in the north of the country. Travel from Lilongwe to Lake Malawi at Salima is being improved; a new two-lane asphalt highway should be completed this year. Most of the other roads in the country vary in quality from rough tarmac roads to dirt and gravel. Some of the lesser traveled roads may be impassable in the rainy season. Although Malawi is connected by road to South Africa via Mozambique, as well as through Zambia and Zimbabwe, surface travel through Mozambique should not be

attempted. Lusaka can be reached in 1 day of driving over tarmac roads, although care must be taken to avoid potholes and rough sections of the road. From Lusaka, it is possible to continue on tarmac road to Victoria Falls, or to South Africa via Harare.

Malawi Railways has about 560 miles of track, primarily intended for freight haulage. Some passenger services are offered, but trains are slow and accommodations are frequently restricted to third class.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Telephone service in Malawi is generally satisfactory. Calls can usually be completed between urban centers within the country with a minimum of delay, although occasional outages do occur, particularly in residential areas. Many international call destinations may be reached by direct dial, including the U.S., and service is good. It is more expensive, however, to call the U.S. from Malawi than vice versa. Telegraph service to all areas is adequate.

Radio and TV

Malawi has its own government radio station, and one TV station. Most programs are in the Chichewa language and include few cultural presentations. A good shortwave radio is useful, especially for receiving international news on BBC or VOA.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The *Daily Times* newspaper is published in English on weekdays with a special edition, the *Malawi News*, on Saturday; it concentrates on local news. The international editions of *Time* and *Newsweek* are available locally. All publications sold in Malawi are subject to local censorship.

Although both Lilongwe and Blantyre have some bookshops, selection is limited, and prices are very high by U.S. standards. A branch of the Malawi National Library is located

in Lilongwe; USIS and the British Council also operate small libraries; again, selection is limited.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Medical facilities in Lilongwe are inadequate. There are a few qualified physicians and specialists practicing in Malawi who may be consulted if necessary, but hospitals are not up to U.S. standards.

Local pharmacies carry primarily European or South African drugs, and their supplies are unreliable. Therefore, bring an adequate supply of specifically needed drugs with you. Try to make arrangements through a U.S. physician or pharmacist for replenishing prescriptions.

There is a Seventh-day Adventist clinic in Lilongwe currently staffed by an American dentist and an American optometrist. Their supplies are limited, so bring an extra pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses and lens care products.

Community Health

Sanitation in Lilongwe, Zomba, and Blantyre is generally good. Food handling in the international hotels and large restaurants appears to be satisfactory. However, foods obtained from the local open markets and supermarkets require special attention to ensure that all edible items are safe for consumption. Water from the Lilongwe water system is treated, but it is recommended that all water used for consumption be filtered and then boiled for 5 minutes.

Preventive Measures

Malaria is endemic to Malawi, and prophylaxis is advised. The Department of State recommends Mefloquine as the first choice for malaria prophylaxis for those persons able to take it. The second choice of prophylaxis is daily Paludrine (proguanil) with weekly Chloroquine. Because no anti-malarial drug prophylaxis can offer total protection, other measures to protect against

mosquito bites and the acquisition of malaria are advised. Some of those measures include: remaining in well-screened areas, especially in the evening and at night, use of mosquito nets enclosing the bed while sleeping, and use of insect repellents containing at least 35 percent DEET.

Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) contaminates most freshwater lakes and rivers in Malawi and is contracted by swimming or wading.

Diarrhea is a common symptom, but most cases are noninfectious, self-limiting, and arise from changes in food or water combined with fatigue and the emotional stresses of travel. Cholera rarely occurs in Malawi, except in areas of severe overcrowding and poor sanitation. Typhoid is endemic to Malawi, but epidemics rarely occur. Hepatitis A is also endemic to Malawi and occurs all too frequently in the expatriate community. Although boiling and filtering of water and cleansing of fruit and vegetables decrease the risk of hepatitis A, the most effective method of prevention continues to be gamma globulin injections every 4–6 months.

Insect pests include flies, mosquitoes, ticks (including a "tickbite fever" carrier), termites, moths, cockroaches, ants, and silverfish. Throughout Malawi putze flies lay their eggs in textiles, which can transfer to the skin of the wearer. To avoid skin sores, use a dryer or iron all line-dried linen and clothing.

The following immunizations are recommended for Malawi:

Yellow Fever—every 10 years

Typhoid—every 3 years

Tetanus-Diphtheria—every 10 years

Polio—one booster as an adult

Gamma Globulin—every 4–6 months

T.B. testing—every 1 year

Rabies—optional, advised for small children, series of 3

Hepatitis B—initial series of 3

Meningitis A+C—every 3 years

TRAVEL NOTES

All international flights to and from Malawi operate from Kamuzu International Airport in Lilongwe. Weekly flights are available from Paris, London, and Amsterdam, as well as regional air links with Botswana, Tanzania, Mauritius, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zambia, and Kenya. The most frequent flights are from Johannesburg and Harare. There are no direct flights from the U.S. to Malawi. However, American Airlines has joined South Africa Airlines in offering three flights a week from the JFK Airport in New York to Johannesburg. This flight complies with the Fly America regulations, as do flights on American carriers from the U.S. with transfers in Europe and South America to foreign-flag carriers that serve Malawi and southern Africa.

Persons entering Malawi must have a valid passport or travel document. Malawi visas are not required for U.S. citizens prior to arrival in Malawi. Those wishing to stay over 90 days must apply for a temporary resident permit. Travelers should, of course, have any required visas for countries they will transit.

An import permit, required for dogs and cats, must be obtained in advance by advising the Embassy of the breed, sex, age, description (color, etc.) and country of export of the pet. A certificate of good health from a veterinarian and a certificate of rabies vaccination should accompany the animal. The dog or cat must be imported directly from the country of origin and not be exposed to infection en route.

Malawi introduced its own decimal currency in February 1971. The units are kwacha and tambala, with one kwacha equaling 100 tambala. The Malawi kwacha (MK) is linked to a "basket" of international currencies to determine base value. As of December 2000, the rate of exchange was about MK 80.09 to US\$1. No limitation exists on bringing foreign currency or travelers checks into the country. Malawi has

strict currency laws limiting the amount of Malawi currency that may be taken out of the country, although travelers may re-export all currency declared on arrival.

Coins currently in circulation include denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 tambala, and a one kwacha coin. Older coins in circulation may carry the marking "one shilling" or "one florin," equal to 10 tambala, and 20 tambala. Notes currently in circulation are in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20, and 50 kwacha.

Credit cards, such as American Express, Mastercard, and Visa are accepted at a few restaurants and hotels, but they are not widely recognized.

Malawi uses the metric system of weights and measures, although many individuals may still quote measures in the older British system (i.e., miles, pounds, etc.).

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Jan.1 | New Year's Day |
| Jan. 15. | John Chilembwe Day |
| Mar. | |
| (2nd Mon) | Commonwealth Day* |
| Mar. 3 | Martyr's Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1. | Labor Day |
| May 1. | Kamuzu Day |
| July 6-8 | Republic Day |

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Oct. | |
| (2nd Mon) | Mother's Day* |
| Dec. | Tree Planting Holiday* |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| Dec. 26 | Boxing Day |
| | *variable |

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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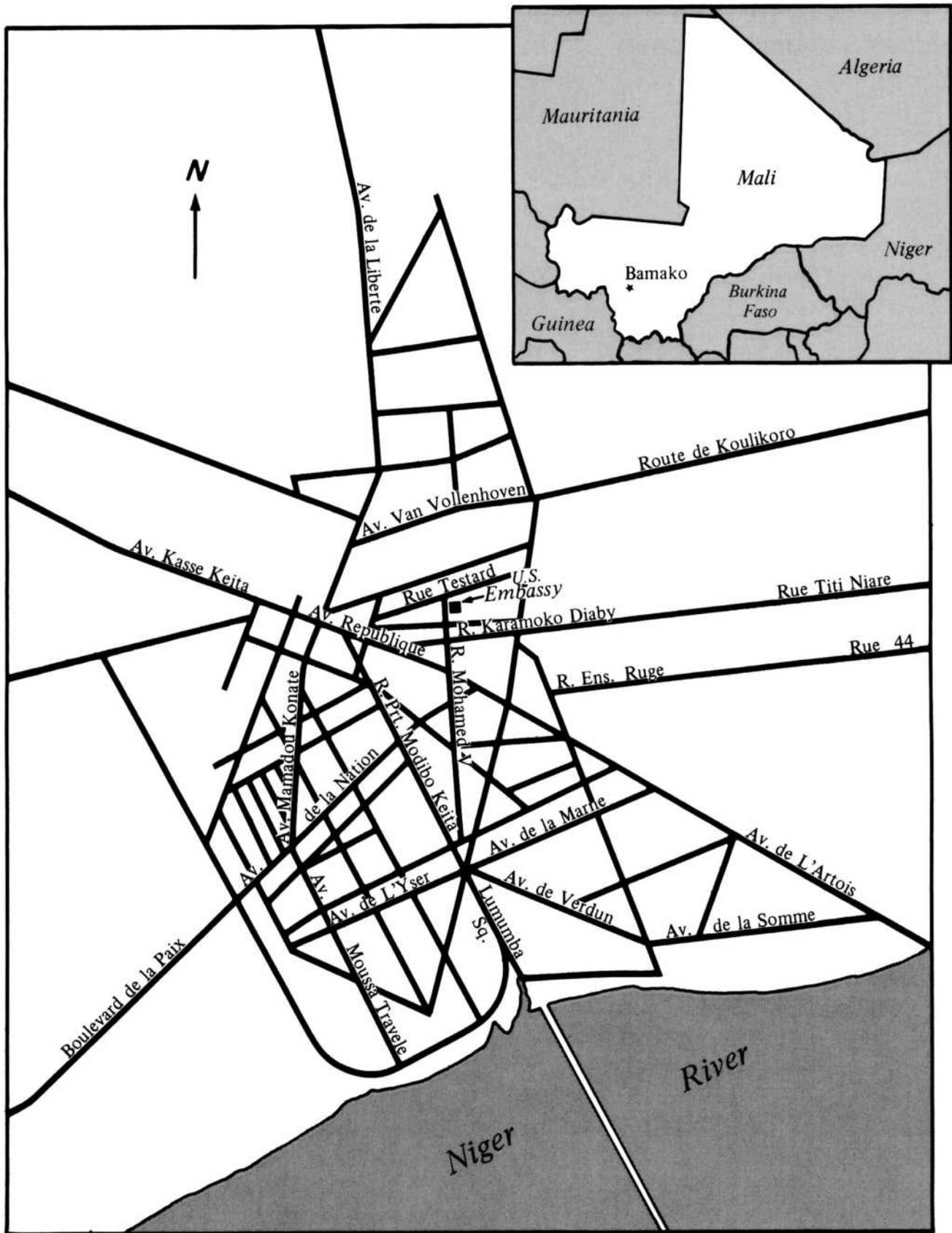
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Bamako, Mali

MALI

Republic of Mali

Major City:
Bamako

Other Cities:
Djenné, Gao, Kayes, Koulikoro, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso, Tombouctou

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2000 for Mali. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Mali is not the country to visit for safaris, wild animals, or natural forests. What it does have is surreal landscapes, beautiful artwork, castellated mosques made entirely of mud, pink sandstone villages carved into cliff faces, and undulating desert that looks like a scene from Lawrence of Arabia.

Landlocked Mali is approximately the size of Texas and California combined. It is a country old enough to have rock paintings that date back to a time when the Sahara was a blossoming paradise.

The first known empire in the region was the Empire of Ghana. This was destroyed in the 11th cen-

tury by Muslim Berbers from Mauritania and Morocco. By the middle of the 13th century, the empire had converted to Islam and had taken out a monopoly on the gold and salt trade. Under the influence of several progressive mansas (lords), Djenne and Timbuktu became the commercial Shangri-La's of West Africa.

Of the numerous ethnic groups in Mali, the largest is the Bambara (80% of the population speak Bambara, though French is the official language). The Bambara occupy many of the civil servant positions, but it is the Dogons and the Tuareg, or "blue men of the desert" (named for their indigo robes and turbans) who practice a more traditional way of life.

Drought and government policy are threatening their traditional way of life, but Tuaregs and their camel-caravans still appear unexpectedly on the horizon before melting into the desert again. The Dogons are incredibly industrious farmers living on the edges of a long narrow escarpment in the inland delta. They are also famous for their artistic abilities and elaborate masks.

Much of Mali's economic woes in the 1980s were due to a devastating drought that brought widespread famine in its wake. People and livestock died, wells dried up, villages

disappeared beneath the sand. When it did rain, it rained so violently that cattle, topsoil, and vegetation were washed away. Mali has never fully recovered from these devastations, although recent discoveries of deposits of gold may help lift the country from its economic doldrums.

The climate varies from semitropical to arid, with a rainy season from mid May to mid-September.

Mali has a rich and diverse artistic heritage that is expressed in arts, drama, and music. Through dynamic tourist agencies, tourism is increasing, and trips to many parts of Mali are now available. Although some of these trips are for the adventurous and hardy, the picturesque rewards can be great.

MAJOR CITY

Bamako

Bamako, the capital of Mali and its largest city, has a population of approximately 1,160,000. The city, situated on the banks of the Niger, is expanding rapidly along both sides of the river. Three bridges cross the Niger, one a submersible

bridge not passable during the rainy season.

Most of the houses in Bamako are low, mud-walled compounds built along unpaved streets. Increasingly, however, more modern, cement-walled “villas” with small gardens are being built. Malian government officials, prosperous merchants, and most members of the small foreign community live in quiet residential neighborhoods, some near the river and others in outlying areas of the city.

The cliffs of Koulouba, a short distance away, overlook the city and river below. Above, on the Koulouba Plateau, are located the Presidential Palace, several government ministries, and the Point G Hospital.

Unlike many of the coastal cities of West Africa, Bamako is truly African. It has in fact been called “the most African of all African cities.” It is a bustling city—traffic is congested and the streets are filled with cars, mobylettes, *bâchées* (vans or passenger pick-ups), street vendors, herds of animals, pushcarts and pedestrians.

The Grand Marché, formerly the greatest concentration of artisans and merchants in Bamako, burned to the ground in 1993. A temporary open-air market housing many of the Grand Marché’s former merchants has evolved along the Koulikoro Road. Handicrafts available in Bamako’s shops and *marchés* include batik, tie-dye and mudcloth fabrics, patchwork cloth, woven blankets, bronze figures, African trade beads, amber, wood carvings, gold and silver jewelry sold by the gram and many other items.

Government buildings, many in the French-developed Sudanic style similar to Mali’s mosques, line Bamako’s shady streets. Two landmarks in the city are the 17-story Hotel de l’Amitié, built by the Egyptian Government, and the Grand Mosquée, whose minarets can be seen from a distance. The Grand Hotel and the Grand Salam Hotel are the only two international standard hotels. The

Hotel de l’Amitié is in a rather dilapidated state of repair but has a wonderful view, overlooking the river. It is the scene of several large parties and balls. Also overlooking the river and the city’s newest and tallest building is the Central Bank of West African CFA Zone, (B.C.E.A.O.). Other points of interest in and around Bamako include the Palace of Culture (a large auditorium) across the river, the newly-constructed Artisanat, where local artisans make and sell gold and silver jewelry, ebony carvings, and leatherwork; the National Museum, a small ethnographic museum; a botanical garden and zoo.

Food

Shopping for food in Bamako is not “one stop” shopping but requires going to several locations for the items on a list. There are open-air markets, several small grocery stores, tiny neighborhood “boutiques,” good bakeries, and butchers. There are vendors who sell fish, pork, and vegetables from door-to-door. A good variety of food can be found in Bamako, and the list is constantly expanding. Stores and “boutiques” generally have fixed prices. Boutiques are open between 0900 and 1300 hours, and again between 1600 and 2000. Most other shops are open daily from 0800 to 1700. Except Sundays, most places are either closed or only open in the mornings. The market is bustling at almost any time of the day. There are no fixed prices; bargaining is in order.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are sold in open-air markets or by vendors who come to the door. A variety of fruits and vegetables are grown, although availability, quality, and price depend upon the season. Vegetables are generally available year round. Potatoes, onions, leeks, garlic, parsley, celery (very small stalks, mostly leaves but adequate for cooking), lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, radishes, green peppers, hot peppers, green beans, eggplant, and okra. Available for short periods of time, in season, are beets, broccoli, cauliflower, squash, spinach, corn (field corn), turnips,

green and red cabbage, peas, green onions and sweet potatoes. Fruits available in season are mangoes, papayas, bananas, guavas, coconut, pineapples, oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit, tangerines, strawberries, watermelon, melon, and avocados. Fresh fruits and vegetables are generally reasonable in price, often less expensive than in the U.S. Imported apples are generally available most of the year. On occasion, other fruits and vegetables such as artichokes, asparagus, endives, mushrooms, Pascal celery, peaches, cherries, pears, grapes, nectarines, and apricots can be found in the grocery stores; they are imported from France and are extremely expensive.

Peanuts are available year round in the market; almonds, hazelnuts, and pistachio nuts are available in the stores at high prices. Herbs and spices are also found in the market: mint, fresh ginger, basil, piment, caraway seeds, bay leaves, nutmeg, lemon grass (*citronella*), peppercorns, salt, curry, bouillon cubes, and many local spices, such as ground baobab leaves. Other spices, imported, are available at very high prices in the grocery stores.

Mali is also West Africa’s leading nation in livestock. Very good beef, pork, and mutton is raised here and sold in the market and in several small butcher shops. Beef and mutton purchased in the open market are freshly butchered and should be frozen before use. Beef is quite flavorful, but very lean and often tough. Meat tenderizers and marinades are useful to bring. The French style of cut is available, though some butchers can do the U.S. cuts. Fresh meat is not expensive by U.S. standards; filet sells for about \$2.50 a pound. Chicken is seasonal due to the intense heat in the spring. There are poultry farms with excellent chickens in the winter months only; all other time of the year, chickens are skinny and tough. Imported bacon, ham, sausages, and *pâtés* are available in the grocery stores and butcher shops but are quite expensive.

Chicken, turkey, pigeon, guinea hen, and rabbit are also sold in the market. Excellent river fish (Nile perch or capitaine) and carp are also sold. Both poultry and fresh fish are expensive by U.S. standards. Frozen shrimp is sold in the grocery stores at very high prices. Canned seafood and fish (tuna, salmon, etc.) are also available.

Eggs are available in the market, stores, and from door-to-door salesmen. They are usually small and not always fresh. Fresh milk can be found but must be boiled before use. UHT (ultra-high temperature) long-life milk is sold both in whole, 2%, and skimmed forms; this milk does need refrigeration until opened. Excellent powdered whole milk (full cream) is also available and not expensive. Butter (salted and unsalted) and margarine is available, as is long-life cream. Many European cheeses are available (Roquefort, Camembert, Brie, Gruyere, Chevre, Gouda, Edam) and are quite expensive. Cheddar cheese, cottage cheese, mozzarella, and cream cheese are found in the shops occasionally, but American-type cheeses are not available. Imported “creme fraiche” (cultured cream), whipping cream, yogurt, and ice cream are available, but very expensive. Mali Lait, the local milk producer, has passed U.S. Embassy Health Unit tests on its milk, yogurt, and ice cream. Infrequent shortages of staples such as butter, eggs, milk, and sugar do occur.

Several grocery stores and neighborhood shops offer a variety of packaged goods and canned items such as fruits, juices, vegetables, soups, fish, and meat. The quality of some canned goods is not as high as equivalent American items. Paper products, dairy products, sausages, ham, and cold cuts are available. Also found are liquors, wines (mostly French), beer, soft drinks, and fruit juices; cookies and crackers; jams and honey; soaps, detergents, and cleaning products; coffee and tea; limited pasta products and couscous; oils, vinegar, sauces, and condiments; cocoa and spices; even some specialty items for Chinese

and Vietnamese cooking. Most of the items stocked in the stores are imported from Europe; there are many Price-Leader brand products. U.S. products are being introduced to Europe and are ending up on the local shelves. All imported items are expensive; i.e., 5 kg of laundry soap at \$32.00, 1 liter of cream for \$16.00, 1 kg of cheese at \$22.75. Store items are not always in stock; items available one week may not be available again for months.

Jars of baby food and baby cereal are sold in the stores; however, there is not much variety; they are expensive and items are often out of stock. Excellent quality European baby formulas are usually available in the pharmacies and are less expensive than American brands.

Local bakeries carry French-style bread (baguettes), pastries, and “pain de mie,” loaf-style breads similar to, but heavier than, American bread. Whole wheat and white flour is available, though most people either bring their own or buy from the commissary. Cake and cookie decorating items and food colorings are available in limited variety at some of the Lebanese shops.

Canned pet food is sold in the grocery stores. Most pet owners prefer to have pet food prepared at home, using rice and meat and vegetable scraps. Pet products such as flea collars, worm medicines, heartworm medication, shampoos, rawhide chew bones, and toys are not available.

Malian, French, and some American brands of cigarettes can be found. Pipe tobaccos are not available.

Clothing

Clothing among Malians is predominantly African in style, although young men often wear Western styles for everyday. Styles for men include the “zerebou,” a long tunic over pants, or for dressier wear, a “grand boubou”—a long, large embroidered robe worn over a short tunic and pants. Only a small number of women wear Western clothing. For everyday, women wear a “pagne,” a length of cloth wrapped

into a type of skirt, and a blouse. For dressy wear, women wear a boubou—a long flowing robe over a pagne. Women have elaborately braided hairstyles and often wear a scarf wound around their heads.

Among the foreign community, Western-style clothing is worn: slacks, shirts, skirts, dresses, blouses, etc. Casual, lightweight, loose, summery styles are worn most of the time. Cotton and cotton-blend fabrics are preferable because of the heat. Clothing should be washable; it is very dusty during the dry season and muddy during the rainy season. Fairly reliable dry-cleaning is available. Clothing wears out quickly because it must be washed frequently due to the climate.

Western-style clothing is available in some boutiques but prices are generally high and quality is not good. Many local tailors can copy a garment from a picture or sample, although the quality is usually marginal. A good selection of fabrics is available, both imported and local. African tie-dyed and batik fabrics are colorful, brightly patterned, and make nice casual clothing. Patterns are not available and the supply of sewing notions—thread, buttons, zippers and trims—is limited.

Shoes should be low-heeled, sturdy, and comfortable. There are very few sidewalks so shoes wear out quickly from the dirt and rubble. Sandals can be worn most of the year and are practical because of the heat. Shoes can be found in local boutiques, but the selection of styles and sizes is minimal and the quality varies from fair to poor. Hand-crafted leather shoes, sandals, and purses can be made to order at the Artisanat. Plastic sandals and flip-flops for adults and children are sold in the market.

Lightweight jackets or sweaters are needed occasionally during the cool season. An umbrella is useful during the rainy season. Bring lightweight hats for protection against the sun. Some warm, winter-type clothing is necessary in case travel to cooler climates is required. Nylon

stockings are uncomfortable because of the heat and are rarely worn.

Business dress is informal and more casual than in the U.S.: short-sleeved shirts worn without a tie, sports shirts and pants for men; lightweight casual dresses, suits, and skirts and blouses for women. Dress at informal evening functions is generally casual: sports shirts, short or long dresses, skirts, pants, etc.

For children, be sure to bring a generous supply of summer clothing. Heat and dust often necessitate several changes a day. Playwear should include shorts, pants, jeans, sundresses, t-shirts, swimsuits, sandals, sneakers, and sun hats. Dress for school is informal. Other items to bring for children are cotton underwear, socks, pajamas, a lightweight jacket, several sweaters, some winter wear and a coat for travel to cooler climates. For infants, bring a large supply of cloth and disposable diapers, diaper pins, and rubber pants. Disposable diapers are available on the local economy but are very expensive. American-style rubber pants are not available. Some baby clothes are available but the variety is small and the quality is poor. Cotton undershirts, cotton pajamas and summer-weight infant wear should be brought. Plastic sandals for children are available in the market. Also bring baby towels, washcloths, crib sheets and cotton baby blankets.

Supplies and Services

Most basic everyday needs are found in Bamako, however, items that must be imported are generally very expensive. The majority of brands are European with some American products. If you do not want substitutes for favorite items and brands, then bring these items with you. The following are suggested items for shipment to Bamako:

Laundry detergent, fabric softeners, and stain removers are available, but are expensive. Pre-soaks and

starch are not available at all. Clothespins, general-purpose liquid soaps for housecleaning and dishwashing, scouring powders, hand soaps, steel wool, and plastic scrub pads are available at reasonable prices. Flashlights are available, and size D batteries are produced locally; other sizes, except AA, are usually not found. Also, bring any specialized batteries your camera and clocks/watches may require. Spray insecticides are sold, but bring fly swatters. An outdoor thermometer, which registers temperature in both Fahrenheit and Celsius degrees, is useful to have.

Basic office and paper supplies can be found locally, but standard sizes of many items such as envelopes, are different than equivalent American items. Bring a supply of American postage stamps. Printed address labels are very handy. A good French-English dictionary is also important to have.

Most basic toiletries can be found in Bamako. They are generally imported from Europe and are therefore expensive and not the same quality as American brands. European-brand shampoos, deodorants, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shaving cream, disposable razors, suntan lotions, sunscreens, moisturizers, and feminine hygiene products are available but expensive. Razor blades to fit American razors, hair conditioners and home permanent, dental floss, and disposable "Wash 'n Dri"-type towelettes are not available. Bring lots of insect repellent; the locally available insect repellent is oily and heavily perfumed. Some cosmetics and nail care products are available, though the selection of colors and types is limited. You should bring your favorite brands of cosmetics and toiletries.

Bring a supply of usual household medicine chest items such as aspirin, Band-Aids, and standard first-aid supplies, birth control items, diarrhea medication, products for insect bites, heat rash and sunburn, vitamin and mineral supplements, and baby needs such as diaper rash

ointment, etc. Also, bring a thermometer, heating pad, ice bag, and vaporizer. Bring at least two extra pairs of prescription eyeglasses and sunglasses. The local French optician can grind lenses, but it is expensive. Also, bring contact lens solutions and cleaning items—they are not available here. Before leaving the U.S., arrange for a regular supply of any known needs for prescription medications. Several worldwide web pharmacies will mail order health, drug, and sundry items.

A limited variety of toys can be found here, but the prices are incredibly high. Also, bring activity supplies such as crayons, coloring books, chalk, construction paper, paints, brushes, and paste. Most of these items are not available. Ordinary school supplies such as pencils, pens, tablets and paper are all available and reasonably priced. For younger children and infants, bring booster chairs, car seats, bed guards, potty seats, food grinder, baby bottles, etc.

Many families in Bamako have video equipment. You may want to arrange for someone in the U.S. to record special programs for you. Also, bring a stereo system, CD and/or cassette player, tapes, and CDs. Street vendors sell inexpensive audiocassette tapes. Bring camera equipment, film, batteries, etc. Don't forget film mailers; film can be developed here, but the quality of print is not always good and is very expensive. Because of frequent power fluctuations, bring a voltage regulator/ stabilizer to protect your electrical equipment. They are expensive but along with a surge suppressor, they will afford the best protection for your investment. Voltage regulators should be sized according to the power consumption of your equipment. Remember that laser printers draw a lot of wattage.

The following computer equipment is available: Full representation of IBM, Compac, Apple, Dell, and the French make, Zenith. Bring a good UPS with a built-in stabilizer and runs on 220v (50hz). Computer with

modem-56K is recommended, and printer and ink cartridges. There is reliable technical service for repairs and upgrades from in-house staff, and some Mission spouses are computer wizards. The brands listed above have good repair technicians.

Bring tennis racquet and balls, softball gloves and bat, golf clubs, camping equipment (tent, sleeping bags, lanterns, coolers, etc.), lawn games such as badminton and croquet, indoor games, playing cards, score-cards, fishing equipment, tack if you ride, and pool toys and games. Bird watching is excellent; if interested bring binoculars and the Field Guide to West African Birds (see Recommended Reading).

Bring musical instruments and sheet music. Needlework, sewing and craft supplies are difficult to find here; a list of mail-order sources for craft and hobby supplies is very useful.

Many tailors in Bamako will make simple clothing, do piecework such as buttonholes, sew slipcovers and curtains, and do mending. Tailors make all types of clothing for women, both Western and African styles; safari-type suits, pants and shirts are the most common items for men. The work is generally reasonably priced and quality is usually fair.

Simple shoe, leather, purse, and watchband repairs can be done at the Artisanat. The work is done by hand, but is adequate and inexpensive.

Laundry is done at home as government-furnished housing is supplied with a washer and dryer. Some people employ a domestic to do the washing and ironing. Drycleaning services have improved, however, not to U.S. standards.

Bamako has a limited number of unisex hair salons that offer standard services at moderate to high prices. Quality varies.

Bamako has radio repair shops, but parts for U.S. equipment are rare. The quality of work is improving.

Repair service for other types of U.S.-manufactured equipment, machines, and appliances are not generally available in the city; however, local technicians with the proper parts are capable to do repairs. Parts are not available locally and must be ordered from the U.S.

Domestic Help

Most American families employ domestic help. Household help is readily available at reasonable wages. Servants can be male or female, although women are usually hired to care for children. The average family employs a housekeeper/cook and a gardener; families with small children often have a nanny. Many families employ a full-time cook in addition to a housekeeper. Servants rarely live in, although they can be asked to work in the evenings, and/or weekends; they are usually paid extra for these occasions. English-speaking domestics are rare; many will speak some French, although fluency varies, but most domestics do not know how to read or write.

Most domestics seeking employment have "attestations," letters of recommendation, which you should read. Servants should have a physical examination and chest X-ray before employment, and annually thereafter.

The workweek is generally 6 days a week, 10 hours a day. Salaries, paid in CFA Francs, range from \$60 to \$160 monthly, depending on the employees' responsibilities and experience. Food or an allowance for one meal per day and a transportation allowance should be provided. Some employers also provide coffee, tea and sugar as well as clothing money to buy uniforms. Although the employer is not obliged to give the employee bonuses for holidays, it is customary to give something at Ramadan and at Tabaski, the two major Muslim holidays in Mali, or at Christmas. Employees are entitled to a month's vacation each year, although extra pay may be given in lieu of vacation if mutually acceptable.

Unlike many countries, Mali has established a work code for household help that stipulates working hours, overtime pay requirements, probationary periods, vacation and sick leave policies, meal and uniform policies, salary increases, and regulations for termination of employees.

A contribution is required for every 3-month period to the Malian social security system for each employee even during the trial period. This protects both employer and employee in case of accident or illness and provides hospitalization, a monthly stipend for each child of the employee, a pregnancy stipend, and retirement benefits to the employee.

Religious Activities

Islam is the predominant religion in Mali. A large mosque is located in the center of Bamako, and many small neighborhood mosques are situated around the city. Both Catholic and Protestant churches are in Bamako as well. Mass in French and Bambara are regularly given at the large, centrally located Roman Catholic Cathedral. Protestant services in French and Bambara are held at the International Protestant Church run by the Gospel Missionary Union, and worship services in English take place on Sunday evenings at the Protestant Mission compound. There is also a Bahai and Jehovah's Witness Community in Mali. There is no synagogue. Protestant Sunday school classes taught by Gospel Missionary Union staff is held at the American School on Sunday mornings during the school year. An Adult Bible Study group meets Sunday mornings at the American school.

Education

The American International School of Bamako (AISB) was established in January 1977 to provide an American curriculum for children from nursery to pre-kindergarten (from age 2) through 8th grade. AISB is a private, non-profit institution governed by a school board, of seven elected members and the Ambassador's Representative. They are responsible for governing policy

and financial management of the school. The school is 95% funded by day school tuition and fees. The school also receives grant monies from the Department of State's Office of Overseas Schools. Accreditation is by the Commission on Elementary Schools of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

Admission to AISB is open to children from the official American community, American business and missionary groups, and from other diplomatic and international organizations. School enrollment during the 1999-2000 school year included 86 students. A third of the student body is from the U.S.; 18 other nationalities are represented.

In school year 99-00, the faculty consisted of five overseas hired homeroom teachers plus locally hired French language, art, music, library, and PE teachers. Course work is based on a standard U.S. curriculum and testing program. Placement tests in mathematics, vocabulary, and reading comprehension are given to all new students. Admission is based on previous school achievement, age, the placement tests, and a personal interview. In addition to regular courses, classes are given in art, music, French, physical education, and computer science. English as a second language (ESL) classes are provided to AISB students who are not fluent in English; an additional fee is charged for this. There is also an after-school activities program for sports, games, and handicrafts. Classes are small, with a student-teacher ratio of less than 10 to 1. Only students with mild learning disabilities or physical handicaps that meet all other admission requirements will be accepted. The school buildings were constructed in 1982 and are located on a pleasant site facing the Niger River. There are 10 classrooms, a library, and a principal's office. All classrooms are air-conditioned. Grounds for outdoor activities and physical education classes are located on campus. The school is equipped with a well-stocked library, playground equip-

ment, and all of the necessary texts and school materials. Two houses have also been acquired to serve as School Office and the Early Learning Center. There is a computer room using Macintosh computers for instruction and computer literacy classes.

School is in session Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 1:30 pm. There is a mid-morning break for snacks and recess. The academic year, which starts in late August and ends in mid June, is divided into semesters and totals 180 school days. Classes commence in late August and run through mid-January; the second semester runs from mid-January through mid-June. There is a 3-week winter holiday vacation in December-January.

The local school system includes a French-language school, Lycee Francais Liberte A, for French citizens and other French-speaking foreign children. Liberte A provides primary classes from the 1st through 5th grades, and secondary grades equivalent to American grades 6 through 12. Secondary studies are preparatory to the French baccalaureate degree. Liberte A will not allow non-French speaking children into its program. Only if the children have already attended a French school, will they be permitted admittance. Generally, students attend Liberte A from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday, though higher grades do have some afternoon classes from 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., supplemented with French, PE, Drama and other coursework. Thirty-seven nationalities are represented, including French, American, German, Malian, Russian, and others. The school year starts at the beginning of September and runs to the middle of June. Tel: 223-22- 41-23. Fax: 22322-06-66, Email: Lberte@liberte.edu.ml or www.libertebko.org

Bamako has several French-language pre-schools. Rose et Blue is not equivalent to an American daycare center; however, it does provide childcare and play activities for children between the ages of 1 and 6

years. It is open all year. Les Lutins offers a pre-school program, which is a preparatory for entrance to Liberte As elementary classes. Les Lutins is open from the beginning of October through the middle of June. There is generally a waiting list for admission, so enrollment plans should be made early. E-mail Mr. Coulibaly, Director, PTA, at: aoua@cefib.com

The American International School has an Early Learning Center. The nursery program provides daycare service for 2-year-olds within a safe and caring environment. The emphasis is on sensory-motor skills and simple symbolic play. The pre-kindergarten concentrates on social and emotional development. An individual approach is used to meet the needs of each child and to encourage growth from their current developmental level in a stimulating and nurturing atmosphere. The child must be 3 and 4 years of age. The kindergarten program emphasizes pre-readiness skills utilizing an individual "play-based" approach. Each child is given the opportunity to develop at his/her own rate in a child-centered environment. The child must be the age of 5 by the first day of school.

Special Educational Opportunities

There are no formal, English-language training or educational facilities for handicapped children in Bamako. On occasion, there have been teachers at AISB who have had training or experience in special education, but the school does not have a formal program.

The new American Cultural Center will be opening soon and once again will sponsor lectures, movies, and other presentations. The French Cultural Center offers movie and concert series, plays, lectures, and exhibits. It also has a large lending library.

Individual or group lessons in English, French, and Bambara are available at the OMBEVI language training school sponsored by the Malian Ministry of Rural Develop-

ment. Many local private tutors are also available to teach various foreign languages.

Afternoon music, craft and sports classes are available for children at the French Cultural Center and American School. Several local teachers are available to give lessons for piano, flute, and other musical instruments.

Swimming lessons are offered at the Amitié Hotel. Informal exercise groups have been organized in several neighborhoods. Tennis lessons are available at various clubs.

French-language classes, using FSI course methods or "French in Action," are available locally. Beginning Bambara lessons are also available.

Other types of classes are taught and various interest groups are established at different times, depending upon the skills and interests of individual members of the community.

Sports

Americans in Bamako spend a lot of time out-of-doors, swimming, golfing, playing tennis, and enjoying other outdoor sports and activities.

Swimming is a year-round pastime in Bamako and a good way to "beat the heat." All government-owned and -leased houses have swimming pools. The Hotel de UAmitie, the Grand Hotel, Hotel Salam, and the Mandé Hotel offer swimming pool memberships. UAmitié has a very large pool, a children's wading

pool, an outdoor restaurant and bar, two tennis courts, a 9-hole golf course, and gardens with peacocks and other birds and animals wandering about.

Small boat owners may join the Bamako Canoe Club, which provides docking and storage facilities. During the July-November season, the Niger is high enough for a boat to travel upriver from Bamako to the Guinea border. When the river level is low (December to June), the river is not navigable for larger craft

(10 hp and above), but smaller boats can still be used in some places.

The biggest spectator sport in Mali is soccer. Mali has several good national teams, whose games in the Omnisport Stadium are enthusiastically attended. Every neighborhood has a soccer field and as many as 10-15 neighborhood teams. Games are played on Sundays and any other day that teams can get together to arrange a game. Basketball is also popular and there are several national teams.

Adult and children's softball games are played on weekends. Some equipment, i.e., bases, bats, and balls are available; however, you should bring your own glove. Bamako has fielded teams to participate in the various West African softball tournaments, including the West African Invitational Softball Tournament (WAIST), usually held in February in Dakar.

The Marine House hosts a number of unofficial functions open to the American community, including family day twice a month on Sunday afternoons and Friday night movies. Volleyball, swimming, badminton, and table games are available most weekends at the Marine House. There is also exercise/aerobic equipment for the Direct Hire American Community located on the premises. The Marines occasionally plan social/holiday activities for general community participation.

The Hash House Harriers run every Saturday.

The Bamako Tennis Club has three tennis courts for members and one court rented out at hourly rates for nonmembers. This club is very popular and has a waiting list of about 1-year for membership; outstanding players and chiefs of mission are exempted from the waiting list. Temporary summer memberships are available for the months of July, August, and September. Four major tennis tournaments are held each year at the club.

The Club Hippique de Bamako (riding club) offers English-style riding

and jumping lessons. Members may board horses at the club for CFA 100,000 per month. Non-members may rent horses, with tack provided, at hourly rates. The Gendarmerie in the Dar es Salaam neighborhood will also rent horses on an hourly basis. If you bring your own tack, remember that local horses are small Arabian horses, 1.5 to 1.6 meters at the shoulder.

Bamako has a lovely, green, rather short, nine-hole golf course and clubhouse, located behind the UAmitie Hotel in central Bamako. Membership is equivalent to approximately \$550 per year (2000) plus a \$250 joining fee per person. The course is scheduled for relocation out of town in 2002-2003.

Horse races are held on Sundays in season at the local Hippodrome. African ballet, judo, karate and other martial arts are taught at several clubs in Bamako.

Jogging is popular; early morning is the best time for running due to high temperatures later in the day.

Fishing is good on the Niger River during the dry season and large capitaine (Nile perch), carp, and catfish are common catches. Hunting is officially prohibited in Mali.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The Government of Mali is making an effort to encourage tourism. A number of private travel agencies have offices in Bamako and in other cities of interest to tourists. Tours can be arranged through local travel agents or the hotels. Be sure to bring photography equipment and film. Photo opportunities are limitless and varied in Mali. A photo permit is not required, but photography of airports, bridges, and military installations is forbidden.

The best time to see the country is during the cool dry season from November to February. Travel is sometimes difficult in Mali, but always interesting. Many Malian towns can be reached by paved road. Beyond the paved network, roads

are laterite and dirt and vary from fair to nearly impassable. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are necessary off the main roads.

Bring camping equipment such as tents, lightweight cots, sleeping bags, canteens, cooking equipment, camping foods, coolers, etc. Hotels are found only in the larger cities and towns. In other areas of Mali, simple overnight lodging and cooking facilities are available only at primitive "campements."

Several interesting places are close enough to Bamako for day or weekend trips. Kati, a pleasant little town about 30 minutes from Bamako, has a colorful market on Sunday mornings. A drive down the Guinea Road affords views of waterfalls and various picnic spots. The Sibi market on Saturdays is also worth a visit. The drive along the canal to Baguineda is also very picturesque and great for picnics.

The Selingue Dam, a 2-hour drive south of Bamako, is an interesting site to spend a day or a weekend. Although accommodations are not up to Western standards, there are furnished villas available for rent, a large swimming pool, a restaurant, and a tennis court nearby in the small "company town," which once housed employees of the firm who built the dam. Reservations for food and lodging must be made in advance.

Segou, a pleasant 3-hour drive from Bamako, is located on the right bank of the Niger River near the spot where the explorer Mungo Park first saw the river. The city is notable for its red-colored mud brick walls and the government buildings, built in the Sudanic architectural style. Hand-knotted wool rugs with Malian-inspired designs are made at the Nieleni rug cooperative located in Segou. The cooperative is open to tourists and it is interesting to watch as the women card, spin, dye the wool, and knot the rugs on their looms. Segou also has a large and colorful market on Mondays.

Mopti, an 8-hour drive from Bamako on a paved road, is located at

the point where the Niger and Bani Rivers meet. It is an important fishing port, which becomes a city of islands during the rainy season. The harbor is usually crowded with large pirogues that ply the river carrying passengers and goods up and down river. It is an area of many different ethnic groups including Bambara, Peuhl, Tuareg, and others. Mopti has a large mosque and a lively market, with a section reserved for Malian handicrafts including the distinctive Mopti wool blankets, Peuhl wedding blankets, hats, earrings, trade beads, Tuareg jewelry, leatherwork, and carvings. The Kanaga hotel in Mopti, modeled after the mud-walled styles of the region's mosques, is modern and comfortable.

Djenne, 2 hours southwest of Mopti, is famous for its imposing mud-brick mosque, a major religious center, and its Monday market. Three kilometers away are the excavations at Jenne-Jeno ("ancient Djenne"), an important Iron Age site and the oldest known city in Africa south of the Sahara.

Several hours' drive from Mopti is the town of Sangha in the heart of Dogon country, along the Bandiagara cliffs. The rock and mud-cliff dwellings of the Dogon people and the distinctive round granaries with their conical straw roofs dot the steep, rocky walls of the Bandiagara escarpment. Clustered into small groups decreed by tradition, the dwellings blend into the landscape, making them almost invisible from a distance. The animist Dogon are culturally distinct from other tribes in Mali. They adhere to their own ancient traditions and beliefs based on a complex system of myths, which explain and create order in their universe. They are renowned for their art, and for their dances, which they will occasionally perform for tourists for a fee.

Timbuktu (Tombouctou), the fabled city of gold, legendary for its camel caravans and renowned in the 15th century as a city of wealth and Moslem scholarship, was once the crossroads between the Arab world to the

north and black Africa to the south. Now a sleepy, sandy town on the edge of the Sahara Desert, Timbuktu is still worth the visit. The ancient mosques of Djingueriber and Sankore, as well as the rooming houses of some of the famous explorers Barth, Caille, and Laing, can still be seen. Stoned walls line the quiet streets and mud-brick houses with latticed windows and carved wooden doors decorated with metal studs. Tuareg nomads, the fierce "Blue Men" of the desert, can be found in camps outside the city. The difficult 2-day drive to Timbuktu has been discouraged due to the banditry in the area. A travel ban on overland travel to Timbuktu was reinstated in June 2000.

Three riverboats (the Tombouctou, the General Soumare, and the Kankan Moussa) leave from Koulikoro (an hour north of Bamako) and go to Mopti, Timbuktu and Gao. Riverboats generally operate between early September and mid-December, depending on the depth of the river. The trip is 5 days, one way to Gao, and 7 days (against the current) on return. Many people travel one-way down river on the boat and return to Bamako by road. Others board the boat in Mopti after visiting Djenne and Dogon country. The riverboats are austere even in deluxe or first class. All meals are provided, although it is a good idea to bring drinking water, fruit and snacks. The cost for a one-way trip to Gao ranges from CFA 418,757 (\$782) for deluxe class for two persons, and CFA 272,283 (\$508) first class for one person. The trip is quite an experience, the life of the fishing people and herders along the riverbanks is fascinating, and you may even see hippopotami swimming in the river. With current restrictions on travel, it is best to check with the U.S. Embassy before traveling by river to points north of Mopti (e.g., Timbuktu, Gao). Travelers should read the relevant section of the Consular Information Sheet before traveling in Mali.

Road trips may be driven through Côte d'Ivoire, where there are several interesting towns and a game

park. You can also drive to Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso in Burkina Faso, to Niamey, capital of Niger, and on from these cities to other African countries. The rocky track to Dakar is not recommended, but the hardy may want to go there overland by train. The road between Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Malian border has had recent carjackings.

Entertainment

Several local theatrical groups present plays in French regularly at the French Cultural Center. The French Cultural Center also sponsors numerous cultural presentations annually, including popular and classical music.

Several local theaters show French, American, Indian, Italian, and Chinese movies. Two large theaters in town, one at the Amitié Hotel and the other at the Palace of Culture, show current French films or American films dubbed in French.

The French Cultural Center presents film series and regular children's matinees. A travel film and lecture series in French is presented each year at the Hotel de l'Amitié. Popular American movies are also shown weekly at the Marine House.

You will have plenty of time to listen to music and to enjoy reading. Bring along a good collection of CD's, tapes, and books. Both the American and French Cultural Centers have lending libraries.

Bamako has a number of restaurants that serve African, French, Mexican, Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, Indian, Italian, and Lebanese specialties. There are a few fast-food restaurants and several local bakeries where sandwiches are served. The Grand Hotel, Hotel Salam, and the Mandé Hotel offer a Sunday buffet brunch. Restaurants generally open at 7 p.m. for the evening and reservations are rarely required.

A number of nightclubs and discotheques offer either live or recorded dance music.

Social Activities

Social activities among the American community in Bamako are relaxed and informal. Cocktail parties, buffets, informal dinners, and barbecues around the pool are popular ways to entertain. Rotary and Lions Clubs hold regular meetings in Bamako. An International Women's Club meets bi-monthly. Every Thursday is a "Play Group" for children ages 1 to 4 years.

Different groups such as the Rotary and Lions Club give several formal charity balls each year. These affairs are generally open to all.

An international duplicate bridge club meets twice a week in the evenings at the Hotel de l'Amitié. The club is registered by European Bridge organizations, and master's points can be awarded. Games are played in French.

OTHER CITIES

DJENNÉ is a small town about 50 miles south of Mopti in southern Mali. It is situated on the flood lands of the Niger and Beni rivers southwest of Tombouctou. Djenné is famous for its mosque built in unique Sudanic style. It is also known for traditional handicrafts in wood, textiles, and terra-cotta.

GAO is situated on the Niger River at the southern edge of the Sahara in eastern Mali. It is best known as the capital of the Songhai empire which rose to power in the late 15th century. Today, Gao is the point of departure for trans-Saharan expeditions. The mosque of Askia Mohammad, a Songhai ruler, is here. The region around Gao is irrigated and permits the growing of rice, wheat, and sorghum.

KAYES is situated in southwest Mali, about 250 miles west of Bamako. With a population of about 48,000, Kayes is a stop on the railroad between Dakar, Senegal, and Bamako. Peanuts are grown here and livestock is also raised.

KOULIKORO is the capital city of the Koulikoro region in southwestern Mali. Established in 1977, the city is about 35 miles from Bamako and had a population of almost 20,000 in 1987. Koulikoro is a transportation and industrial center, producing soap, cottonseed oil, and peanut oil.

MOPTI is a chaotic port and marketplace located on the Bani River, one of the fingers of the Niger, 275 miles northeast of Bamako in eastern Mali. With a population of about 75,000, Mopti is sometimes called "the Venice of Africa"; the comparison, however, does not do the city justice. Its appeal lies in the fact that it is thoroughly African, not quasi-European. It does not have the high-rise hotels and game parks of Kenya, nor the sophistication of Dakar (Senegal), nor the commercial and architectural appeal of Abidjan in Cote d'Ivoire. Rather, Mopti's appeal lies in its rich history as a crossroads of trade and crafts. Some of the sights in Mopti include the gaily painted, hand-poled dugouts that travel up and down the river; fish being bartered at the water's edge; and the central marketplace, which is alive and bustling. The city's mosque is a commanding sight on the horizon. Major crops grown in the surrounding area are rice, millet, onions, cassava, and peanuts. Fishing and livestock raising are significant. Mopti's market and rest camp are both tourist stops.

SÉGOU is located on the Niger River, about 120 miles northeast of Bamako. It has a population of about 90,000. It is the headquarters of the Office du Niger, an extensive irrigation system begun in 1932. A textile factory at Ségou, built by the Chinese, has proved to be one of Mali's most successful industrial undertakings.

SIKASSO is about 190 miles southeast of Bamako, near the Cote d'Ivoire border. It has a population of about 73,000. Once the capital of the Kingdom of Kéné Dougou in the late 19th century, Sikasso is currently a center for cotton ginning

and textile manufacturing. A main road links the city with Bamako.

TOMBOUCTOU is fascinating and mysterious only in that it is indeed the Tombouctou (Timbuktu) of legendary salt caravans, traffic in slaves and gold, and trade in spices and cloth. Although the city has inspired many tales of the French Foreign Legion, riches, and adventure, it is now just a sleepy, sandy town on the edge of the Sahara, about 425 miles northeast of Bamako. If one has the time and the spirit, he can rent a camel and join the Tuaregs in having “tea on the dunes,” which consists of three tiny cups of strong mint tea and the ghosts of explorers long gone. Tombouctou has a population close to 20,000; it reached its height of prosperity as a Muslim commercial and cultural center under Songhai rule about 1500, when its population was estimated to be one million.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Mali is located in the interior of West Africa, north of the Equator, reaching to the Tropic of Cancer. The country covers 478,764 square miles, an area about the size of Texas and California combined. It is landlocked, sharing borders with seven other African nations: Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), Niger and Algeria. Situated in the same time zone as Greenwich, Mali is five hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. The capital city of Bamako lies at an elevation between 950 and 1,000 feet.

Mali stretches across three different climatic regions. To the south is tropical Sudanese savanna, wooded grasslands broken occasionally by cliffs and rock formations, watered by the Niger and Senegal Rivers and their tributaries. In the middle are the semi-arid steppe-lands of



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View of Tombouctou, Mali

the Sahel. This transitional zone between the savanna and the desert to the north is characterized by dry, sandy plains dotted with sparse trees and bushes and a vast plateau broken by isolated rocky masses. Among the latter are the Bandiagara escarpment, famous as the home of the Dogon people, and the spectacular rock buttes of Hombori. The desert zone in the north covers the largest area of Mali and is a hot, barren plain whose terrain is contoured by sand dunes and rocky outcroppings with little vegetation other than occasional patches of thorn bush.

The dry season and the rainy season are the two primary seasons in West Africa. The dry period can be further divided into two distinct seasons, mild and hot, particularly in the savanna and Sahelian regions of Mali. The rainy season usually begins in June and continues into October. Almost all of the annual rainfall occurs during this season. As much as 60-80 inches of rain may fall in the southern savanna. The amount of rainfall decreases, however, as one proceeds north. The air is warm, from 70 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and humid. The more pleasant cool season lasts from December to mid-February. The dry, moderate temperatures range from 60 degrees Fahrenheit at night to the mid-80's during the day. The hot

season starts in mid-February and goes through July. The air is dry, dusty, and very hot; temperatures often reach over 100 degrees and clouds of dust hang in the air. This is the season of the Harmattan, the dry, dusty wind that blows south from the Sahara.

Mali has two large river systems, the Senegal and the Niger. The Senegal River crosses into Mali from Guinea in the south and follows a northwest course into Senegal. The Niger River flows across the heart of Mali and serves as its most important waterway. The river courses 2,600 miles, the third longest in Africa, and played a large role in European exploration of Africa. The Niger flows northeast to the edge of the Sahara at Tombouctou (Timbuktu) where it turns east and then south, passing the town of Gao before entering Niger. The Niger is navigable from Koulikoro to Gao by large riverboats from September to November and by smaller craft for most of the rest of the year. Just beyond the Mali-Niger border rapids prevent the riverboats from going further downstream into Niger.

Population

The population of Mali in 2000 was estimated to be around 9.3 million. The annual population growth rate

for Mali is calculated at 3.2 percent, and life expectancy is probably 48-50 years. Most of the country is sparsely populated; the average population density is 18.0 inhabitants per square mile, ranging from 65 persons per square mile in the savanna and Sahelian regions, to less than one person per square mile in the less hospitable desert regions of the north. Approximately 20 percent of Mali's people live in Bamako and towns of more than 5,000 inhabitants. The rest live in villages or travel as nomads. Bamako, the capital of Mali and its largest city, has a population of approximately 1,020,000 people. The major towns include Segou (90,900), Mopti (79,800), Sikasso (113,800), Kayes (67,000), Gao (54,900) and Timbuktu (28,500).

French is Mali's official language. Bambara, the most widely spoken local language, is used by 80 percent of the population, although all ethnic groups have their own language. Mali is officially a secular state, but 90% of the population is Muslim. Only a small percentage (4%) is Christian. There are animists among the Dogon, Bambara and other ethnic groups. The intermingling of these ethnic groups, facilitated by the Niger River and a common understanding of Bambara, have given Mali an impressive legacy of harmony rare among African states.

Bambara is a written language, as is Tamashek, the Berber dialect spoken by the Tuaregs. Most other tribal languages do not have this advantage. The literacy rate in Mali is approximately 31%.

Ethnic groups in West Africa can be distinguished not only by language and physical characteristics, but also by the occupations to which each group is traditionally tied. Mali's cultural diversity includes desert nomads, cliff-dwelling cultivators, river fishermen, and the farmers of the savanna, placing it among the most interesting countries in Africa. Within each ethnic group are the hereditary castes: nobles and farmers, artisans, black-

smiths and griots, the entertainers and "keepers" of the oral history preserved through their songs.

The three geographic zones of Mali serve as rough boundaries for the delineation of the various ethnic groups. Among the groups found in the savanna zone are the Manding or Mandé. They occupy most of the southern half of the country and are the largest cultural group in Mali, representing nearly 50 percent of the population. The Manding speak dialects of Bambara and trace their origins to a small area located where the present-day borders of Mali and Guinea meet. This Manding heartland formed the center of the vast Mali Empire, which dominated West Africa from the 12th to the 17th centuries. The Manding are divided into several groups, among them the Bambara, the Malinke and the Dioula. Also found in the south of Mali, along the borders of Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso are Voltaic groups: the Minianka, Senufo, Mossi and Bobo, primarily subsistence farmers. The Voltaic peoples represent about 12 percent of Mali's population.

Among the groups found in the Sahelian zone are the Sarakole, the Peulh, Bozo, Dogon and Songhai. The Sarakole (or Soninke) are primarily merchants, who have historically migrated to other parts of the continent and who can be found in most of the important market places of West and Central Africa.

The Peulh or Fulani are found throughout Mali except in the true desert areas north of the Niger in the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth regions. Primarily cattle herders, many Peulh move with the changing of the seasons in search of grazing lands for their cattle. During the wet season they take advantage of the marginal lands away from the Niger—in the dry season they must move toward the more permanent watering places of the great inland delta of the Niger. The Peulh represent 17 percent of Mali's population. The Bozo, semi-nomadic fishermen, also move up and down the Niger and Bani Rivers following the

Niger's flood and the seasonal migrations of the fish.

The Dogon occupy the rocky cliffs of the Bandiagara plateau east of Mopti. They have resisted outside influence throughout their history and have maintained much of their traditional way of life, their animist faith, and their art forms, which have been the subject of study by numerous anthropologists and art historians. The Dogon are renowned as industrious farmers, cultivating the rocky areas of the plateau and the sandy Senou plain to its southeast. The banks of the Niger near Gao are peopled by the Songhai (or Sonrhai), heirs to the great Songhai empire of the 14th through 16th centuries. The Songhai, who make up 6 percent of Mali's population, are primarily subsistence farmers. They also make up the majority of the population of the fabled city of Timbuktu.

The Saharan desert zone is populated by two nomadic groups of Berber origin, the Tuaregs or Tamashek, who also are found in Algeria and Niger; and the Moors (Mauris) in the northwest, who live on both sides of the Mali-Mauritania border. These two groups represent five percent of Mali's population. The harshness of the desert climate shapes their way of life. They are nomadic herdsmen who are forced to move from place to place in search of water and forage for their herds of camels, cattle, sheep and goats. The Tuareg are the fabled "Blue Men of the Desert," often pictured swathed in indigo turbans, and remembered for their battles to control the deserts' caravan routes.

Public Institutions

French colonial penetration into the Soudan, the area covered by present-day Mali, began around 1880. A French civilian governor was appointed in 1893, but serious resistance to French control was not eliminated until 1898 when the Malinke warrior Samory Toure was defeated. The Soudan was then administered with other French



Aerial view of Bamako, Mali

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colonial territories as the Federation of French West Africa.

In 1957, France's "Loi Cadre" (Basic Law) granted extensive powers to a Territorial Assembly. A French constitutional referendum in 1958 accorded complete internal autonomy. The following year, representatives from Mali, Senegal, Dahomey (now Bénin), and Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), met to draft a constitution founding the Federation of Mali. When the constitution was presented in January of 1959, only Mali and Senegal voted to join the Federation, which became fully independent within the French Community on June 20, 1960. The Federation collapsed in August when Senegal seceded. On September 22, 1960, Soudan proclaimed itself the Republic of Mali and withdrew from the French Community. President Modibo Keita, whose Union Soudanaise party had dominated pre-independence politics, declared a single-party state. Keita's government pursued a socialist policy based on extensive nationalization.

Deterioration of the economy led to mounting discontent within the country. In November 1968, a group of young military officers staged a bloodless coup and set up the 14-member Military Committee for National Liberation (CMLN) with

Lieutenant Moussa Traore as President. The military leaders renounced socialism and attempted to pursue economic reforms despite several years of debilitating internal political struggles and the disastrous Sahelian drought. The first move toward a return to civilian rule occurred in 1974 when a new constitution was approved by referendum. The military government remained in power for the five-year transition period until elections were held in June 1979. General Moussa Traore, former leader of the military government, was voted into power as the first President under the new constitution.

The single party Democratic Union of the Malian People (UDPM) governed the country with the support of the military until 1991. Increasing demands for multi-party democracy in the late 1980's - early 90s culminated in several days of violent street demonstrations which left around 120 people dead. On March 26, 1991, a group of officers led by Lt. Col. Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT) overthrew the government, arresting the President and a number of his followers. A "Transitional Committee for the Salvation of the People" (CTSP) was established and appointed a Prime Minister, who in turn appointed a transition government which governed for 14 months. In a series of

six direct elections between January and April 1992, Malians ratified a new constitution, elected municipal councilors, National Assembly deputies, and, finally a president. Twenty-one political parties nationwide participated in elections, judged by international observers to be free and fair. Alpha Oumar Konare was elected to a five-year term in the second round of the presidential elections and was inaugurated on June 8, 1992.

The President, who is the head of State, appoints a Prime Minister as head of the Government. The National Assembly is a unicameral body with 117 members elected from Mali's eight regional districts. Twelve political parties are represented in the National Assembly, with the "Alliance for Malian Democracy - African Party for Solidarity and Justice" (ADEMA) holding the majority. Mali's legal system is largely based on codes inherited at independence from France. The judicial branch is mostly independent but depends on the Ministry of Justice for its budget. The highest court within the judicial system is the Supreme Court. There is a Constitutional Court and Administrative and Commercial Courts as well. The Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, assembly, association and religion. There are nearly 50 independent newspapers and journals in Mali—published with varying regularity—as well as over sixty independent radio stations in Bamako and others serving Mali's regional capitals.

Administratively, Mali is divided into eight regions and the capital district of Bamako, each under the authority of an appointed governor. Each region has from five to nine districts, or "cercles," administered by commandants. Cercles are divided into arrondissements, and arrondissements into villages. In the North, a National Pact was signed in 1992, ostensibly to end the Tuareg and Maur rebellion against the Bamako government. The northern part of the country continued to be the scene of occasional clashes between rebels and govern-

ment troops until 1994, when the Government of Mali and a majority of rebel movements agreed on a peace settlement. In March 1996 more than 3,000 firearms were burned in a symbolic “flame of peace” ceremony. During 1996 there has been a steady stream of Malian Tuareg and Maur refugees returning from Mauritania, Algeria and Burkina Faso.

Arts, Science and Education

The richness and diversity of Mali’s artistic heritage is evident throughout the country. Not only do craftsmen continue to work in towns and villages, but also in Bamako where the Institut National des Arts (INA) offers instruction to traditional artists. Courses are taught in the carving of masks and other wooden objects, in music, dance and weaving, in iron-working, and the manufacture of silver and gold jewelry. Malian craftsmen also use traditional designs to create objects in bronze and leather, as well as to fashion baskets and pottery. Craftsmen trained at the INA often work in small shops in the Artisanat, a center for handicrafts.

Mali has a small but impressive National Museum whose collection consists of Malian carvings, masks, textiles, items from everyday village life, and historical artifacts. The museum also presents special exhibitions on a regular basis.

The National Institute of Arts, the French Cultural Center, and the National Museum also hold frequent exhibitions of contemporary art. Modern interpretations of traditional designs, works in nontraditional media, traveling exhibits from other countries, and the works of individual artists, both African and Western, are presented.

Traditional music, song, dance and drama are encouraged by the government through radio and television broadcasts, a national dance troupe, and frequent arts festivals. At every important occasion—baptisms, marriages, circumcision cere-

monies—dances are organized, and the sound of the tamtams and the singing of the griot storytellers can be heard in even the most urban of areas. Traditional instruments—the balafon, a type of gourd xylophone, stringed gourd instruments such as the kora and dossongoni, tamtams (drums), and reed flutes—are still played.

Several international medical research and treatment facilities are based in Mali. The Institut Ophthalmologique Tropical d’Afrique (IOTA) specializes in the prevention and treatment of eye diseases. The Institut Marchoux, established in 1934, is a well-known leprosarium that conducts research into the prevention of leprosy and other skin diseases.

The Malaria Research and Training Center, funded in part by the National Institute of Health (U.S.), is on the campus of Mali’s National School of Medicine. A malaria vaccine is in the testing/trial stages from the work of this research.

The research division of Comité Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Secheresse au Sahel (CILSS), the Sahel Institute, is based in Bamako. Made up of representatives from the drought-stricken Sahelian countries, the institute is seeking ways to counter desertification and promote economic development.

In principle, primary education is free and compulsory, however, parents must pay registration fees and purchase books and supplies. These costs make it difficult for most families to keep children in school for long. School attendance is 42 percent at the primary level (34 percent for girls), and 10 percent at the secondary level (two percent for girls). Primary education is divided into two cycles, the first lasting six years and the second, three years. Secondary education lasts for three years and consists of either technical training or general secondary instruction leading to the baccalauréat degree. For the more than 12,000 existing communities in Mali (villages, towns and cities), there are 2,200 schools, which

means that children must frequently walk long distances to get to the nearest school.

In 1996 several “grandes ecoles” united to form the University of Mali. This institution grants degrees equivalent to the BA and BS. Malian students pursue their further studies in universities abroad (primarily France, Canada, and the United States). The “grandes ecoles,” each now a “Faculté” of the University, exist for specialized training: a teacher’s college, schools of engineering, medicine and pharmacy, administration, and others. These colleges grant BA or BS equivalent diplomas.

Commerce and Industry

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita income under \$250 and a GDP of approximately \$1.3 billion. An estimated 85 percent of the labor force engages in farming, livestock production or fishing, most at the subsistence level. About 100,000 work in the formal sector.

The most important food crops are millet, sorghum, rice, field corn and peanuts. Sugar cane, tobacco and tea are also grown for local manufacture and consumption. Cotton is Mali’s most important export crop and chief foreign exchange earner.

Livestock (cattle, sheep, goats) is raised for both domestic and export markets. Already Mali’s second most important export, livestock has great potential for further development—thanks to the January 1994 CFA devaluation. It is relatively free of diseases which inhibit animal husbandry in the coastal areas to the south. Fish from the Niger, Bani and Senegal Rivers supplement Malians’ diets and provide an additional source of income.

Periodic drought has resulted in decreased agricultural production and serious food shortages. The disastrous Sahelian droughts of 1973-74 and 1983-84 caused much suffering and dislocation and forced

the Government of Mali to request emergency food aid in large quantities. Above average rainfall in 1988 and 1989 produced a cereal surplus; 1990 saw less favorable rains and led to renewed requests for food aid. Food output has increased since then—1994 and 1995 registered record harvests for most major crops.

Mali's industrial sector is small. Most factories are concentrated in or near Bamako and Segou. Firms engage in food processing and the manufacture of low technology consumer items, agricultural tools and construction materials. Many state enterprises have been privatized in recent years, including textile, cement and ceramic plants and a tannery and tea plantation. The government still owns a match and tobacco plant, slaughterhouse and other units but is committed to further privatization. Private businesses produce soap, candy, vinegar, bleach, plastic goods, flour, noodles, construction materials, beverages, etc. Local enterprises vary from the large cotton ginning monopoly to mid-size transport and trading houses to sidewalk merchants. Local markets offer a wide variety of traditional and modern goods. Many companies are wholly or partially French-owned.

With assistance from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and bilateral donors including the U.S., the government continues to make major steps to encourage development of the private sector, to increase agricultural productivity and improve health, education and family planning in Mali.

France is Mali's leading source of imports with ties going back to the colonial era. France, West Germany, Côte d'Ivoire, Italy, the Netherlands, the U.S., the United Kingdom, China, Senegal, Belgium and Japan provide Mali with imports of food, equipment and spare parts, vehicles, petroleum products, textiles, chemicals and pharmaceutical, and other manufactured goods. Imports cost \$740 million. Exports of Mali are \$556 million (1998),

going primarily to the major markets of France, Switzerland, Italy, Thailand, Cote d'Ivoire and Algeria. Mali sells cattle and sheep mainly to Cote d'Ivoire. Gold, Mali's third leading export, is exported to Europe. Mali imports \$773 million worth of goods (1998), including over \$29 million from the U.S. (1999) for items such as tobacco and cigarettes, equipment and spare parts, food and used clothing, and plastics.

Deposits of gold, marble, iron ore, bauxite, manganese, uranium, phosphate, kaolin, salt and limestone are found in Mali, but only gold is exploited on a major scale. Deficient infrastructure and capitalization costs have prevented exploitation of other minerals. The only major gold mine, operated by BHP International, an Australian firm, began production in January 1990. Additional gold mining projects are at various stages of exploration and development. Limited petroleum exploration has yielded disappointing results.

Mali belongs to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA), the Organization to Develop the Upper Senegal Valley (OMVS) and is an associate member of the European Economic Community.

Transportation

Automobiles

Vehicles purchased on the local economy take longer to register due to extensive title searches designed to curb cross border vehicle theft.

There is a Chrysler/Jeep dealership and distributor for Chrysler parts located in Bamako, as well as Mitsubishi and European dealerships. However, in terms of overall service and availability of parts, Peugeot, Renault, Toyota, and Nissan remain the most practical cars to have in Mali. Malian mechanics are most familiar with the French-made Peu-

geots and Renaults, although some can work on Japanese, German and other types of cars; mechanics are not trained to work on American cars. Spare parts are readily available for French-made autos and often available for Toyota, Nissan, and Mercedes. Spare parts for American cars and some foreign makes are not immediately available; they must be ordered from the U.S. or shipped with your household effects. Consider bringing spare parts such as spark plugs, air and oil filters, fan belts, water hoses, and wiper blade replacements. A repair manual for your auto is very useful. Jerry cans for gasoline are also useful for traveling out in the bush where there are no gas stations.

If you are purchasing a new car, air conditioning is advisable. If you have a choice, select heavy-duty options, such as heavy springs and shock absorbers. Avoid dark colors because of the high temperatures.

Most major streets in Bamako are paved but are in disrepair. Most residential streets are unpaved, rutted, and filled with potholes; they become dusty during the dry season and muddy during the rainy season. Roads to some tourist areas such as Dogon Country are difficult and, depending on the season, can be impassable for most cars, except those with four-wheel drive. You may wish to consider purchasing a four-wheel-drive vehicle if you intend to do a lot of traveling out of Bamako. A diesel engine works well in Bamako and is more economical than a gas engine.

Catalytic converters should be removed from vehicles before shipment, if possible. A letter from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is required for this work to be done in the U.S. (This letter can be obtained through the Office of Transportation, Department of State.) Catalytic converters must be replaced if you intend to return the vehicle to the U.S. at the end of your tour.

Vehicles shipped from the U.S. do not transit Antwerp, but still can take about 6-10 weeks to arrive in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, where clearance procedures can take up to 4 weeks. Cars are normally left in the 20-foot containers and trucked to Bamako. Due to the recent escalation of car thefts in Côte d'Ivoire all cars are trucked to Bamako in containers. For the most recent guidance on shipping instructions, please refer to your welcome cable.

To minimize chances of theft, remove small items such as cigarette lighters, mirrors, antennas, hubcaps, windshield wiper blades and arms, radios, cassette players, and clocks. Lock them inside the trunk or ship them with your household effects. Do not store other items in the car for shipment. Private insurance is recommended for shipment of vehicles.

Autos purchased in the U.S. and France, such as the Peugeots ordered through diplomatic sales programs, are shipped directly to Abidjan.

You are not allowed to drive a vehicle in Mali without proper registration documents (Carte Grise), which must be kept in the vehicle at all times.

Third-party liability insurance is compulsory in Mali. Insurance policies can be easily obtained from several agencies in town.

A valid driver's license is required to drive in Mali; an U.S. or international driver's license is acceptable. Vehicles may be rented through several local agencies, but discouraged. It is quite expensive to rent a car and often the agency requires that you pay an agency chauffeur to do the driving.

Local

The regional security officer does not recommend the use of local transportation, due to the poor quality of vehicles and unqualified drivers.

Local transportation in Bamako is provided by taxis, buses called

bâchées vans, and small pick-up trucks with benches and a canvas top in the back. Public transportation is hot, crowded, and often unreliable, as vehicles frequently break down.

Taxis are usually easy to find in the city. Fares range from about CFA 250, if a taxi is shared with others, to about CFA 1,000 if there is only one passenger. Taxis do not have set routes; they can be used to go to the surrounding countryside, however, since it is difficult to find one to return to the city, it is advisable to hire one by the hour for out-of-town trips.

Bâchées carry 16-18 closely packed passengers, as well as chickens, goats, and all kinds of parcels bound to and from market. Bâchées have regular routes within town and are inexpensive, starting at about CFA 150, depending upon the distance traveled.

Small "mini-buses" operate around the city for about CFA 150 a trip. They carry 18-20 seated passengers and as many "standees" as possible. A few large buses have been imported and are being put into use for travel between major cities. Some are air-conditioned.

Peugeot station-wagon "bush taxis" provide transportation from town to town. Fares depend upon the destination. They are generally very crowded and often slowed down by delays and breakdowns. Bâchées are usually painted green. Taxis are usually yellow and have "taxi" signs on top. A commercial service, "Tababus," provides bus service on set routes in Bamako and to some major cities. The Bamako fare is about 250 CFA per trip. All legal taxis, buses, and vans are marked by the red license plate.

Regional

Mali has one primary system of paved roads totaling approximately 1,700 miles. This network connects Bamako with Côte d'Ivoire in the south via Bougouni and Sikasso, and with Burkina Faso in the southeast via Segou and Koutiala. The road continues to the north, from

Segou, connecting Bamako with Mopti and Gao. There are approximately 5,000 miles of permanent dirt roads and an additional 3,700 miles of seasonal tracks, usable only during the dry season. The European Union has begun surveying a future road connecting Bamako with the Senegalese border.

Travel by car off paved roads is often difficult, except with four-wheel-drive vehicles. Traveling by vehicle, outside city limits at night can be inherently dangerous and as such is not advised. Any travel in Mali should be coordinated after reading the most recent travel advisory in Mali's Consular Information Sheet.

The sole railway system in Mali connects Bamako with Dakar (Senegal) via Kayes. The scheduled 36-hour trip to Dakar is difficult and recommended only for the hardy traveler. Couchettes and first-class service are available, but electric lights and toilets often do not work. Air-conditioning is inoperative. Travelers should bring their own food and drinks.

International flights to several points in Europe and West Africa, as well as a few internal flights to cities within Mali, are available from the Bamako-Segou airport, located about 9 miles south of the city.

Airlines serving Bamako are Air Afrique, Air France, Sabena, Air Algerie, Ethiopian Air Lines, Air Ivoire, Air Gabon, Air Burkina, Ghana Airways, Royal Air Maroc, Air Guinee, Air Mauratania, and Air Mali. You can fly from Bamako to most of the major cities in neighboring West African countries. Direct flights also serve Paris daily and Brussels several times a week. Code share flights are being introduced with American carriers. A weekly flight exists to Mopti, Timbuktu, and Gao via Air Mali, but expect delays and cancellations.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Direct-dial long-distance telephone service is available to most countries and to the U.S. The quality of the connection is usually good. Within Mali telephone service has improved since 2000 when eight new Bamako exchanges were added to the two existing ones. Cellular phone service has been available in Bamako since 1996. Long-distance calls to the U.S. are expensive. The cost for a 3-minute call to the east coast of the U.S. is about \$21. Call-back services are now available in Mali at reduced costs (about \$1 a minute). Commercial telegrams cost approximately 18 cents per word to the east coast of the U.S.

Internet was introduced to Mali in 1998, and there are currently five Internet service providers in Bamako.

Local postal facilities are generally reliable for airmail letter services. International airmail for letters to and from the U.S. may take 10 days to 2 weeks. Packages sent from the U.S. by airmail arrive in 3 to 4 weeks. International airmail for packages sent to the U.S. is quite expensive and not always reliable. Surface mail is even less reliable and not recommended. Packages sent to or from the U.S. by surface mail may take three months to a year or more to arrive. Service and customs fees of 60% of the value of the package are charged for receipt of packages for nondiplomatic persons.

U.S. postage stamps can be purchased from the American Community Services Association (ACSAM); however, they do not always have them in stock, so you should bring your own supply with you. U.S. postage stamps can also be ordered online directly from the U.S. Postal Service.

Radio and TV

Radio Mali is the government radio station in Mali. Programs include government published newscasts, local and Western music, and special features. Broadcasts are gener-

ally in French and Bambara, with some programming in other local languages and English. Radio programs are broadcast from 6:00 a.m. to midnight. Radio in Mali is an important means of communication for public announcements and local community news. There are many private FM stations (currently around 15) in Bamako as well, which play mostly popular African music and present public discussion programs in French and Bambara.

For international programs, a strong short-wave radio is useful. BBC, VOA, France International, Radio Paris, Christian Science Monitor, and Deutsche Welle are some of the stations that can be received. Quality of reception is erratic. An outside antenna often improves reception. Radio France International and Africa No. 1 broadcast on FM in Bamako. VOA news in French is available every evening on Radio Klédu, the local VOA affiliate. There are about 100 FM radio stations outside of Bamako, most broadcasting local community news, announcements, and music.

Television broadcasting in Mali was inaugurated in mid-1984. One television station exists and is operated by the Malian Government. Programs are broadcast in color from 7:00 p.m. to about 11:00 p.m. On weekends programming runs between 10:00 a.m. and midnight. Nightly broadcasts include a news program, a children's program, and cultural and entertainment programs or movies. Programs are broadcast in French and Bambara, and in other local languages.

Most people subscribe to one of two cable services offered locally, Multi-Canal and TV KLEDU. A special antenna and decoder can be purchased locally for approximately \$350. The cable companies offer special programming packages ranging from \$20 to \$35 for a month's subscription. Channels currently available are two movie channels, daytime Kid TV, Super Sport, CNN International, ESPN2, which are all broadcast in English. There are also French- and Arabic-lan-

guage channels. The local ORTM/Mali TV is included on the cable systems. More channels will be added in the future.

There is no digital mini-dish, direct-from-satellite services here that cover Mali. The problem is that the satellites that cover Europe and southern Africa have a "footprint" that does not reach West Africa. You can get an older-type large dish (about 2.5 meters in diameter), but these are very expensive (up to \$4,000) and will not pick up encrypted signals.

Mali uses PAL/SECAM transmission systems, which are not compatible with U.S. TV's. If you plan to purchase a TV or video equipment, consider buying a multi-system TV and multi-system, multi-speed video equipment. Black-and-white and color TV's are available locally, but generally very expensive.

Newspaper, Magazines, and Technical Journals

There are more than 15 French-language daily newspapers published in Mali: L'Essor les Echos, and Nouvel Horizon are examples. L'Essor, the official government newspaper, is the oldest and perhaps most influential in Mali. It contains local news and a limited amount of international news. A weekly edition, L'Essor Hebdo, centers primarily on social issues. Les Echos is published by a private company that also publishes novels, books, and news on tapes; it is generally supportive of the ruling party. Nouvel Horizon generally opposes the government.

In addition to the three daily newspapers, there are about 30 weekly publications: Aurore, la Roue, Le Tambour, l'Observateur le Democrate, le Malien, and le Republicain. All of these deal primarily with local news. Specialized publications such as le Scorpion and la Cigale Muselee (satire) or Kabako and l'Inspecteur (crime) appear biweekly.

Foreign newspapers and magazines, in English and in French, can be purchased locally at bookstores and hotels. The international editions of

Newsweek and Time cost from \$5 to \$7 per issue; the International Herald Tribune costs about \$2. These publications are somewhat less expensive by subscription; they are delivered by airmail several days after issue. Subscriptions from the U.S. through the pouch can take up to a month or more to arrive.

Books in English can be borrowed from the American Cultural Center lending libraries. Children's books in English can be borrowed from the American International School library. The French Cultural Center has a large library of books and periodicals in French and a small collection of books in English.

Local shops carry a small selection of books in French, and occasionally a few books in English. Technical books and dictionaries are not available.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Dental care in Bamako is very limited. Although simple or temporary work can be handled in Bamako, complicated work such as crowns, inlays, and partials must be done outside. Be sure to have a thorough dental checkup and complete all dental work before departing for Mali.

A local optician is available who can grind prescription lenses; the selection of frames is limited and very expensive. Bring several extra pairs of prescriptions glasses. Contact lenses are not available.

Local pharmacies are not well stocked; supplies of even simple remedies and common drugs are limited or nonexistent at times. Medications available are generally French and European brands; familiar American medications are not stocked.

Hospital care in Bamako is inadequate. Hospitals do not meet minimum standards for sanitation and lack services, trained personnel,

basic supplies, and equipment. Two public hospitals are located in Bamako: Point G and Gabriel Touré.

Community Health

Standards of community sanitation and public cleanliness in Bamako are poor. Local health and sanitation control measures to protect the public health are inadequate.

Bamako's garbage collection system is erratic and not adequate for the size of the city. Only a small area of Bamako is served by a sewage system, and open sewers exist even in the better city sections. Most American homes have their own septic tanks.

Local water supplies are not safe. Bamako's public water supply is chlorinated, and water is potable when it leaves the filtration plant, but the distribution system is inadequate and contamination often occurs.

During the rainy season particularly, and also at other times of the year, the city is infested with flies, mosquitoes, and other insects. Individuals are advised to bring a large supply of mosquito repellents.

Good household insecticides are available but are more expensive than in the U.S. and are often strongly scented.

Locally (commercially) bottled beverages and processed foods are generally of satisfactory quality. Fresh milk is not safe to drink unless you pasteurize it, but you can buy imported UHT-treated, long-life milk in sterile packages. Fresh meats and poultry are available in groceries where refrigeration is generally available.

Preventive Measures

Sanitation and disease prevention and treatment practices in Mali are not fully developed. The typical diseases associated with poor, underdeveloped countries are found here. Among endemic diseases in Mali, malaria is one of the most serious. It

affects nearly all the population and is a major cause of infant mortality. Also endemic are schistosomiasis (bilharzia) which causes liver and intestinal damage, trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness), onchocerciasis (river blindness), tuberculosis, and rabies. Other diseases present in Mali are meningitis, yellow fever, and cholera. Intestinal diseases such as amoebic and bacterial dysentery are common.

For Americans in Bamako, the risk of disease is lessened considerably by following recommended disease prevention practices, keeping up with immunizations and booster shots, and by using malaria prophylaxis. Most illnesses suffered by Americans could be encountered anywhere; diarrhea and minor intestinal problems, colds and respiratory infections, and skin irritations periodically spread through the community. You will probably need a time of physical adjustment to tropical heat. More rest, more fluids, and more salt intake are essential, but you will soon learn to judge your own needs.

Before leaving, have necessary immunizations, start malaria suppressants, and take care of needed dental work. Start immunizations early. More than one injection is required for several of the immunizations, and a specified time must lapse between them.

Malarial suppressants must be taken throughout your entire tour in Bamako. Mefloquine is the recommended suppressant for this area. Mefloquine should be started one (1) week before arrival and continued for four (4) weeks after departure. Other alternatives to mefloquine are doxycycline, and chloroquine with paludrine.

Other precautions against malaria include keeping your house well screened, using mosquito netting around beds, and using insect repellent on exposed areas of skin.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs & Duties

A passport and visa are required. All travelers must have international vaccination cards with a current yellow fever immunization. Travelers should obtain the latest information from the Embassy of the Republic of Mali, 2130 R Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 332-2249. Internet: <http://www.maliembassy-usa.org/>. Overseas, inquiries should be made at the nearest Malian embassy or consulate.

Mali is signatory to the Treaty on Cultural Property that restricts exportation of certain Malian archeological objects, in particular those from the Niger River Valley. Visitors seeking to export any such property are required by Malian law to obtain an export authorization from the National Museum in Bamako.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Mali are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Bamako at the intersection of Rue Rochester NY and Rue Mohamed V, and to obtain updated information on travel and security in Mali. The Embassy's mailing address is B.P. 34, Bamako, Mali. The telephone number is (223) 22-38-33. The fax number is (223) 22-37-12.

Pets

Mali has no quarantine restrictions for pets, however, they must be accompanied by proof of rabies vaccination and a current certificate of good health. Dogs and cats are required to have yearly rabies shots. Veterinary services and routine immunizations are available through several private veterinarians and the local veterinary school.

Firearms & Ammunition

Malian Government procedures for clearance of arms and ammunition are, at best, complicated and drawn out, and there is no assurance that permission will be granted for importation.

Currency, Banking and Weights and Measures

Mali is a part of the West African Monetary Union, whose members use the CFA Franc, a convertible currency tied to the French franc at a fixed rate of exchange (100:1). Mali withdrew from the Zone in 1962, establishing its own currency, the Mali franc, and its own issuing bank. After a 22-year hiatus, Mali reentered the West African Monetary Union (UMOA) in mid 1984, and returned to the CFA franc as its official currency on September 1, 1984. The current average daily exchange rate is 695 CFA = \$1.

The CFA (Communaute Financiere Africaine) group of countries includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. The CFA community has its own central issuing bank; however, the monetary reserves of the CFA countries are held on deposit in the French Treasury in French francs. French francs are readily accepted by most local shops.

Banking services such as checking accounts are available through several local banks, but procedures are cumbersome and slow, so they are seldom used by Americans. Payments for local purchases are generally made in cash, except in the larger stores where checks for CFA francs are accepted.

Travelers checks are accepted by banks, airlines, and hotels; however, they are not accepted in local shops. American dollar or French franc travelers checks may be purchased at several banks in Bamako; however, it is easier to bring a supply from home and less expensive.

Credit cards are not accepted in local stores. The larger hotels will take American Express, Visa and Diner's Club. International airlines such as UTA and Air Afrique accept several credit cards including American Express and Diners Club, but only up to certain limited amounts.

The metric system is used as the standard system of weights and measures.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | | |
|----------|-------|---------------------|
| Jan. 1 | ..... | New Year's Day |
| Jan. 20 | ..... | Army Day |
| Mar. 26 | ..... | Day of Democracy |
| May. 1 | ..... | Labor Day |
| May 25 | ..... | Africa Day |
| Sept. 22 | ..... | Independence Day |
| Nov. 19 | ..... | Liberation Day |
| Dec. 25 | ..... | Christmas |
|  | ..... | Id al-Adah* |
|  | ..... | Ramadan* |
|  | ..... | Id al-Fitr* |
|  | ..... | Mawlid na Nabi* |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country.

Africa South of the Sahara 2000. Europa Publications: Bernan Associates. October 1999. (In print.)

Auster, Paul. *Timbuktu.* St. Martin's Press. April 2000.

Conde, Maryse, Barbara Bray (Translator). *Segou.* Penguin USA. September 1998. A best-selling novel based on the history of a Malian family from the last great pre-colonial kingdom. (In print)

Cornell, Christine. *The Dogon of West Africa.* Rosen Publications Group: August 2000.

Courlander, Harold and Ousmane Seko. *The Heart of the Ngoni: Heroes of the African Kingdom of Segou.* University of Massachusetts Press: September 1994. Traditional history from the kingdom of Segou.

Imperato, Pascal James. *A Wind in Africa: A Story of Modern Medicine in Mali.* Warren H. Green: St. Louis, January 1975. Memoirs of the author's 5 years as a USAID epidemiologist in Mali.

Imperato, now a professor of public health at SUNY Brooklyn, became an expert and prolific writer on Malian history, medicine, art history, and much more. A fascinating introduction to modern Mali, still available from the publisher.

Imperato, Pascal James. *Historical Dictionary of Mali*. Africa Historical Dictionaries, No. 11. 2nd ed. Scarecrow Press: Metuchen, N.J., January 1996. Up-to-date reference work on Malian history, geography, and personalities, also with a comprehensive bibliography. (In print.)

Joris, Lieve. *Mali Blues*. Lonely Planet Publications: 1998. A colorful novel observing the life of a Malian musician.

History

Bovill, E.W. *The Golden Trade of the Moors*. Markus Wiener, publisher. November 1994. Classic account of early trans-Saharan trade.

Chu, Daniel and Elliott Skinner. *A Glorious Age in Africa: The Story of Three Great African Empires*. Africa World Press: September 1996.

de Gramont, Sanche. *The Strong Brown God*. Houghton Mifflin Co.: Boston, 1976. History of Niger River exploration, in highly readable form. (Out of print, but possible to find in book stores.)

Miner, Horace. *The Primitive City of Timbuktoo*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J. 1953. What the famous old city was really like just after World War II as observed by an anthropologist. (Out of print.)

Perimbam, B. Marie, Shula Marks (editor). *Family Identity and the State in the Bamako Kafu c. 1800-1900*. Westview Press. April 2000.

Language

Imperato, Pascal James. *Buffoons, Queens and Wooden Horsemen: The Dyo and Gouan Societies of the Bambara of Mali*. Kilima House: January 1983.

Ouattara, Mouhamadou. *Essential Bambara: For English-Speaking*

Travelers. Osborne Communications: September 1992.

Religion

Brenner, Louis. *West African Sufi*. University of California Press: Berkeley, 1984. Historical study of Islam in Mali by a leading scholar of the subject. (In print)

Griaule, Marcel. *Conversations with Ogotemmel: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas*. Oxford University Press: London, September 1990. One of many works on the Dogon by a famous French scholar. (Out of print, but can buy through the book.com stores.)

Art/Architecture

Ezra, Kate. *Art of the Dogon*. Selections from the Lester Wunderman Collection. Yale University Press: January 1998.

Lawal, Ibrinke O. (Editor). *Metalworking in Africa South of the Sahara*. Greenwood Publications Group Inc.: January 1995.

O'Toole, Thomas (Editor). *Mali in Pictures*. Lerner Publications. February 1990.

Political/Development

Gann, Lewis H., Duignan, Peter, *Africa South of the Sahara: The Challenge to Western Security*. Hoover Institution Press, January 1981. (In print.)

Coquery-Vidrovitch, Catherine, David Maisel (translator). *Africa: Endurance and Change South of the Sahara*. University of California Press. May 1992. (In print.)

Bingen, R.J., Robinson, D., Staatz, J. *Democracy and Development in Mali*. Michigan State University Press: October 2000

Lucke, Lewis. *Waiting for Rain: Life and Development In Mali, West Africa*. Christopher Publishing House: August 1999.

Miscellaneous

Brooks, Larry, Ray Webb (illustrator). *Daily Life in Ancient and Modern Timbuktu*. Learner Publishing Group. April 1999.

Jackson, Elizabeth, Paul Quinn (illustrator). *South of the Sahara: Traditional Cooking from the*

Lands of West Africa. Fantail: July 1999.

McIntosh, Susan and Roderick. "Finding West Africa's Oldest City." *National Geographic Magazine*. Vol. 162, No. 3 (September 1982), pp. 396-418. Article for the general reader on Mali's most significant archeological site.

van Maydell, H.J. *Trees and Shrubs of the Sahel*. Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ): Eschsborn, Germany, 1986. A guide to "the bush" published by the West German AID program. Along with the Serle and Morel bird book, this is a useful reference for those working in Mali's rural areas.

Serle, William and Gerard J. Morel. *A Field Guide to the Birds of West Africa*. Collins: London, 1977. First-rate field guide to Mali's diverse bird life. (In print)

Note: The best location for many of the Mali-related books are found in any of the Book-Dot-Com internet sites. Otherwise, these books are available only from a good library or (if still in print) direct from the publisher. Consult Books in Print at your local library for publisher's addresses.

World Wide Web Sites on Mali

<http://www.wash.afp.com/ext/francais/coope/mali/>
<http://www.mysteriousplaces.com/mali/mali9.html>
<http://www.afribone.net/ml/>
<http://www.afribone.net/ml/en>
<http://www.maliembassy-usa.org/index.html>
<http://www.tourisme.gov.ml/index.html>
<http://callisto.si.usherb.ca/malinet/>
<http://flani.malinet.ml/anais/investiture/index.html>
http://www.malinet.ml/palabre/Presse/les_echos/index.html <http://www.malinet.ml/>
<http://www.anais.org/Fr/pays/mali/index.html>
<http://www.ccfbko.org/ml/>
<http://www.liberte.edu.ml/>
<http://www.banivoyages.com/>

MAURITANIA

Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Major City:

Nouakchott

Other Cities:

Atar, Boutilimit, Chinguetti, Kaédi, Nouadhibou, Ouadane, Rosso, Zouérate

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated June 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Republic of **MAURITANIA** has been a recognized political entity with defined borders for just over 30 years. From the beginning of this century until independence was achieved in 1960, it was a part of the larger region known as French West Africa; prior to that time, portions of the present-day republic were included in political systems based in northwest Africa and in the Niger Basin.

One of the few truly exotic places left in the world, Mauritania is the traditional homeland of the Moors, nomadic herdsmen and warriors who, for centuries, roamed the desert and semi-desert areas of Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco,

and the Western Sahara. The country is distinct from the ancient African province of Mauritania, which existed in Roman times.

MAJOR CITY

Nouakchott

Nouakchott was a small village of mud brick houses on the edge of the Sahara in 1957. It was selected that year as the future site of the capital of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania over larger, historically more important towns because of its relatively moderate climate and central, coastal location. Nouakchott's name derives from the Berber expression "place of the winds."

After rapid and unplanned growth, some 694,000 people now live in Nouakchott and its surrounding tent and shanty suburbs. Most of this growth is the result of prolonged drought, which has forced masses of nomadic people to abandon their way of life and move to the city for food and the slim hope of finding work.

The city, covering some 10 square miles, is bounded on three sides by desert, and on the fourth by the Atlantic coastline, approximately 3 miles from town. Maximum daytime

temperatures average in the low 90's (F), with average minimum temperatures in the high 60's (F). Precipitation in Nouakchott is less than three inches annually. The city's water supply is piped some 40 miles from the nearest reliable aquifer.

The airport is located near the older section of town, known as Ksar.

Food

Many of the food products that Americans are accustomed to are expensive on the local market. Almost all such food is imported, including fresh fruits and vegetables such as apples, oranges, and potatoes. Availability, quality, and variety fluctuate widely. Locally produced, good quality, vegetables are always available in winter. During the summer, fresh produce is scarce, and even meat, butter, and cheese can be in short supply due to fewer imports as foreign residents depart. Nouakchott is blessed with delicious fresh, locally caught fish, shrimp, and rock lobster in season at reasonable prices. Beef and lamb, chickens, eggs, and a few vegetables (lettuce, tomatoes, tubers, mint, and parsley) are produced locally at costs about 30 to 50 percent higher than U.S. prices. There are many imported fruit juices available at about twice the price of comparable U.S.-made products. Items such as

lunch meat, cheese, ice cream, and turkey are imported either from neighboring countries or Europe and are correspondingly expensive.

Supermarkets, butcher shops, numerous smaller shops, several open-air markets, several bakeries producing good baguettes, door-to-door vendors, and the fish market are the local sources of supply for groceries in Nouakchott. Shopping frequently, stocking up on sometimes scarce items, scouring the vegetable stands for fresh items, advance planning (but flexibility in menu planning), and befriending certain vendors enables foreign residents of Nouakchott to live adequately, albeit expensively, on the local market.

Clothing

The weather in Nouakchott ranges from cool to very hot, so warm weather clothing is needed. Cotton clothing is best. Some cool-weather clothing such as sweaters and long-sleeved shirts are needed during the winter, when evening and nighttime temperatures can drop as low as 45 °F. Sweatshirts or light windbreakers are useful for the beach in the evening. Bring washable clothing, since there is only one quality dry-cleaning establishment in Nouakchott.

Men: Normal office attire for men includes slacks, short-sleeved shirt, with or without tie, and occasionally, a sports jacket or blazer. Men who like lightweight, short-sleeved safari suits or jackets find these comfortable for day and evening. Jeans and shorts are worn on the beach and for recreational activities.

Women: Office attire for women is a simple cotton dress or blouse and skirt. Out of respect for Islamic custom, skirt length is conservative, and shorts are not worn on the street. Bare arms and sundresses are acceptable for foreign women. Local tailors can make dresses and skirts from local tie-dyed or batik fabric. A long-sleeved dress and shawl or dressy jacket are useful for outdoor receptions on chilly eve-

nings. Stockings are rarely worn outside the cool season.

Children: Boys and girls wear shorts or jeans and shirts to school. For the few occasions when they must dress up, boys need a nice polo shirt and cotton pants and girls need a simple dress. Children wear tennis or running shoes, best brought, and "flip-flops," which may be purchased here. The local selection of shoes for children is extremely limited and expensive.

Men and women use sandals for casual wear, and women wear them to the office. All shoes wear out quickly in Mauritania's sandy streets and yards. Bring all sports shoes. Tennis shoes wear out quickly on hard-surfaced courts. Softball cleats may not be necessary in sand, but cleats help rugby and soccer players.

Comfortable clothing for any type of sport or recreational activity in Nouakchott should be brought in quantity. Swimwear, tennis, jogging, basketball, soccer, rugby, and aerobics clothing all wear out much more quickly here from excessive perspiration and dust, and consequent tough washing. Hats and caps are necessary for any outdoor activity. Sweatbands and plenty of cotton socks are helpful.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: Few American products are sold on the local market. Some French products are available, but the prices are high, and the selection is limited. Among French products are some toiletries, patent medicines and drugs, common household items, insect sprays, paper products, hardware, and some cleaning equipment.

Basic Services: Most shops are open from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm, and 4 pm to 7 pm, Saturday through Thursday. Services including basic tailoring and dressmaking, and simple electrical and automotive repairs are also available, but the quality of workmanship varies. Most Americans patronize two unisex hairdressers. Massages, facials,

manicures, or haircuts are available as home services. Specialty shops carrying items such as pet supplies and English-language books or magazines do not exist. Private veterinarians are available to attend to the needs of American pets. (Ticks and fleas can plague animals during certain seasons and are difficult to control.)

Religious Activities

Islam is the state religion in Mauritania. Non-Mauritanians may attend the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Joseph. Mass is in French. Protestant services (in English) are held on Fridays in the Parish Hall on the Cathedral compound.

Education

The American International School of Nouakchott (AISN) is an accredited, nonprofit, private, coeducational school, which provides an American educational program for pre-kindergarten through grade 8, depending on enrollment. The school was founded in 1978 and moved into a new facility in 1981. Current American texts are used. The school year runs from Labor Day until mid-June. Classes are held from 7:30 am to 1:30 pm, Sunday through Thursday. Preschool is offered for 3- and 4-year-olds if there is sufficient enrollment. In addition, ninth grade can sometimes be offered by using correspondence courses.

All kindergarten through grade 8 teachers are certified, either in the U.S. or another country. The school is accredited in the U.S. through the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

Students in grades kindergarten through grade 8 are grouped as follows: K-1, 2-3, 4-5-6, and 7-8.

Sports

Outdoor recreation centers around the Atlantic beaches and the softball/soccer/rugby fields (in season). The unspoiled beaches are the greatest benefit to Nouakchott. The white sand beach is 3 miles from town by paved road.

With four-wheel-drive vehicles, many Americans drive up the beach at low tide or cross dunes to reach private spots north or south of town for fishing, camping, and picnics. The Atlantic often has high surf, strong currents, and undertows, so vigilance and caution when swimming are necessary. Jogging, shell collecting, motorcycling, and surf fishing are also popular.

Mauritania enjoys good surf fishing year round, along the entire coast. Among the fish in these rich waters are tuna, sea bass, sole, parrot fish, squid, and lobster. Surf fishing rod, reel, tackle, and line all should be brought, as when available; they are expensive, and a fair amount of tackle may be lost to rocks and tenacious fish. Fishing licenses are not required, but a permit is required to fish from a commercial wharf.

The community softball team is organized loosely according to season and interest, and all participation is eagerly welcomed. The team sometimes travels to other capitals of the Sahel for tournaments.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Travel outside of Nouakchott is interesting and enriching but requires thorough preparation and proper equipment. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are necessary in any direction outside the city. A good selection of spare parts, tools, sand ladders, extra fuel, water, and food must be carried for travel off the main roads.

Camping is possible both on the beach and in the desert. One popular trip involves driving up the beach at low tide along the water's edge toward Cap Timiris. Others enjoy camping in the desert or along ancient caravan routes, searching for archaeological artifacts and exploring ancient towns.

Accommodations for travelers in the interior of the country are rudimentary, if available. Travelers to all but a few cities usually take camping gear or stay with Mauritanian families. Most regional capitals have



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Mosque in Nouakchott, Mauritania

government rest houses (“gites d’étapes”) and a few have tourist hotels. Travel and accommodations require considerable advance planning.

In this country of vast open space, the population is as sparse as the vegetation. Wherever one camps, there are few signs of people. You can enjoy sleeping in the open during favorable seasons, but a tent is useful as protection against wind and sandstorms and as a sunscreen.

The following cities and towns of Mauritania make interesting destinations:

Akjoujt, 3 hours from Nouakchott, is the site of a former copper mining industry.

Atar, 4 hours beyond Akjoujt, was one of the ancient capitals of the Almoravid Kingdom and a caravan base for the trans-Saharan salt trade.

Chinguetti, the seventh holy city of Islam, lies some 72 miles east of Atar. Some of the houses and mosques in its fascinating stone-built quarter date back to the 13th century.

Nouadhibou, accessible from Nouakchott by air or a 2-day drive up the beach at low tide, is a fishing

and commercial port, and the terminus of the railroad from the Zouerate iron mines. Air Afrique operates a fishing camp nearby.

Boutilimit, some 2 hours by paved road from Nouakchott, is one of the religious centers of the country and the site of an Islamic institute. The ruins of a French military post are visible atop a dune near town.

Kiffa is 10 hours east of Nouakchott, and an important regional trading center and crossroads. The oases and escarpments around Kiffa offer an interesting change of scenery.

Aioun is 3 hours east of Kiffa, with houses of beautiful blocks of local stone. The interesting rock formations to the south are reminiscent of the American southwest.

Oulata, located in the southeast near the Malian border, was a famous religious center, and is known for its unique style of decorated houses and courtyards. UNESCO is interested in undertaking historical preservation programs in Oulata, Tichitt, Chinguetti, and Ouadane.

Rosso is a border town on the Senegalese River, reflecting the ambience of Senegal, some 3 hours from Nouakchott.

Keur-Massene is a hunting and fishing camp operated by Air Afrique 60 kilometers west of Rosso, in the delta area of the Senegal River, near the Banc de Diawling National Park, a large bird refuge on the Atlantic coast.

The Banc D'Arguin National Park, a 4–5 hour drive north of Nouakchott along the beach at low tide, is large natural estuary rich in bird and animal life. The park is reputed to be one of Africa's best for watching migratory birds.

Other places of interest easily accessible from Nouakchott include the Canary Islands, several different islands, each with its own character. The largest of these resort islands, Gran Canaria, is only a short flight from Nouakchott and features duty-free shopping, international resorts, and Spanish culture. The other islands can be reached by local Spanish airlines or boat.

Senegal offers alluring destinations for residents of Mauritania, including:

Saint Louis, the administrative capital for Mauritania during the colonial period, is a 4–5 drive from Nouakchott. This picturesque island town was one of the earliest French settlements in Africa. The former slave trading port near the mouth of the Senegal River today offers comfortable hotels and good dining.

Dakar, the capital of Senegal and former capital of French West Africa, is a cosmopolitan city with good shopping, beaches, hotels, restaurants, and night life. Frequent 1-hour flights or an 8-hour drive make this seaport city a popular destination from Nouakchott.

Entertainment

Few commercial forms of entertainment are found in Nouakchott. The French cultural center offers occasional live productions, exhibitions, and films all in French. A few but growing number of local restaurants offer varying quality in food and service. A large sports stadium, built by the Chinese Government,

hosts sports events featuring Mauritanian, African, and European sports teams. Occasional art shows or musical concerts take place and are widely attended.

Social Activities

The American community in Nouakchott includes personnel of the U.S. Mission, Peace Corps volunteers, and other resident Americans, most of whom are affiliated with religious or international organizations. AERAN is the focal point for many American community activities, with dining service and bar and grill. Social life is relaxed and usually casual, centered around dinners at the Club, and an occasional tennis or volleyball tournament.

Many opportunities exist to develop friendships with members of the international and Mauritanian communities, but French proficiency is essential. The French Racing Club offers evening dinners and dancing as well as tennis tournaments. Entertaining in the international community is similar in style to the American community.

OTHER CITIES

ATAR, one of the ancient capitals of the Almoravid Kingdom about 300 miles northeast of Nouakchott, was a caravan base for the trans-Saharan salt trade. The town is an oasis that produces dates and grains and supports cattle, sheep, and goat grazing. Atar is also known for its rugs.

BOUTILIMIT is the religious capital of the country and the site of an Islamic Institute. It is about 100 miles southeast of Nouakchott.

CHINGUETTI, in west central Mauritania, is the seventh holy city of Islam, and has houses and mosques dating back to the 13th century.

KAÉDI, capital city of the Gorgol administrative region, is situated on the Senegal River in southern Mauritania. The city exports the

skins and hides of cattle, goats, and sheep. Its population is about 21,000.

NOUADHIBOU (formerly called Port-Étienne) is a seaport town in the northwest corner of Mauritania, 225 miles north of Nouakchott. Warm currents make this area an ideal breeding zone for valuable fish species. About a dozen fishing companies operate here. However, Nouadhibou lacks the infrastructure to enable it to compete with other fishing ports in the area. Nouadhibou is the site of Mauritania's largest international airport.

OUADANE, just northeast of Chinguetti, is an old caravan center, and the site of several oases.

ROSSO, with a population of about 16,500, lies on the Senegal River in southwestern Mauritania, 110 miles south of Nouakchott. The city produces melons, beans, corn, millet, gum arabic and livestock.

ZOUÉRATE (also spelled Zouîrât) is located in north central Mauritania. As the country's iron-mining center, the city accounts for most of Mauritania's export income. Zouérate is linked by rail to the port city of Nouadhibou and has a population of over 25,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania is situated on the Atlantic Ocean in northwest Africa. It is bounded on the northeast by Algeria, on the east by Mali, and on the south by Senegal. Mauritania shares its long northern border with the former Spanish Sahara. Spain relinquished control of this area in 1975, but its political status is still unresolved. A UN-sponsored mandate to decide whether residents prefer independence or annexation by Morocco is still being negotiated.

Mauritania has three distinct geographic regions in its surface area of 419,000 square miles. The riverine zone, a narrow belt of rich, well-watered alluvial soil stretching along the Senegal River Valley in the south, is the sole center of settled agriculture. Rainfall averages 10–25 inches annually.

The Sahelian Zone is a broader east-west band that extends from the riverine zone to just north of Nouakchott. Until recently, annual rainfall has averaged some 4–18 inches, enough to support savannah grasslands suitable for nomadic cattle and sheep herding. However, diminished rainfall, in recent years, has resulted in scantier vegetation, forcing many inhabitants to move south or migrate to larger towns. What rain there is occurs mainly in heavy, localized thunderstorms. Nouakchott, at the northern extreme of this zone, experiences such storms several times each year.

The Saharan Zone comprises the northern two-thirds of Mauritania. This vast, sparsely populated region is characterized by beautiful shifting dunes, rock outcroppings, and rugged mountain plateaus with elevations higher than 1,500 feet. Irregular, scant rainfall permits little vegetation, although date palms are cultivated around larger oases and on some of the higher plateaus in the east. Herds of camels, goats, and sheep, which formerly ranged in this area were depleted during successive droughts in the 1970s and 1980s. With only a brief respite, pre-drought conditions have returned in the mid-1990s.

Modifying these conditions is the Atlantic coastal area, which includes Nouakchott. The ocean breezes provide periodic relief from the heat, although desert winds may bring flies, locusts, and sandstorms with consequent discomfort and annoyance. The Sahara is a young, growing desert. The severe droughts of the Sahel in the 1970s–80s have accelerated desertification. Thus, the southern edges of the Saharan and Sahelian Zones creep inexorably southward.

Mauritania's climate is hot and arid, except in the far south, which has higher humidity. In Nouakchott, daytime temperatures reach 85°F in the winter, although at night sweaters and blankets are needed. Summer temperatures regularly reach over 100°F during the day, but because it is a dry heat, they are more bearable than the same temperatures at high humidity. Summer evenings can be considerably cooler.

The area's fine sand makes beachgoing one of the highlights of a tour in Nouakchott; however, winds can also stir this sand into enervating sandstorms that last from a few hours to several days. These sandstorms can occur throughout the year, although they are less frequent during the summer and fall.

Population

Mauritania's population of some 2.7 million is unevenly distributed. It ranges from an average of 91 persons per square mile in certain sections of the Senegal River Valley to an average of 19 persons per square mile in the Sahelian Zone and less than one person for every 4 square miles in the Saharan Zone.

Although Mauritania is a country of cultural and ethnic diversity, its many ethnic groups have co-existed essentially peacefully for centuries. Arabic-speaking Moors comprise the largest group, about 70 percent of the population. Among Moors there are two major subgroups, the Bidan, or White Moors, who are mainly Arab-Berber herders, traders, and oasis farmers and the Haratin, mainly descendants of tributary (slave) black groups who practice extensive dryland agriculture and herding. As a result of centuries of intermarriage, the terms black and white Moor now indicate patrilineal ancestry rather than racial characteristics. The Moors have been traditionally nomadic, roaming the deserts of Mali, Algeria, Morocco, western Sahara, and Senegal. Today, the majority live in sedentary agricultural communities or in larger towns and cities. They remain highly mobile, with more

than 20 percent of the adult male population away from their settlements at any given time either trading or herding.

The remaining 30 percent of the population live primarily as sedentary farmers and herders in the Senegal River Valley, though their numbers are rising in urban areas. Their major ethnic groups include the Haalpulaar, the largest; the Soninke (Sarakolle); the Peulh (Fulbe, Fula, Fulani); and the Wolof. The French are the largest foreign national group, numbering more than 2,000. Most of the Americans who reside in Nouakchott work for the U.S. Government or for relief and development organizations.

Arabic is the official language for government and, with French, is a working language for commerce. Hassaniya, the local Arabic dialect, is spoken to some degree by 75 percent of the population; however, each ethnic group speaks its own language. The national literacy rate is about 47 percent but rising, now that 80 percent of the school-age population receives a basic primary school education.

Mauritanians are Muslim. Dietary restrictions common to Muslims, such as prohibitions against consumption of alcoholic beverages and pork, are observed strictly. No alcohol is sold in Mauritania; however, imported pork is occasionally available at local shops. Social restrictions, particularly for women, are less noticeable here than in the most conservative of Arab countries, e.g., Saudi Arabia. Mauritanian women cover their hair but rarely their faces in public, and many are active in business and some in government.

Mauritania has been a recognized political entity with defined borders since independence in 1960. From early in this century until independence, it was part of the larger region known as French West Africa. Prior to that, some of present-day Mauritania was included in political systems based in northwest Africa and in the Niger River basin.

The southward migration of the Senhadja Berber confederation of tribes first brought the Islamic faith to what is now Mauritania in the seventh century. By the 11th century, indigenous black African people had been driven south to the Senegal River or enslaved by the nomadic Senhadja. Southern Mauritania was overrun in about 1040 by Islamic warrior monks (Almoravid or Al Murabitun) who, subsequently extended their empire northward into Morocco and into much of southern Spain.

As the Almoravid Empire eroded, the Arabs overcame fierce Berber resistance to dominate Mauritania. Several groups of Yemeni Bedouin Arabs occupied north Africa and spread into what is today Mauritania. Their disruption of trans-Saharan caravan trade caused an eastward shift in the routes, resulting in a decline of Mauritanian trading towns. By the end of the 17th century, the Beni Hassan group dominated much of what is now Mauritania. The last effort by native Berbers to oust the Arab invaders was the unsuccessful Mauritanian Thirty Year War (1644–74).

The social structure established as a result of that war has been maintained intact to the present day. The descendants of the Beni Hassan warriors became the upper stratum of Moorish society, and Arabic gradually replaced Berber dialects. Many of the Berber groups, however, remained social equals, even as they became political vassals. They turned to clericalism and produced most of the region's Marabouts: the men who serve as repositories and teachers of Islamic tradition. At the bottom of the social hierarchy were the Zenaga (the poor Moor tributaries), the Haratin, often called Black Moors, and the Abid (slaves).

The country's other ethnic groups do not share the tribal structure of the Moors, but are organized as clans, extended families, or villages. Their traditional hierarchical structure, however, is very similar.

Under French colonial rule the population was obliged to give up slave trading and warfare, although armed clashes between French soldiers and Beni Hassan warriors continued through the 1930s. Also during the colonial period, sedentary black African peoples began to trickle back into southern Mauritania from which they had been expelled in earlier years by aggressive Moorish nomads.

This influx of non-Arabic-speaking black peoples from the south has caused a major modification of the social structure in this century. Many Haalpulaar, Soninke, and Wolof moved into the area north of the Senegal River at the time of independence. Educated in the French language and customs, large numbers became clerks, soldiers, and administrators in the new state.

Moors reacted to this change by increasing pressure to Arabize many aspects of Mauritanian life (law, language, etc.). A schism resulted between those who consider Mauritania to be an Arab country (mainly Moors) and those who seek a dominant role for the ethnic sub-Saharan peoples. The tension between these two visions remains a feature of the political dialogue. A significant number from both groups, however, seek a more diverse, pluralistic society. The discord between these two conflicting visions of Mauritanian society was evident in language disputes of the 1960s and during the intercommunal violence that broke out in April 1989.

Public Institutions

Mauritania became self-governing as the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in November 1958, and shortly thereafter began the process of transferring its administrative services from St. Louis, Senegal to the new capital at Nouakchott. Mauritania became independent on November 28, 1960. The constitution, adopted in 1961, replaced the former parliamentary type of government with a presidential system. Moktar ould Daddah, elected the

first President in 1961, was reelected in 1966, 1971, and 1976.

On July 10, 1978, ould Daddah was overthrown in a bloodless coup d'état; power was then assumed by the Military Committee for National Recovery (CMRN). For the next 2 years, power shifted among various members of the military group, culminating in January 1980 with the newly formed Military Committee of National Salvation (CMSN). In December 1980, a civilian prime minister, who formed a government of civilian ministers, was appointed, but the military committee retained policy oversight. This government was dissolved in April 1981 when the military reestablished itself as the sole ruling body of the nation.

In 1984, Colonel Maaouiya ould Sid'ahmed Taya led a successful, bloodless coup and declared himself Chief of State. He soon called for gradual movement toward a democratic system. A constitution was approved in a general plebiscite in 1991, and presidential elections were held in 1992. Taya was elected to office for a 6-year term, then reelected in 1998.

Mauritania is divided into 12 regions and the district of Nouakchott, each administered by a governor responsible to the president. Municipal elections were first held in 1986–88. Second municipal elections in 1994 were the first that saw multi-party participation in races for municipal councils and mayors. In 1995, the government, with support from international and bilateral donors, began seeking to decentralize authority by giving more responsibility to municipalities.

Although the constitution provides for the independence of the judiciary, the executive branch exercises significant pressure on the courts through its ability to appoint and to influence judges. The system includes lower, middle, and upper level courts, each with its own jurisdiction. A dual system of courts, one based on modern law and one based on Shari'a, has been replaced by a

single system as the country moves to a modernized legal system that is in conformity with the principles of the Shari'a.

Arts, Science, and Education

Mauritania, a nomadic society until independence, lacked large market centers or sedentary populations that help generate traditional arts and crafts. Limited basic raw materials and restraints on possessions associated with mobility contributed to only a limited crafts tradition focused on utilitarian goods such as decorated leather pillows, woven leather and straw mats, and silver jewelry (which doubled as a portable savings account).

In recent decades, woven rugs, gold and inlaid jewelry, and decorated teapots (so ubiquitous as to be nearly a national symbol), have been developed as crafts. Workmanship varies and vigorous bargaining is necessary to attain a reasonable price. Two types of rugs are available: the "Boutilimit rug," made of camel, goat, and sheep hair, adapted from traditional wool tent weaving methods; and new, tight, hand-knotted carpets with traditional motifs. Both are made at the Artisanat de Mauritanie in Nouakchott.

Nomadic life is not conducive to the establishment of institutions of higher education and science. From ancient times, however, traditional Koranic schools were founded in special encampments as well as religious caravan centers such as Chinguetti, Tichit, and Oualata. In addition to religion and language, these schools taught rhetoric, law, mathematics, and medicine. Curriculum was based largely on Greco-Roman scholarship. Some traditional schools still exist, but that system now coexists with public schools, including the University of Nouakchott with its faculties of letters, law, economics, and science.

Research facilities and programs remain in a formative stage. The Mauritanian Institute of Scientific Research in Nouakchott is a gather-

ing place for a limited number of scholars interested in history, poetry, or archeology. It supervises the National Museum which has two large public rooms, including a small standing exhibit of traditional life in Mauritania, displays of archeological materials found in the country, and some interesting visiting shows. The National Health Center, the National Center for Agricultural Research and Development, and the National Center for Livestock and Veterinary Research perform limited studies, all generally dependent on foreign support.

Commerce and Industry

Many Mauritians are engaged in subsistence farming or nomadic herding. Settled agriculture is confined mainly to the Senegal River Valley, where millet, sorghum, and smaller quantities of other cereals and rice are the main crops. Some 13,000 tons of dates are produced annually from date palms cultivated in the mountainous regions of Adrar, Tagant, and Assaba, and at the larger desert oases. Most agricultural produce is consumed locally, and Mauritania is a net importer of foodstuffs.

The most important sector of the economy is based on the rich fishing waters that lie off the Atlantic coast. The government levies fees on foreign fleets that fish in Mauritanian waters and requires that a percentage of the catch be processed in Nouadhibou. In 1994, the country exported more than 306,000 metric tons of frozen and canned seafood products worth about \$223 million. Fishing by foreign companies, however, threatens this important source of income.

Mauritania's other major income-producing sector is mining. High-grade iron ore is found in the Zouerate region in the northwest. Iron ore exports in 1994 totaled over 10 million metric tons with a value of approximately \$160 million. In recent years, however, a decline in demand has led to production cutbacks. The slag heaps of mined cop-

per near Akjoujt, about 135 miles northeast of Nouakchott were reprocessed to extract remaining gold in the early 1990s.

The Societ  Nationale Industrielle et Mini re (SNIM), a parastatal corporation established in 1972 when the French mining company was nationalized, controls the country's iron mines (copper and gold mining are private sector efforts). The government also oversees gypsum mining and the administration of the industrial explosives factory at Nouadhibou. More recently, SNIM has been studying the feasibility of sulphur and phosphate exploitation.

Other income sources for Mauritania include traditional exports of salt and gum arabic, still often carried over ancient camel caravan routes into Morocco, Algeria, and Mali. There is no current ongoing exploration for oil in the country, although such sources may exist. Exploration has begun in the diamond and petroleum markets.

Mauritania has been a member of the U.N. since 1961 and of the League of Arab States since 1973. In 1972, Mauritania, Senegal, and Mali formed the joint Senegal River Development Organization (OMVS) to develop the agricultural and hydroelectric potential of the Senegal River and to foster economic cooperation among the three countries. Mauritania also belonged to the 16-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) until the country withdrew in 2000. Mauritania is a signatory of the Lome Convention. In 1989, Mauritania joined Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Morocco to form the Arab Maghreb Union.

Transportation

Local

Limited bus service is available in Nouakchott and local point-to-point taxis are plentiful, but the vehicles are dilapidated, overcrowded, and rarely used by Americans. Irregular, long-distance taxi service, "taxibrousse," is available between Nouakchott and many regional cap-

itals. This is a colorful, if slow, way to experience the local scene.

Regional

Travel within Mauritania is via a small network of roads, air, or over the beach at low tide to coastal destinations. The only railroad, from the port of Nouadhibou to Zouerate, is used primarily to transport iron ore to the coast. Travel by boat along the Senegal River is possible during the rainy season. No passenger service by ship exists along the Atlantic coast.

Mauritania's road network includes the main north-south trunk line, which passes from Bir Moghrein through Atar and Akjoujt, and then south through Nouakchott to Rosso, on the Senegal border.

Another paved road extends east from Nouakchott to Nema, close to the Malian border, but large sections of the roadway have badly deteriorated. Other paved roads go into Boghe and Kaedi along the river. The rest of Mauritania's roads are unpaved. Because of deep, drifting sand, interior roads (both paved and unpaved) are only regularly passable in four-wheel-drive vehicles. Even paved roads may be in such poor condition that four-wheel-drive vehicles forge parallel tracks over the desert. Many roads in the south along the Senegal River are flooded during the July-September rainy season, when normally dry watercourses, called marigots, often flood and impede travel. No road connects Nouakchott with Mauritania's business capital and port, Nouadhibou, but four-wheel-drive vehicles and heavy trucks ply the beach between the two cities during low tide.

Vehicular border crossings to Senegal can be made via the ferry at Rosso and by land over the Diama Dam to St. Louis, Senegal. Other crossing points at N'Diogo, Diana, Jerd El Mohguen, Tekane, Lekseiba, Boghe, M'Bagne, Kaedi, Tifounde Cive, Maghama, and Goraye are made in pirogues, small boats plying the river, but not capable of taking cars. During the rainy

season, the dam is not recommended, as heavy mud makes the road impassable.

The government-owned airline, Air Mauritania, provides weekly service to most regional capitals; twice daily service to Nouadhibou; twice weekly flights to Dakar; and weekly flights to Las Palmas, Grand Canaries, and Casablanca. Air Afrique, Air France, and Sabena Airlines fly direct between Paris or Brussels and Nouakchott four times weekly, and Nouakchott usually has frequent direct flights to Dakar, only 1 hour away. Air Afrique has direct flights five times weekly from Dakar to New York. During sandstorms, the Nouakchott airport occasionally closes, and certain airlines decline to land.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Telephone service exists between Nouakchott and most regional capitals, and Nouakchott has direct-dial international long-distance service. However, it is not possible to contact the international access numbers for commercial operators such as AT&T, Sprint, or MCI. It is also not possible to dial 800 numbers directly from Mauritania. It is less expensive to call Nouakchott from the U.S. than vice-versa. Telephone and telex facilities operate 24 hours daily.

Radio and TV

The radio station in Nouakchott broadcasts music, news, and commentary, mostly in Arabic, but also in French, and several African languages. Separate government-run radio stations exist in Boghe and Nouadhibou. Radio France International (RFI) broadcasts 24 hours a day and is available on the FM band. Shortwave reception is usually good.

Mauritanian TV service is limited to evening hours and includes news in French and Arabic, a few imported TV series dubbed in Arabic and French, as well as some Arabic music programs. On clear nights, Senegalese TV can be picked up in Nouakchott. Both Senegal and

Mauritania use the SECAM (European) system, which is incompatible with U.S. system sets.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The Government of Mauritania publishes a daily newspaper in French and Arabic editions. French paperbacks, newspapers, and periodicals are available from vendors and in shops. There are about a dozen independent weekly Mauritanian papers published in French and Arabic.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Local medical facilities are limited. The single government-run hospital in Nouakchott, staffed by Mauritanian and expatriate physicians, is used only in the case of life-threatening emergencies. Nursing care and hygiene do not meet U.S. standards. A few Mauritanian and expatriate physicians have private practices or clinics.

Bring prescription medicines taken regularly (such as those for high blood pressure, skin problems, hormone replacement, etc.). Although many pharmacies stock French drugs, supplies are not reliable, and exact duplicates of American prescriptions are unobtainable.

Home pharmaceutical items such as cold remedies, home first-aid kit items, digestive aids, eye washes, sunscreens, and insect repellents should be brought in ample supply.

A local ophthalmologist has modern equipment, and an optician is available, but bring extra pairs of prescription glasses. Many people have trouble with contact lenses in Nouakchott because of dust and the dry climate. Several pairs of sunglasses are also recommended.

Dental facilities are limited. Expatriates rarely use a local dentist, and the most exceptional cases are referred to Dakar or Europe. However, a very well-trained dentist just opened a practice in Nouakchott

and has been judged reliable and safe. Complete all routine dental work before arrival. Orthodontia is available in Dakar, but the French system used by orthodontists there is not compatible with U.S. practices.

Community Health

Public health measures in Nouakchott are limited. Personal hygienic standards are low, and household trash often is thrown in the streets and vacant lots. Most illnesses are related to bacteria spread by Mauritania's prodigious fly population, contaminated tap-water, or improper food handling. The desert climate of Nouakchott is healthier than that of tropical regions, but polio, typhoid fever, hepatitis, tuberculosis, malaria, meningitis, and a variety of parasitic illnesses are endemic.

Preventive Measures

Because medical facilities are limited, those assigned to Nouakchott must place a high priority on the prevention of illness and maintenance of good health. Health promotion measures include keeping immunizations current; proper treatment of food, water, and personal environment; maintaining good nutrition; and paying close attention to your need for exercise, rest, and relaxation.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

An entry visa is required for all Americans traveling to Mauritania. Proof of current vaccination, or a stamp in your World Health Organization (WHO) card, for cholera and yellow fever also are needed. Arriving travelers not holding diplomatic passports should fill out a currency declaration form at the entry port and retain this form until time of departure in order to facilitate exit formalities.

Rabies is prevalent in Mauritania. All dogs and cats must have a valid

health certificate showing current rabies inoculation.

The local currency is the ouguiya (UM), valued in December 2000 at about 251=\$1.00. Mauritania uses the metric system of weights and measures.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
 - May 1 Labor Day
 - May 25 Africa Day
 - Nov. 28 Mauritanian Independence Day
 - Hijra New Year*
 - Id al-Adah/Tabaski*
 - Ramadan*
 - Id al-Fitr/Korite*
 - Mawlid an Nabi*
 - Lailat al Kadr*
- *variable, based on the Islamic calendar

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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Port Louis, Mauritius

MAURITIUS

Major City:

Port Louis, Curepipe

Other Cities:

Beau Bassin-Rose Hill, Mahébourg, Pamplemousses, Quatre Bornes, Vacoas-Phoenix

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated July 1993. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Although comparable to the neighboring island of Madagascar, the country of **MAURITIUS** defies precise classification. It is not African, although it lies close to that continent and seeks regional ties with it—nor can the island be considered Asian, notwithstanding the obvious Indian and Chinese influence. And, despite more than 300 years of European colonial domination, Mauritius is definitely not European.

When Portuguese navigators first visited Mauritius in the 15th century, they found the island completely uninhabited. The Dutch came during the 17th century and named it for Prince Maurice of Nas-

sau. The French renamed the island Île de France after settling here in 1715, and it became an important stop on the way to India. The French also introduced sugarcane cultivation, importing African slaves to work on the plantations. After the British captured the island in 1810, its Dutch name was restored, and laborers were brought from India.

Unlike Madagascar, no ethnic group is indigenous to the island. The ancestors of the present inhabitants, therefore, considered themselves to be Franco-, Indo-, Anglo-, or Sino-Mauritians. Today Mauritius remains a unique blend of many cultures.

MAJOR CITIES

Port Louis

Port Louis, capital of Mauritius and its largest city, lies at sea level on the northwestern coast, within a semicircle of mountains. It is one of the oldest towns on the island, and the center of industry and trade.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, the French, Dutch, and British vied for Mauritius as a port of call. After the French East India Company

took possession in 1715, a settlement was established at Port Louis, which was named for the French king, Louis XIV. It served as an important naval base for French operations against the British.

Since the 18th century, Port Louis harbor has been the center of commercial activity. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, however, considerably reduced the importance of Mauritius' position on the trade route around the Cape of Good Hope. When the Suez Canal was closed between 1967 and 1975, the harbor of Port Louis was again heavily used. In 1974, more than 1,200 ships were loaded and unloaded in Port Louis, compared to an average of 700 a year before the canal was closed. Since World War II, Mauritius has become a communications center on the air route between Australia and South Africa.

About 165,000 people live in Port Louis. In the late 1860s, malaria hit the low-lying areas and was responsible for the town's decline and the exodus of its wealthier inhabitants to the uplands. Although malaria has now been eradicated, Europeans and foreigners continue to live in the residential areas surrounding the Curepipe Plateau.

Port Louis has a new Legislative Assembly building and a government center flanking its stately 18th-century Government House. A university, founded in 1965, is also located here in the capital.

Education

Almost all Mauritian educational institutions follow British lines, except for the French Government-supported Labourdonnais Lycée and Colleges. Primary education (grades one through six, or up to age 11 or 12) and secondary education (to completion of exams) are distinctly divided.

Pupils earn ordinary-level (equivalent to the U.S. high school diploma) and advanced-level (college preparatory) Cambridge School certificates. The official language of instruction is English, and most textbooks are printed in the United Kingdom. In actuality, however, a large part of classroom instruction and explanation is in French/Creole, the common language of most Mauritians.

For primary-school children, the Catholic-run Loreto Convent Schools, located at various places on the island, are popular and offer primarily English-language instruction. The small, nondenominational Alexandra House School in Vacoas more closely resembles an English grammar school; resident Americans have used Alexandra House frequently, and have found that the small classes and lack of spoken Creole allow an easier environment in which U.S. children can adjust.

Boys of secondary-school age attend Royal College (Curepipe and Port Louis), St. Esprit in Quatre Bornes, and St. Joseph's in Curepipe, all of which have good academic reputations. St. Esprit is Catholic, and Royal College is Mauritian administered. For girls, several Loreto Convent Schools and Queen Elizabeth College in Rose Hill are available; all have good standards and are considered the best of their type on the island.

Facilities at these schools are adequate, but not modern. Books and materials are either available at the schools or can be purchased locally. Uniforms, required at all except the French school, are available locally at reasonable prices. Physical education and other special interest classes are available. Few, if any, schools on the island have buses or lunchrooms.

Generally, U.S. children with experience in only English-language environments have been able to adjust to the Mauritian system of education. The fact that French and Creole are widely spoken in the schools requires a period of adjustment, but also presents an excellent opportunity to experience new languages.

Examination results on the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Cambridge exams among the island's school population are low (50 percent with passing scores). This may be attributed to overcrowding and a lack of well-trained teachers. Although the standard of education in Mauritius has declined in recent years, it is still sufficiently high to allow equivalent transfers to most other school systems. To compensate for deficiencies, students can easily arrange for private tutoring for a nominal fee. The Cambridge and baccalaureate certificates are recognized worldwide.

Recreation

Few places in the world offer more beautiful beaches or better opportunities for swimming. There is no danger from sharks in most areas, since the island is largely surrounded by a coral reef which encloses lagoons of brilliant, clear blue water. Mauritius is known as a skin diver's paradise; the variety of its underwater life is unparalleled. The sea is exceptionally rich in fauna and in historic shipwrecks. Collectors will discover many rare species of seashells found only in Mauritius. Surfing is popular at Tamarin Bay on the west coast, where Indian Ocean swells break on one of the island's most beautiful sandy beaches. Facilities for water-

skiing are available at reasonable prices at all resort hotels on the bay. Many people own their own boats and equipment. Good swimming and sports activities are offered by beach hotels, including La Pirogue, St. Geran, and the Touessrok, which has its own private island.

It is possible to fish with a rod and line almost anywhere on the island. Every coastal village has fishermen whose picturesque *pirogues* can be hired with motor or sail for a small fee. Several world records are held in Mauritius, and deep-sea boats based at Morne Brabant Hotel offer big-game fishing at reasonable prices. The private Morne Anglers' Club has its headquarters at Black River on the southwest side of the island. The Grand Baie Yacht Club and the Morne Anglers' Club organize class sailing races. The visitor may rent dinghies at Le Morne and Le Chaland hotels. Both places have ample water and good sea breezes. *Pirogues* can be built inexpensively, and sailing craft are sometimes sold.

Mauritius has beautiful mountains and forests, perfect for hiking. The cliffs on the south coast of the island are magnificent, and offer seemingly endless opportunities for walking and picnicking.

There is an 18-hole golf course at the Gymkhana Club, the former British naval station, at Vacoas. Le Morne, St. Geran, and Trou-aux-Biches hotels also have courses in delightful settings close to the ocean. Tennis is played almost all year, and includes lawn tennis and hard-court championships. A squash court, swimming, and a clubhouse with bar and dining room are available at the Gymkhana Club.

The horse racing season lasts from May to October. The Mauritius Turf Club, founded in 1812, is the oldest racing club south of the equator. Local race horses have been imported from the U.K., France, Australia, and South Africa; stables are reinforced by new arrivals every year.



Riding instruction (in French) is available at Club Hippique d'Île Maurice in Floreal. Jumping events are held here several times a year. Riding dress requires jodhpurs or breeches, except that children ordinarily ride in jeans or slacks and a hunt cap. Le Chaland Hotel gives private riding lessons with English instruction.

Association football (soccer) is the national sport. Basketball, tennis, hockey, and volleyball are played in the schools and at various sports clubs on the island.

The island has many beautiful gardens with statues of Mauritians renowned for their political and literary achievements. Some of the most spectacular scenery is on the southern coast. It is pleasant to drive along the coastal road and stop to dine or swim at either Le Morne Hotel on the southwest coast or Le Chaland on the southeast. At La Nicoliere reservoir, on the far side of Long Mountain, there is a view of the entire north and east coastline and its many small, picturesque fishing villages. Europe, Australia, or Africa are only hours away by regularly scheduled flights, but fares are expensive.

The Mauritius Institute Museum is located just behind the docks in Port

Louis. It has a small collection on natural history which describes the zoology and geology of the region, including the dodo bird, last seen alive on the island in 1681. The Sugar Institute, where important world sugar research is conducted, is just outside of the capital, as is the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Hindu culture, an endowment of the Indian Government.

Lists of hotels and their rates may be obtained through the Mauritius Government Tourist Office, Cerné House, La Chaussée, Port Louis, Mauritius. Arrangements for visits to sugar plantations and mills, and information on museums are available here.

Other possibilities for exploring the island include visits to Casela Bird Park, in the southwest, with its 142 species of birds and its lovely scenery; the aquarium in the north, near the Trou-aux-Biches Hotel; and the volcano at Trou aux Cerfs on the central plateau.

Mauritius has a few good restaurants and nightclubs. The resort hotels have bars and bands, and there is dancing at least once a week. Hotels show old English-language movies on a rotating schedule, and a few movie theaters show French-language films, although

these rarely are dubbed in English. The Gymkhana Club, however, does have English or American films from time to time. Several amateur theater clubs offer occasional productions, and dances and balls for charitable purposes are held frequently. Curepipe and a number of the resort hotels have casinos.

For the most part, social entertaining is done in the home. The few organized activities center around private clubs, where membership can be obtained without difficulty. Dues are reasonable, and no particular dress restrictions are imposed, except that whites are preferred for tennis and English saddles and attire are used for riding.

Curepipe

Curepipe is a commercial town and health resort, about 15 miles up the central plateau from Port Louis. Among its many attractions are the municipal gardens; several interesting colonial buildings; casinos; and an extinct volcano at Trou aux Cerfs, just outside of town. The current population of Curepipe is close to 74,200.

The Hotel Continental, rising above a street-level arcade of shops, is spacious and quiet, and one of the popular spots for foreigners in the city. Most social activity, however, centers around private clubs or the home. Minibus tours of the countryside can be arranged in Curepipe; a 50-mile trip southward through Souillac and Rose Hill, with side trips on foot and by taxi, is quite inexpensive.

Education

The Lycée Labourdonnais, a French Government-supported primary school (kindergarten through grade five), follows the French educational system. All instruction is in that language. Labourdonnais maintains high standards and is an excellent school for children who either speak, or wish to learn, French.



Street scene in Curepipe, Mauritius

© Wolfgang Kaehler. Reproduced by permission.

Labourdonnais College is the secondary division of the French school, and offers the baccalaureate certificate, which is equivalent to, or higher than, a high school diploma. The school is coeducational, of high standard, and all classes and books are in French.

St. Joseph's College and Royal College are boys' schools for secondary-level students. St. Joseph's is administered by the Catholic Brothers of Ireland, who also run schools in the U.S. under the name of Christian Brothers. Teaching standards at both institutions are good.

OTHER CITIES

BEAU BASSIN-ROSE HILL, with a population of approximately 94,000, is the second largest settlement in Mauritius. Beau Bassin and Rose Hill were once separate communities, but merged several years ago. The town is a marketing and shopping center and is the home of the British Council Library.

MAHÉBOURG (population approximately 14,000) lies on the southeast coast of the island, diametrically across from Port Louis. Once the main port, Mahébourg is of interest to those who enjoy sailing

ships. The Historical Museum, housed in an old mansion, is also located here; visits are free, but donations are requested.

PAMPLEMOUSSES is a town 20 miles northeast of Port Louis, known for its beautiful Royal Botanical Gardens. The gardens were founded in 1768 by Pierre Poivre, a pirate, who brought spice trees such as cinnamon, clove, and nutmeg to the island from the East Indies. There are also several varieties of palms and water lilies—500 woody plant species in all—and animals such as deer and tortoise.

QUATRE BORNES, with a population of about 71,000 (2000 estimate) is an independently administered city in the western highlands of Mauritius, nine miles from the capital. The city's French name, meaning Four Boundaries, comes from the stones that once marked the limits of four sugar estates in the area. Sugarcane is still a major crop here. A middle-class, fast-growing, urban city, Quatre Bornes has a large hospital and surfaced roads. Its municipal infrastructure includes a town council.

Located roughly 10 miles south of Port Louis, **VACOAS-PHOENIX** were two separate villages until

they merged in 1963. The town has several small industries such as vegetable canning, beer brewing, and garment manufacturing. Sugarcane and vegetables are grown in areas surrounding Vacoas-Phoenix and are often sold here. A major highway links Vacoas-Phoenix and Port Louis. The estimated population in 2000 was approximately 91,200.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The beautiful island of Mauritius, almost completely surrounded by coral reefs, lies in the southwest Indian Ocean just within the Tropic of Capricorn, about 1,250 miles from the African coast. Of volcanic origin, it is about 40 miles long and 30 miles wide, with an area of 720 square miles. In the center, an extensive plateau rises to a level of some 1,900 feet. Three mountain ranges border the central tableland.

Mauritius has a maritime climate, with a slight difference between tropical summer and subtropical winter. In contrast, the coastal areas are warm and dry, while cool and rainy weather prevails inland. Humidity is high, and the annual rainfall along the western slopes of the central plateau totals nearly 200 inches. The rainy and dry seasons are not well-defined, and the vegetation remains green throughout the year. Mildew is a year-round problem, particularly in summer. Cyclones threaten between November and April.

Population

The island's population is estimated at slightly more than one million. It is one of the most densely populated agricultural areas in the world, with 1,597 persons per square mile (2000 estimate). The population growth rate of about three percent a year in the early 1960s has declined, and

was 0.88 percent in 2001. 26 percent of the total population is under 15. The labor force was approximately 514,000. With some encouragement from the government, emigration from Mauritius is increasing. Job opportunities in Arab countries also are attracting more Mauritian workers each year.

The ethnic composition of Mauritius resulted from the historical needs of the sugar industry, which dominates the local economy. Some 27 percent of the people are Creole—descendants of Europeans and African slaves who were the first to exploit the island’s potential. The Creoles are mainly clerical, commercial, and professional workers, and are usually urban or coastal dwellers. Indo-Mauritians now comprise 68 percent of the population; they are the descendants of indentured Indian labor brought to Mauritius to work in the sugar fields after slavery was abolished in 1833. They live mostly in the countryside and are still the main labor source in the sugar industry. Most Muslim Indians have become traders and industrial workers. About three percent of the population are Chinese, a group primarily engaged in retail trade. The 20,000 whites, nearly all Franco-Mauritian, are the elite. They own most of the sugar estates and many of the large commercial firms. Despite these various cultural backgrounds, the island retains a distinctly French cultural flavor, reflecting 18th-century French rule.

Government

After 158 years as a crown colony, Mauritius became an independent country within the Commonwealth on March 12, 1968.

The cabinet system was adopted in 1957, and universal adult suffrage was introduced two years later. For electoral purposes, the country is divided into 21 constituencies which elect a total of 62 members to the National Assembly (plus up to eight “best losers” to help maintain the communal balance). The Council of Ministers, presided over by the

prime minister, is the supreme policy-making body and is responsible to the Assembly. In 19992, Mauritius became a republic. Acting president is Ariranga Govidasamy Pillay and Anerood Jugnauth is the prime minister.

Mauritius is a member of the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Nations. It maintains diplomatic relations with 57 countries, including the following which maintain resident embassies in or near Port Louis: Australia, the People’s Republic of China, Egypt, France, India, Korea, Madagascar, Pakistan, the U.K., the U.S., and the former U.S.S.R.

The flag of Mauritius consists of red, blue, yellow, and green horizontal divisions.

Arts, Science, Education

An interest in arts and letters has existed in Mauritius since the 18th century. The island has produced talented poets and novelists, and the work of one historian is recognized as authoritative throughout the world. As early as the 18th century, actors from France performed plays in Port Louis. Today, although overseas theater and opera troupes come here infrequently, many islanders attend high-standard performances given by local amateur drama groups. Lectures, art exhibits, and concerts of varying quality are other activities which give Mauritius a unique flavor of both Eastern and Western culture in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

Representative and abstract painting flourishes; local authorities provide art courses to initiate interested young people. The island has a musical society and several active historical societies. The Mauritius Archives is one of the oldest organizations of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. The Mauritius Institute, founded in 1880, comprises a natural history museum, public library, small art gallery, and historical museum at Mahébourg.

Mauritius’ efficient Sugar Industry Research Institute is a world-acclaimed organization providing improved varieties of cane. It also pursues research on fertilizers, herbicides, pest and disease control, irrigation practices, and sugar technology.

Demands are high for widespread, free primary and secondary education. Literacy was estimated at approximately 94 percent and, although education is not compulsory, about 95 percent of children of primary school age attended schools. Mauritius maintains an Industrial Trade Training Centre; the College of Education, which trains primary school teachers; and the Institute of Education, which prepares teachers for secondary schools. The University of Mauritius is concerned with agriculture, technology, education, and administration, and currently is developing its curriculum and student body. Most Mauritians obtain their university degrees in the United Kingdom, France, India, or the United States.

Commerce and Industry

The Mauritian economy depends heavily on the sugar industry. Sugar grows on 90 percent of the arable land and accounts for about 25 percent of export earnings. The island produces from 500,000 to 700,000 tons of sugar annually. As an associate member of the European Community (EC), Mauritius has an annual export quota of about 500,000 metric tons to the EC countries at a guaranteed price.

Because of the island’s vulnerability to cyclones, nonsugar agriculture (vegetables and fruit) is small; the country imports most of its daily food requirements. However, the government has a determined policy of diversifying agriculture to reverse traditional dependence on exported sugar and imported food.

To diversify the economy and create jobs, Mauritius launched, in the

early 1970s, the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) scheme for firms manufacturing exclusively for export. With the establishment of the EPZ, the manufacturing sector (excluding sugar milling) has greatly increased its economic importance. About 29 percent of recorded employment is in the manufacturing establishments. EPZ firms concentrate on textile products, especially knitwear; Mauritius is currently the world's third largest exporter of knitwear.

Tourism also developed rapidly during the 1970s to become the island's third-largest source of foreign exchange earnings by the end of the decade, drawing almost half of its visitors from Europe. More than 250,000 tourists visit Mauritius each year.

The bulk of Mauritian imports consists of food, petroleum products, machinery and transport equipment, chemicals and fertilizers, cement, iron and steel, and crude vegetable oil. The imports come mainly from EC countries, South Africa, the U.K., and the U.S., except petroleum products, which are brought from Bahrain and Kuwait.

The economy suffered in the 1980's because of low world sugar prices. The economy has experienced high growth, averaging 6 percent, since.

The Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry is located at 3 Royal St., Port Louis; telephone: 2083301; telex: 4277; FAX: 2080076.

Transportation

Regular flights operate to and from Europe, eastern and southern Africa, India, and Australia. Schedules change frequently, however, and airline offices should be consulted for current information. Occasional passenger ships stop at Mauritius on cruises, and some cargo ships carry passengers to Africa and Australia.

The island has neither railroads nor streetcars, and buses are crowded

and slow. Local taxi service is generally safe and adequate. Taxis are not metered, but fares are supposedly based on mileage, using the odometer as a gauge. Overcharges can be avoided by agreeing on a price beforehand.

The roads in Mauritius are usually paved, but not well maintained. In 1989, the World Bank approved a loan of \$30 million for the resurfacing of 110 miles (175 kilometers) of roadway. Driving can be hazardous because of pedestrians, carts, and animals moving along the sides of narrow roads, and the recklessness of many drivers. Local driver's licenses will be issued to those with valid foreign permits. Liability insurance is required by law, and a discount is given with proof of a safe-driving record.

Communications

Telephone service is poor for most of the island. The beach resort hotels have telephones, and outlying police stations will deliver urgent messages. The international circuit is open on a 24-hour basis, but calls often take 15 to 30 minutes to place. Connections are good, and all calls are automatically person-to-person. Collect calls cannot be made or received.

Reliable worldwide telegraph service is available. International airmail between Mauritius and the U.S. takes five to 10 days, depending on destination, and the mail is neither restricted nor censored.

The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) operates on medium-wave radio and one television band. It broadcasts in French, English, Hindi, and Chinese. English-language news is broadcast daily by TV and radio. Some English, American, and French TV films are aired, with many of the former two dubbed in French. TV sets can be purchased or rented inexpensively. Sets properly equipped with boosters or good antennas (available locally) can receive telecasts from the French overseas channel, RFO, on Réunion Island in the Indian Ocean; RFO

provides daily news coverage from Paris.

International editions of *Time* and *Newsweek* are available at local newsstands within a few days of publication. No local press is written exclusively in English. The chief French-language dailies print mostly local news and advertising; they do, however, cover some international news, and a few articles are in English. Reuters and Agence France Press news bulletins are received by the U.S. Embassy in Port Louis.

Health

Private medical facilities in Mauritius are generally adequate for routine cases, although they do not measure up to U.S. standards of efficiency, organization, or sophistication of equipment. Doctors and surgeons are capable of coping with emergencies; unfortunately, however, inadequate nursing care and staff sometimes make the system uncertain.

The three large, government-owned and -operated hospitals have satisfactory equipment and personnel, but are unpopular because of overcrowding (medical care is free for all Mauritians). Although the Ramgoolam Hospital, a government facility in the northern part of the island, has a basic intensive-care unit, it is considered too far from most American residences in the Floreal/Vacoas plateau region.

Most physicians have been trained in Europe and India. Many are government doctors with private practices in their specialties. In general, local physicians are well trained, but their efficiency is often hampered by inadequately trained support personnel, unavailable strategic equipment and supplies, heavy patient loads, and lack of in-country instruction to stay abreast of medical advances and technology. Cultural dissimilarities also account for differing attitudes toward patient care, devotion to duty, and other Hippocratic-oath

standards normally expected by Americans.

Dental service is somewhat expensive. As in the case of physicians, some dentists may be out of touch with modern equipment and dental practices, and their care is not up to U.S. standards. They should be selected with discrimination. Although Mauritius itself has no orthodontist, a good one is in practice on Réunion Island. Long delays often are experienced in trying to arrange dental appointments.

Pharmacies are numerous and fairly well stocked. However, most brands of medicines are European-manufactured and may be unfamiliar to Americans. Prices are reasonable. All main towns have several pharmacies; a few are open on Sundays and local holidays.

Mauritius has no serious endemic diseases or health hazards. Except for an occasional bout of dysentery or influenza, most resident Americans find the island healthful. The constant high humidity may, however, affect persons with arthritic conditions. Malaria suppressants are recommended for all residents, especially those who live near the coast. Hay fever and sinusitis sufferers are affected during July and August when the sugarcane is in flower.

Parasites and dysentery are common, but usually can be prevented by careful preparation and storage of food, the boiling of drinking water, and the use of patent medicines. Gamma globulin and tetanus inoculations are recommended before arrival. While infectious hepatitis, poliomyelitis, and typhoid and paratyphoid fever occur intermittently, they can be countered by immunizations at regular intervals.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Travel to Mauritius from the U.S. is by two basic alternate routes. The

first is via Europe, the other via the South Atlantic and South Africa. Planes arrive daily. The ocean port of entry is Port Louis.

American citizens do not need visas to enter Mauritius, but valid immunization certificates are required. In countries where Mauritius does not maintain an embassy, visas may be obtained through British consular offices.

Pets are allowed to enter Mauritius only if accompanied by import permits; applications are to be made beforehand to the Veterinary Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Le Réduit. Dogs and cats are required to undergo six months' quarantine in government kennels from the date of their arrival, and all expenses are charged to the owner. During this period, only adult owners may check on their animals, and at fixed hours. The quarantine kennels, at Le Réduit, about seven miles from downtown Port Louis, are clean and modern, and have a government veterinarian in daily attendance.

The time in Mauritius is Greenwich Mean Time plus four.

The unit of currency is the Mauritian *rupee* (Re, plural Rs), which is divided into 100 cents. Branches of Citibank N.A. and Barclays Bank International are located in Port Louis.

Mauritius uses the English system of weights and measures. Gasoline is sold by the imperial gallon.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 & 2 New Year's Day
- Jan/Feb. Chinese New Year & Spring Festival*
- Jan/Feb. Thaipoozam Cavadee*
- Feb/Mar. Maha Shivaratree*
- Mar. 12 Independence Day
- Mar/Apr. Good Friday*

- Mar/Apr. Easter*
- Mar/Apr. Ougadi*
- May 1 Labor Day
- Aug/Sept. Ganesh Chaturthi*
- Sept 9. Father Leval Day
- Nov. 1 All Saints' Day
- Oct/Nov. Divali*
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day
- Id al-Adha*
- Ramadan*
- Id al-Fitr*

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

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MOROCCO

Kingdom of Morocco

Major Cities:

Rabat, Casablanca, Tangier, Marrakech, Fez, Meknès, Oujda

Other Cities:

Agadir, Ceuta, El Jadida, Kenitra, Safi, Tétouan

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 1999 for Morocco. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Morocco has been called "a cold country with a hot sun." The mild, semitropical climate on the northern and western coastal areas is separated by mountain ranges from a desert climate to the east and south. Most people live west of the mountain chains which protect them from the Sahara Desert. In the harsher south the population is sparse, concentrated in scattered oases along the Draa and Souss Rivers.

Africa's closest approach to Europe, Morocco lies some 20 miles away across the Strait of Gibraltar. Twice, it was the stage for invasions of Europe—the Moorish assault on Spain in the eighth century and the

Allied assault on the continent in World War II. Today, jet airliners fly over plodding camel trains and farmers tilling with implements unchanged since Romans occupied and governed the land. Cities offer traditional medinas with narrow, cobblestone streets; the neighborhood mosques with their distinctive minarets; as well as modern skyscrapers, shopping malls and tree-lined boulevards. Morocco's industrious people produce not only some of the world's most ingenious handicrafts—from handwoven woolen carpets to ornate metalwork, from leathercraft to inlaid wooden objects, from hand-painted ceramics to gold and silver jewelry—they also are heavily involved in intensive agriculture and harvesting fish and other seafood from its offshore waters. Morocco's trees produce olives and cork. The country's largest export, however, is phosphates from the world's largest known deposit of this resource.

MAJOR CITIES

Rabat

Rabat, on the Atlantic coast of northern Africa, is about 280 feet above sea level. It rests on a bluff overlooking a small river, the Bou

Regreg. Sale, its sister city, lies opposite Rabat on the north side of the river. Rabat is located 172 miles south of Tangier, the gateway to Europe, and 60 miles north of Casablanca, the country's largest city, principal seaport, and industrial center. Rabat has two main seasons—short, rainy winter and a long, dry summer—separated by brief transitional seasons. Temperatures range from an average minimum of 46°F in January to an average maximum of 81.5°F in August. Annual rainfall averages 21 inches. Rabat's climate is more moderate than that of Washington, D.C.

Rabat reflects the diversity of cultures that characterizes Morocco. All corners of the country are represented in its population which, including Sale, stretching from Tangier to the Sahara Desert. Contrasts of Arabic and Western (especially French) culture are sharply reflected in the Moroccan capital. European-style villas, shops, apartments, and tree-lined boulevards extend over much of the city. On the avenues of the new section of the city, the latest fashions parade beside flowing robes, hoods, and veils of the Islamic tradition. The historic core of the city is its walled "medina" (old city), whose narrow, bustling cobblestone streets have changed little over the past century. Forests, beaches, mountain resorts,

and legendary medieval cities with rich historical cultures, such as Fez and Marrakech, are all within easy distance of Rabat.

Many Rabatis speak Arabic and French well, and some are fluent in Spanish or other Western languages. For the leisure-time student of languages or cultural patterns, many opportunities for study exist. Learning French is worth the investment. The English-speaking community and facilities are simply too limited to be relied on for entertainment and recreational purposes.

Food

Nearly all fresh vegetables and fruits found in the U.S. are available in season in Rabat local markets. Moroccan shops sell imported canned goods at higher than U.S. prices. Domestic and imported goods such as dairy products, flour, rice, couscous olives and spices can be found in local supermarkets and markets. Local bakeries make excellent breads, pastries, cakes and other sweets. A wide variety of fresh fish is sold daily in the fish markets. Good quality beef, veal, chicken, rabbit and pork are available. Moroccan lamb, particularly is of excellent quality.

Some families occasionally drive to Ceuta or Melilla, the two Spanish enclaves on the northern coast, for shopping at several well-stocked supermarkets which carry a large selection of Spanish and other European products. As these territories offer duty-free prices, good values can be found there. Gasoline is approximately 2/3 the cost in Morocco, for example. Moreover, Spanish specialty items such as wines, fruit juices, cheeses, ham and pork products, certain vegetables unavailable in Morocco, and other items make the trip worthwhile. Ceuta is approximately 3-1/2 hour's drive from Rabat, or 1-1/2 hour's drive from Tangier.

Clothing

The type of clothing worn in Rabat and Casablanca is as in Washington, D.C. The Moroccan public dress

is much closer to European than to Middle Eastern customs but females dress more conservatively in public places. A "cold country with a hot sun," Moroccan temperatures drop sharply at night, both during summer and winter. Summer days are cooler than in Washington, D.C. Clothing can be ordered from the U.S. without difficulty from catalogs. Local tailors have been used with varying results, and varying prices. Some Mission staffers have located dressmakers which they recommend, individuals who can work with or without patterns. It is recommended, however, that dress fabrics be brought with you, since good locally available fabrics are imported and are either expensive or not to American tastes. Some residents have located suitable clothes and fabrics during visits to Europe.

American women, and families with teen-age daughters, should be aware that Morocco is an Islamic country where the position of women in society is very different from that in the U.S. In Morocco, women appearing in public outside the confines of the home must expect that they will attract attention of the country's males. Moroccan females learn to deal with this early in life and dress accordingly, in many cases by using the djellaba with its long sleeves and robe extending to the ankles. Moroccan women also arrange, whenever possible, to walk the city's streets accompanied by a friend rather than alone. They also learn to develop a thick skin to ignore the unsolicited male comments and suggestions that are inevitable in public.

Expatriate females who reside in Morocco, the young and even not-so-young, often are singled out even more for this uninvited attention. Comments or approaches usually are made in French. In the majority of cases, there is no danger or evil intent, but foreign women residing in Morocco often are made uncomfortable by this behavior. In recognizing this simple fact of life, American women choose their

clothes with a view to avoiding any apparel which might seem potentially provocative or enticing. But regardless of choice of clothing, harassment of foreign females generally is unavoidable in Morocco. American female residents should do their best to ignore public comments and avoid reacting in any way.

Men: Prices of men's clothes are higher locally than in the U.S. and there is not as much variety. Generally, it is recommended that clothing and shoes be acquired in the U.S. prior to arrival; ordering from a catalogue can fill needs as they arise.

It is recommended that men purchase a belt designed to carry money and passport which fits out of sight under the shirt or pants. These belts safeguard valuables during the inevitable visits to medinas and souks where crowded conditions favor the activities of pickpockets and petty thieves.

Women: In the evenings, women need a light wrap such as a woolen shawl or sweater, as Moroccan houses tend to remain chilly during winter months. Bring a good supply of sweaters, warm slippers, and bathrobes for the entire family. Long-sleeved dresses are also useful. Many women wear wool afternoon and cocktail dresses during winter. Bring a lightweight wool coat, a raincoat (with detachable liner), and umbrellas. Morocco produces many qualities of women's shoes, but styles and sizes may not fit American tastes. Imported shoes available on the local market are expensive. Women need cocktail, dinner, and evening apparel. Halter-type, sleeveless, or decollete women's fashions are no longer a curiosity (when worn indoors, not on public streets). Ready-made clothing (including children's clothes), women's lingerie, and many accessories can be bought locally. Selection is limited to European styles and prices are high by U.S. standards.

Children: Good quality American-style children's clothing is expensive if purchased locally.

Supplies and Services

Local pharmacies and stores stock a large assortment of locally produced and imported drugs and cosmetics at higher than U.S. prices.

Many hairdressers and barbershops in Rabat offer satisfactory service at prices lower than in the U.S. Manicure, pedicure and masseuse services are available at reasonable prices. Shoe repair is competent and cheap by U.S. standards. Drycleaning service is uneven; avoid purchasing items which must be drycleaned in favor of wash-and-wear fabrics. Repairs for French, Italian, Japanese, and German cars are more satisfactory, and cheaper than for American cars due to spare parts availability.

Domestic Help

Individual requirements vary depending on representational responsibilities, family size and ages of children. Another variable is whether staff are expected to live in, or work only during the day and commute from home. Not all people seeking employment as household staff speak French, and with the exception of the few who have worked for U.S. families before, few know English. Wages for household staff vary according to responsibilities and hours worked during the week. In 1999, a couple or small family hiring a cook/housekeeper could expect to pay DH 500-600 per 5-day work week, with overtime paid for duties after normal hours. Some single personnel hire maid service for 1 or 2 days per week.

Most residences with yards require at least part-time gardeners to assure the plants and lawn are well tended. Such part time help is easily obtainable. A gardener was earning DH 80-100 per day in 1999. Some families able to offer live-in facilities hire a man to be a combination gardener and night watchman. The employer is expected to furnish food and uniforms for household help. As the employer is legally liable for

medical bills incurred by employees due to accidents sustained on the job or going to and from work, it is recommended that liability insurance be purchased to cover such contingencies. The rate for this type of policy averages 1.5% -2% of the employee's annual wage.

Religious Activities

Religious services in Rabat are regularly celebrated at Protestant, Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Jewish places of worship, as well as at the numerous Moslem mosques which dot the city. With the exception of the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca, entry to Moroccan mosques is prohibited to non-Moslems, but such visitors are welcome to stroll around outside these often ornate and beautiful structures to admire their architecture. Catholic services in local churches are held in French and Spanish, Protestant services in French and English. Jewish services are in Hebrew. In addition, an English-language non-denominational Protestant service is conducted each Sunday. The English-speaking Protestant community also conducts a Sunday school for children. An English-speaking Catholic priest hears confessions occasionally and says Mass in English every other Sunday. Catechism classes are conducted for elementary school students 1 hour a week.

Education

The Rabat American School Association operates the Rabat American School (RAS), a nonprofit organization, which is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and has received permission to offer the International Baccalaureate curriculum in grades 10-12. Located on an attractive campus covering several acres in the Agdal district and surrounded by a high wall, the school consists of several classroom blocks, administrative offices, science labs, a computer science center, an auditorium, cafeteria, athletic field, gymnasium, gymnastics room, locker rooms and swimming pool. RAS offers classes from nursery through grade 12.

For nursery school, a child must be 3 years of age by September 31 and toilet trained. Rabat also has an English language, parent-run, parent-sponsored nursery coop for 3 and 4-year olds, as well as a number of French language nursery schools.

The RAS curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12 is that of a quality, private school offering university preparatory coursework. Kindergarten, for example, is an academic program covering the full day where children are taught to read. French-language instruction is provided for each student; Arabic language is optional for other than Moroccan students for whom it is compulsory. Spanish also is offered as a foreign language.

Throughout the curriculum there is emphasis placed on learning about the geography, history, culture, religion and accomplishments of the host country. This is presented through special school programs, community service, athletic events and field trips to a variety of sites in Morocco.

Computer instruction is mandatory from grades 1-12. Four separate computer labs are available, the school has its own leased line and every student has access to e-mail. The school has a 14,000-volume library. Transportation by school vehicles is provided to and from school. In 1998, enrollment averaged 450 students, with an average class size of 16. American enrollment averaged 27%, Moroccan enrollment 32%, and 45 other nationalities made up the balance. The faculty of full and part time teachers consisted during the 97-98 school year of 26 U.S. citizens, 3 host country nationals and 26 individuals of other nationalities. Parent-teacher conferences are held regularly, and quarterly progress reports are issued for students above nursery through grade 12.

After school athletic activities, scouting, and other extracurricular offerings such as aerobics, Tae-kwan-do, ballet, choir, drama, computer club, or arts & crafts are

available, with late bus transportation provided. The school sponsors boy's and girl's basketball, soccer, volleyball, track and swim teams.

The school year begins the last week in August and ends in mid-June. The secondary education curriculum is based on the rigorous International Baccalaureate program, with heavy emphasis on mathematics, science and English. Students transferring into RAS, particularly at the secondary level, may find the adjustment difficult unless they have a solid grounding in academic subjects previously. The school will test such prospective students for placement and make recommendations if there are any deficiencies which need to be addressed.

In recent years, graduates of RAS have gained admission to superior North American universities such as Dartmouth, Yale, Harvard, Princeton, M.I.T., Duke and McGill (Canada). For further information, see the Department of Overseas Schools Summary School Information.

The French Cultural Mission operates a number of schools in Rabat at the elementary and secondary levels. Lycee Descartes, a large (3,500 students) coeducational institution, partly housed in a modern building and in several annexes throughout the city, has a solid reputation. Instruction is of high quality but all in French. English is taught as a foreign language. Admission requirements are fluency in French and/or having been enrolled previously in a French language school.

Special Educational Opportunities

Various cultural missions also offer language training, including the French Cultural Mission. All courses are offered at a moderate cost.

Sports

Spectator sports include soccer and polo. Morocco's principal cities host soccer games almost every weekend. Those who play golf or tennis

will find courses and courts in cities and towns throughout the country, and Morocco's pleasant climate allows play virtually the year around. In Rabat, many golfers avail themselves of the Royal Golf Dar-es-Salaam complex, with two 18-hole courses and one 9-hole course. Greens fees are DH 400 for 9 or 18 holes; caddy fees are DH 70 for 18 holes and DH 40 for 9 holes. You may rent golf carts for DH 300. Admission costs DH 400 (deducted from greens fees when playing golf). The golf club hosts a yearly Pro-Am golf tournament in the fall to which many professionals and ranking amateurs are invited. Royal Golf Dar-es-Salaam also offers tennis, a heated, Olympic-sized swimming pool, sauna bath, pro-shop, and clubhouse. Yearly membership costs DH 9,700 (single) or DH 12,000 (couple) for the first year; then DH 8,100 (single) and DH 10,400 (couple) a year; a child's membership costs DH 1,900 annually. Club members are exempt from entrance or golf fees. Daily nonmember fees for golf are DH 400. Mission personnel may pay for 6 months at a time.

One popular private club, the Riad Club, offers tennis, swimming, a playground for children, and a clubhouse with bar and restaurant. Rabat's yacht club offers an Olympic-sized pool, restaurant, bar, bathhouses, and tennis courts. Membership in the latter club is limited and mostly French, however, The Hilton Hotel offers memberships enabling families to use facilities which include: two swimming pools (one for children, one for adults), four clay tennis courts, a golf practice range, and an exercise room. Monthly dues, however, are steep at DH 1,500 for singles, DH 2,000 for couples, and DH 4,000 for family memberships.

Most of the Atlantic coast beaches have rough surf and strong, often dangerous currents. Moreover, in recent years water samples taken from beach areas near Rabat, Casablanca and Tangier indicate unsafe pollution levels. During hot summer weekends, hordes of local residents flock to the beaches such as Temara,

just south of Rabat, or Plage des Nations, a lovely beach just north of Sale. But regretfully, Moroccans have yet to recognize the need to protect their beautiful beach areas by not littering them with plastic bags and other cast-offs from their picnicking. Except in rare instances, trash receptacles are not to be found. Expatriate residents soon learn that driving a few extra miles to Skhirat, Bouznika or Mohammedia, all less populated areas located between Rabat and Casablanca, is worth the effort to enjoy a day at the beach. Other excellent beaches are available up and down the Atlantic coast or north to the shores of the Mediterranean.

Morocco is one of the few countries on the African continent which offers skiing during the winter months. Depending upon snowfall, the ski season may begin as early as December and run through the end of March. Closest to Rabat near Ifrane, approximately 3 hour's drive, are the ski areas of Michliffen and Djebel Hebri at an altitude of 6,500 feet. Michliffen is located on the slope of a mountain. Djebel Hebri includes a steep hill about 10 minutes beyond Michliffen. The Poma lift (300 yards) and baby Poma lift charges are very reasonable by U.S. standards. Djebel Hebri also has an easy hill for learning. Sleds may be rented and a snack bar is available.

The other area offering skiing is Oukaimeden, which is a 90-minute drive from Marrakech, and is reputed to have the best skiing in Morocco. Its facilities include a chair lift to 10,637 feet and intermediate and beginner slopes with T-Bars and Poma lifts. Ski equipment may be rented near the slopes, though quality of such equipment may not be up to U.S. standards.

Several private clubs and the Royal Golf Dar-es-Salaam offer private and group instruction in horseback riding at considerably less cost than in the U.S. Trout fishing can be found in many lakes and streams, but the nearest spot is about 60 miles from Rabat. A reservoir 15

miles from Rabat has provided some excellent fishing for large-mouth bass. (Fishing licenses are required for all inland fishing.) Fishermen also may try their luck at deep sea fishing or surf casting from the beach at many spots along the Atlantic or Mediterranean coasts; no license is required for ocean fishing. The reservoir mentioned above also attracts windsurfers. Devotees of this sport also will wish to visit Essaouira, five hours' drive south of Rabat, whose nearly constant onshore wind provides ideal conditions for windsurfing.

Hunters will find ample opportunity to hunt for game such as duck, partridge, quail, goose and dove. Hunts for wild boar, deer, and mountain goats can be arranged. Hunting licenses are required for all types of hunting. All shotguns must be registered. (See Firearms and Ammunition).

In recent years, a number of local tour companies have begun to offer group activities such as mountain bike tours, whitewater rafting in the Atlas Mountains, mountain climbing, hiking, and camel trekking in desert areas.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Rabat has a number of interesting cultural and historical sites which attract tourists from around the world. The Chellah, a former Roman settlement, stands on a bluff overlooking the Bou Regreg River below, and marks the site of the first population center in the Rabat-Sale area. There are traces that the Phoenicians may have settled this site as early as the 8th century B.C. Remains of the Roman forum can still be seen. Out towards the mouth of the Bou Regreg River where it meets the Atlantic stands a tiny fortress and what remains of the Kasbah of the Oudaia, founded around A.D.788. Its principal gateway, the Bab el Kasbah, is the most beautiful surviving in the Moorish world, and within its walls is a perfect Andalusian garden. The site houses a museum of Moroccan clothing, jew-

elry, and furniture, and an open-air tea room overlooking the river.

The Mausoleum and Mosque of Mohammed V provide a modern contrast to the columns of the uncompleted minaret of the Tour Hassan. The latter was begun in the 12th century by the Almohad ruler, Yacoub El Mansour. The Archeological Museum contains fascinating objects from prehistoric and Roman times. The medina (old city) itself is worth several hours, poking around the many shops selling everything from leather items from Fez, bronze chandeliers from Marrakech, or Berber jewelry from the south.

Within a day's drive of Rabat, you can wander through the ancient Roman ruins of Volubilis, or visit the casino and beaches of Mohammedia. A scenic drive into the foothills of the Atlas, lunch at Rommani, or a picnic in the Mamora cork forest along the Meknes road are pleasant diversions. Fez, about 110 miles from Rabat, offers a labyrinthine "souk," where metalworkers and pottery makers turn out handicrafts the same way that they have been doing it for five centuries. This famous city also is the site of the Karaouiyine University and Mosque, the latter originally founded in the 9th Century.

Visit Casablanca, a 1-hour drive, to take in the splendor of the Hassan II Mosque with the tallest minaret in the world; to sample the big city's Parisian boutiques, Italian, Lebanese, and other European grocery stores and patisseries; or to patronize one of the excellent seafood restaurants along the Corniche (seafront). View the Swiss village architecture of Ifrane, high in the Middle Atlas mountains, and spend some time in neighboring Azrou for both summer and winter sports. Marrakesh, less than five hours' drive from Rabat, is famous for the pinkish color of its buildings, its palm trees set against the backdrop of the High Atlas mountains looming up behind the city, its wonderful climate, and the infinite variety of handicrafts for sale in its famous

souk. Marrakech is also a good starting-off point for visits to the beginning of the Sahara Desert, trekking into the High Atlas Mountains, viewing the Berber settlements along oases and gorges of the south, or travelling west to the beach towns of Agadir and Essaouira.

The north of Morocco - where the strong Spanish influence continues to be felt - is also worth touring, whether it be to Tangier's medina, to Asilah for its beaches and seafood, to the Lixus Roman ruins near Larache, to Chaouen for a stay in a medieval style mountain village, to Tetaoun for its souk, or to the two Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, which offer a taste of Spain without leaving the continent.

Entertainment

Public entertainment is in French, Arabic, or Berber. The Very Little Theatre Group (an informal, English-speaking community organization) performs several times per year. French troupes occasionally present classical French plays, modern French dramas and comedies. Folklore attractions are presented from time to time. Cultural missions often sponsor concerts featuring touring artists and ballet and dance groups. Rabat's largest theater, the Mohammed V, offers occasional concerts, shows, performances or art exhibitions. In addition to several neighborhood theaters, many theaters show films in the central business district. Virtually all films, whether American, British or Italian, have French dialog dubbed in. Two theaters in the medina feature Arabic films, mostly Egyptian.

Rabat features many excellent restaurants, including a number offering international cuisine such as Japanese (Restaurant Fuji), Vietnamese (Le Mandarin, La Pagode), Italian (Pizzeria Reggio, La Mama), TexMex (El Rancho), and scores of Moroccan establishments where fresh seafood and French or Moroccan cuisine are specialties. U.S. franchise establishments such as McDonalds, Pizza Hut and Dairy



Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Ornate arched entranceway to mosque, Casablanca, Morocco

Queen also are located in and around Rabat.

Social Activities

The American Women's Association of Rabat holds monthly meetings and sponsors a wide variety of activities, including an annual fund-raising event to benefit local charities and scholarships.

Along with the Moroccans, you may contribute your effort, skills and personal enthusiasm. Members of the royal family are occupied with and sponsor many of these charities, including the Union des Femmes, organized to promote women in the business world.

In 1998, Rabat had an active Boy Scout troop of about 10 members, ages 1 to 15. The troop included boys of several nationalities, but adhered to U.S. standards. The Rabat American School is the charter institution. Troop No. 241 was awarded the International Boy Scout Crest for exemplifying an "International Experience." In 1998, there were Cub Scout and Webelo groups, Brownies, Daisies and Junior Girl Scout programs as well. Of course, these groups are dependent upon sufficient adult support to organize and oversee activities.

In recent years, a co-ed slow-pitch softball league involving teams

made up of Americans, Moroccans, Japanese and other baseball enthusiasts has been organized for weekend play in Rabat. Typically, teams are drawn from the Marines, Embassy, USAID, Peace Corps, RAS, Hash House Harriers, diplomats and business representatives from Japan, and Moroccans who have taken an active interest in the game. For the younger set, a Little League baseball group organizes practices and games.

RAS is the site of regular volleyball games which mix local Moroccan players, Americans and other expatriates, as well.

Virtually every week, the Hash House Harriers stage their celebrated "race". People young and old of every nationality take part in this regular outdoor activity which gives participants an up-close look at Rabat and its hinterland, before gathering for the social hour which follows. Occasionally, the Harriers organize family travel to another part of Morocco for a weekend together which includes their usual run.

Casablanca

Casablanca is Morocco's economic, financial, industrial and demographic capital (population about 6 million) and the country's most important seaport. It is also a significant airline crossroads from the U.S., Europe, the Middle East and other African countries. Casablanca's broad boulevards, multi-story office buildings, bustling business districts, and relatively small medina (the ancient, walled old city) contrast sharply with the traditional imperial cities of Rabat, Fez, Meknes and Marrakech. Though Casablanca begins at sea level, several of its suburbs are considerably higher. Temperatures range between 46°F and 65°F in the rainy winter and between 65°F and 90°F in the humid summer. Humidity averages 75%. Rainfall averages 15-20 inches a year.

The modern city of Casablanca originates from the ancient Berber

hamlet called Anfa. The present city center was largely built during the French Protectorate in the first half of the 20th century, while extensive outlying areas have been constructed since independence in 1956. The most visible new landmark on the Casablanca skyline is the Hassan II Mosque, located on a promontory overlooking the Atlantic with its 200-meter-high minaret towering above the city. This magnificent building took 13 years to complete, with several thousand artisans working on it around the clock. Plans include building a conference center, library and other buildings to house businesses in this redeveloped area of the city.

Food

Markets and grocery stores abound in Casablanca; the Central Market and the Maarif offer the best quality and selection. Although the markets are open only in the morning, the grocery stores remain open well into the evening; in addition, several large American-style supermarkets and buyers' clubs are located in the city.

All fresh fruits and vegetables found in the U.S. are available seasonally. Most personnel buy poultry, meat and fish locally. Cuts of meat differ slightly from those in the U.S., but quality and variety are good. Pork, chicken, and beef are available at prices somewhat higher than in the U.S. Alcoholic beverages are available, although expensive when purchased on the local market. Moroccan wines, however, are plentiful and vary in quality from table wine to quite good vintages. Prices are reasonable by U.S. standards. Casablanca has an excellent selection of French pastry shops and Belgian chocolate shops; Moroccan breads and pastries are of good quality.

Clothing

Most purchase clothing either directly from the U.S. via catalog or while on vacation in Europe or the U.S. However, Casablanca has an increasing number of boutiques with adequate to very good apparel

and footwear, some of it imported. Casablanca currently has Morocco's only department store, Alpha 55, which has a clothing department. Clothes may also be purchased at the large supermarkets or price clubs mentioned above.

Casablanca's medina and Habbous district offer an excellent selection of Moroccan arts and handicrafts, everything from bronze metalwork to Berber carpets, to decorated ceramics and pottery. (Other major handicraft centers within the consular district are Marrakech, Safi, Essaouira and Ouarzazate.)

Many expatriates living in Casablanca take advantage of its antique shops, fairs and flea markets to hunt for that special Moroccan or European decorative item.

Transportation

In Casablanca, automobile service and repair facilities are more numerous than in other Moroccan cities. Buses and taxis are plentiful and inexpensive. There are numerous car rental agencies in Casablanca. Rates are more expensive and rental cars generally are older and less well maintained than those for hire in the U.S. or Europe.

Supplies and Services

Casablanca has many excellent hair stylists, beauty shops and shoe repair shops. Drycleaners are not of American or European standards; wash-and-wear is preferable to items requiring drycleaning. Local film processing using the latest technology to produce fast service is reliable and comparable in price with the U.S. Some employees, however, prefer to send film to the U.S. for processing. (For additional information on Clothing and Supplies and Services, see Rabat.)

Religious Activities

English-language services are available at the Anglican Church of St. John the Evangelist, located near the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Casablanca, and weekly Catholic Mass alternates between the Cathedral and Maison St. Dominique. Several Catholic and Protes-

tant churches hold services in French and Spanish. Other places of worship include synagogues and Greek Orthodox Churches. Non-Moslems generally are not permitted to enter mosques in Morocco. An exception is the

Hassan II Mosque where visitors can view the magnificent ornate interior on guided tours for DH 100.

Education

Parents of pre-school age youngsters may enroll their children in the Casablanca American School (CAS), which offers nursery and kindergarten classes on a half day basis, or else choose one of a number of French language pre-schools in Casablanca. A third option is the George Washington Academy (GWA), inaugurated in 1998. The latter offers an American curriculum taught in a trilingual setting (40-45% English, 40-45% French and 10-20% Arabic). GWA offers pre-kindergarten through 8th grade education, with plans to expand to 12th grade in the future.

Tuition at the French language pre-schools generally has been less expensive than that charged by CAS; parents must pay this tuition charge themselves.

Other American children attend either CAS or one of the French Mission schools. CAS, which opened its impressive new campus in a suburb named "California" in September 1989 but which has been in operation since 1973, provides English-language, international education from nursery school through grade 12. Interested parents representing the corporate sector and the General founded the school, and it has been well-supported by the entire English-speaking community, as well as permanent residents of Morocco in Casablanca. The school year begins in early September/late August and runs through mid-June. Its walled campus contains a pre-school with 6 classrooms, administration building, large classroom building, two-level library, gymnasium, cafeteria and dining area, and sports field. Con-

struction is planned to begin in 2000 to provide another auditorium, an additional gymnasium, and more classroom space.

All local holidays and some American holidays are observed. The school is supported in part by a grant from the Department of State, and uses modern teaching methods and materials, maintaining high academic standards. It compares favorably to better American public and private schools. The International Baccalaureate program as well as an American high school diploma are offered. In 1999, enrollment stood at 478 students, representing over 30 nationalities. American students made up 9%, Moroccan students were 59%, and 32% came from other nations. Space limitations, particularly in the lowest grades, have meant that early applications for nondiplomatic families are highly recommended.

The school attempts to limit class size to 18 students per class, though CAS responds positively to requests that additional students be accepted from the corporate or diplomatic sectors. French language instruction is provided to all students; Arabic is optional except for Moroccan students for whom it is a compulsory subject. Computer instruction is introduced at an early age. Students can access e-mail through the school's computer lab.

The CAS faculty includes 64 full-time and 8 part-time staff members, including 34 from the U.S. Teachers are assisted by instructional aides in the lower grades as well as by several teaching interns.

CAS integrates the study of Morocco into its curriculum at all levels in order to build a better understanding of the host country. There are academic and athletic exchange programs with Moroccan counterparts; moreover, field trips and visitations promote an appreciation and understanding of the geography, history, language, religion and accomplishments of Morocco.

As the rigorous International Baccalaureate curriculum, beginning in middle school and continuing through high school, places heavy emphasis on mathematics, science and English, students transferring into CAS at the secondary level may find adjustment difficult without a solid grounding in previous academic work. The school will test all such prospective students for placement and make recommendations if there are any deficiencies which need to be addressed. Extremely limited resources are available for students with special needs. All students are mainstreamed into the normal academic programs if admitted to CAS. Parents of high-school-age students should consult with A/OS in the Department of State.

CAS graduates in recent years have gained admission to superior North American and European universities such as Duke, Penn, Stanford, Yale, Harvard, M.I.T., Cal Tech, Vassar, Williams, McGill (Canada), International School of Economics, (Rotterdam), London School of Economics, etc. Depending on the institution and IB examination results, some graduates may be given advanced standing or awarded credits at universities based on their IB degree.

After-school activities include a full range of sports for both boys and girls including volleyball, track and field, basketball, soccer, swimming and softball. Other extracurricular offerings are drama, art, choir, debate and yearbook clubs. Student councils are elected at both the lower school and upper school levels. A charity committee focuses CAS efforts at outreach into needy communities in Casablanca and its environs. On the academic side, the school regularly places students from grade 5 upwards, based on Scholastic Achievement Test results, to special summer programs for the academically gifted at Johns Hopkins, Duke University, Amherst and other U.S. higher institutions.

The French Mission system, another educational option, traditionally has many more applicants than places and therefore gives preference to students who have already studied in the French system. French-language fluency is essential. French school hours are longer (including some Saturday sessions) and discipline may be different for those accustomed to U.S. public schools. Class size could well be substantially larger than that at CAS. Graduates of the Lycee Lyautey in Casablanca possess the equivalent of a high school education plus 1 year of college credit, and may continue their education at French universities.

American college degrees or certificates cannot be obtained in Morocco, though Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane offers coursework in English according to a U.S.-based curriculum leading to undergraduate or graduate degrees.

Special Educational Opportunities

The Department-sponsored FSI language program teaches French and Arabic, depending on funding and community interest. The French Cultural Center also offers reasonably priced French or Arabic lessons. The American Language Center, an independent educational institution, is located in the downtown building which formerly housed the Consulate General. The center offers classes in English, French and Arabic. It also houses the American Bookstore which contains a modest assortment of English-language books.

Sports

The two golf clubs in the Casablanca area have a combined but limited membership for use of their facilities. One 9-hole course is located in the Anfa residential area of Casablanca near the principal officer's home; it also offers a restaurant, swimming pool, sauna, and tennis courts. The other, which has an 18-hole course, is about 20 miles from Casablanca, in Mohammedia. Casablanca has many tennis clubs.

(See Rabat Sports section on beaches, skiing, hiking, hunting, fishing, etc.) A long strip of clean beaches can be found a half hour's drive south of Casablanca in Dan Bonazza, including several private beaches which offer dining, shower and bathroom facilities. Many people enjoy saltwater fishing, and two yacht clubs offer boating and sailing. Surfing and windsurfing are available, but are not recommended for beginners. Recreation for children is limited, but small public parks, a zoo, two small amusement parks, and an aquarium are located in the city. Horses can be rented and excellent instruction is available for children at reasonable rates.

Long distance running is becoming increasingly popular. Employees from Rabat and Casablanca participate in the annual Marrakech International Marathon, as well as in many shorter races. Spectator events in Casablanca are held in the Mohammed V Stadium; weekend soccer matches are popular and draw huge crowds and considerable traffic congestion. The local newspapers offer coverage of sporting events.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Casablanca's consular district offers a wide variety of sights of both natural beauty and cultural importance. Marrakech, with lovely monuments and excellent restaurants, has a booming tourist industry, as does Agadir with its beautiful Atlantic beaches. Safi and Essaouira offer attractive ceramics and handicrafts as well as a less hurried pace, while Ouarzazate is the gateway to the Draa and Dades Valleys, and Zagora lies at the edge of the Sahara. Within a few hours' drive from Casablanca, one can admire beaches, forests, mountains, waterfalls and deserts. The major cities of Rabat, Fez, Meknes, Marrakech, and Tangier are all linked to Casablanca by excellent and inexpensive bus and rail service.

Entertainment

Casablanca offers a wealth of excellent restaurants, many of them

French. They can be found both in the major downtown hotel area and out on the Corniche overlooking the water, where diners take advantage of both the beautiful sight and an abundance of fresh seafood. Although there are creditable Moroccan restaurants as well, the best Moroccan cooking in Casablanca remains in private homes. Casablanca has many Lebanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Kosher, Italian, and Spanish restaurants.

In recent years, U.S. franchise establishments have entered the Moroccan market. Casablanca now boasts numerous well-known outlets such as McDonalds, Pizza Hut, Subway, Dairy Queen, Dunkin Donuts, Domino's Pizza and even a Schlotzky's Deli. Additionally, Casablanca offers innumerable cafes and ice cream parlors. Personnel at the Consulate General also travel frequently up and down the coast to enjoy the numerous fish and seafood restaurants in such towns as Mohammedia, El Jadida, and Oualidia. The latter is particularly well known for its cultivation of oysters.

Casablanca has a number of night clubs, jazz clubs and discotheques that typically attract the late night crowd. These are generally found along the city's Corniche waterfront area.

Cultural events are limited, but the foreign cultural centers, particularly the French and Italian, as well as the neighborhood cultural centers of Anfa, Maarif, and Ben M'sik, offer frequent concerts, lectures, painting exhibitions, and other cultural events. The Goethe Institute and the Spanish Cultural Center also offer a variety of programs. Casablanca's dozen cinemas offer mostly American films dubbed into French. Three or four showings are featured daily. The foreign cultural centers also show films in the original language with French subtitles. Teenagers participate in social events with their counterparts from the various high schools. The common language is French.

Few festivities take place in Casablanca proper, but there are occasional "moussems" and "fantasias" (colorful simulated charges by horsemen in full regalia, brandishing and firing weapons), and there are native folk dances in the Atlas Mountains. A National Museum and National Library are planned for the redevelopment area surrounding the Hassan II Mosque.

Newsstands carry primarily French and Arabic periodicals, but the International Herald Tribune, the European editions of Time and Newsweek, and The Economist are found readily. Several excellent French bookstores, some of which carry English language titles, are also available.

Shortwave reception is good. A quality shortwave set receives VOA, BBC, or other European broadcasts. Local radio and TV broadcasts are in French and Arabic. A multisystem TV is required for viewing these broadcasts. (See The Host Country, Radio and TV, for information regarding satellite TV)

Social Activities

The Churchill Club, located in the suburb of Ain Diab off the Corniche, stipulates that its members speak English on the premises. Membership is primarily English and American, with some French and Moroccans who wish to exercise their knowledge of English and socialize with native speakers. This club provides a means of getting acquainted with other members of the English-speaking community. The club offers dinner every Tuesday night, luncheons on Sundays, and limited food service during the week. Members are permitted to bring out-of-town visitors. Facilities include a bar, library, small wading pool, table tennis, and billiards. The club also sponsors dances, ethnic dinners and bridge tournaments. Both the American and British consuls general are ex officio members of the governing board.

The Casablanca Amateur Dramatic Society (CADS) presents several full length plays annually, as well as

numerous readings using the Churchill Club's facilities, but remaining a separate group. Casablanca's American International Women's Club membership is mostly non-American, although the club president must be a U.S. citizen. Working closely with many hospitals and schools, this group has an effective charity and development program which provides for the needy, and sponsors one annual fund raising event—the pre-Christmas bazaar. Besides monthly business meetings, the club sponsors afternoon bridge sessions and occasional outings. Many social clubs offer tennis, yachting, riding, and swimming. These clubs and the Royal Golf d'Anfa and Mohammedia provide good opportunities for meeting the local community of all nationalities.

Tangier

Strategically located facing the Strait of Gibraltar, Tangier is one of the oldest urban settlements in Morocco. It likely was founded as a trading post by the Phoenicians around 1100 B.C. and later was settled by Carthaginians and Romans before Arabs arrived in the 7th century A.D. Later, Tangier was fought over by Portuguese, Spanish and the English. From 1906 until Morocco's independence, Tangier existed apart from the rest of Morocco as an international port governed by European countries. It was during these five decades that the city gained a reputation for smuggling, intrigue and espionage. Various artists, writers, poets and eccentric expatriates were attracted to its pleasant climate and checkered history. While the Moroccan government's successful efforts to clean Tangier of its most unsavory elements have altered the character of the city, its proximity to Europe and regular flow of tourists, its somewhat run-down 1930s architecture, its mixture of Berber, Arabic and European influences, and its still active cultural community, combine to make it a highly individual and interesting place.

With a population of nearly 800,000, Tangier is built around a sandy beach and extends up into the foothills of the Rif Mountains. The general topography is hilly and craggy, with scant vegetation in the summer dry season, and with a profusion of flowers and greenery in winter and spring. Average temperature in August, the hottest month, is 86°F. Particularly during the summer months, tourists descend upon the city, both from Morocco and the European continent, swelling the city's population and filling its many restaurants, hotels, apartments and cafes.

Tangier's winters, November to April, resemble those of San Francisco, chilly and rainy. January average temperature is around 63°F. Periods of rain can last for several days, however, and the resultant dampness coupled with barely adequate heating facilities in many homes require families to have on hand a good supply of warm clothing.

History

It is said that when the doves from Noah's Ark carried back leaves from Tangier signifying that the flood had receded, Noah exclaimed "Et T'heneja!" (the land has come), pronounced in *darija* Arabic, "Tanja."

The recorded history of Tangier begins with the arrival of the Phoenicians, whose lonely stone tombs still look out upon the sea that brought them here. Following a short epoch of Carthaginian occupation, the Romans took Tangier in the third century. By the eighth century, the Muslims had taken back the city which, with nearby Ksar Es-Seghir, became the base for their invasion of Iberia. The waning power of the Andalusian Muslims brought Portugal to the scene in 1471. Portugal ruled Tangier until the British received it in 1662, along with Bombay, as part of the dowry of the new wife of King Charles II, Catherine of Braganza, the Infanta of Portugal.

The British in Tangier were first led by Lord Sandwich. Morocco was, at

that time, ruled by one of its fiercest sultans, Moulay Ismail. His unending harassment of the British colony of Tangier, coupled with political and financial problems at home, caused the withdrawal of the British in 1681. They blew up much of the city as they left.

The first American official contacts with Morocco began in 1777, when the Sultan of Morocco accorded recognition to the maritime commerce of the fledgling United States. Thus, Morocco became the first nation to recognize the U.S. as an independent nation.

In 1856, Tangier became the diplomatic capital of Morocco. The Franco-Moroccan Treaty of Protectorate was signed in 1912, and Tangier was placed under a special international regime. In June 1940, the forces of the Khalifian Army of the Spanish Zone entered the city, and the next year Tangier was incorporated into the Spanish Zone of Morocco. At that time, Vichy, France, which was dominated by Germany, controlled Morocco.

In August 1946, as a result of the negotiations among France, the U.S., the United Kingdom, and the U.S.S.R., the International Statute was reestablished. Morocco became independent in November 1956, and the Tangier International Zone was reabsorbed into the kingdom the following year.

The oldest official U.S. building in the world, outside the United States, is located in Tangier. The former American Legation was a gift to the U.S. in 1821, and was used by official American representatives until new offices were constructed in 1962. In 1981, the old legation building was registered by the Department of the Interior as a national historic site, the first such designation of a property outside the country.

Food

Tangier does not have supermarkets offering the range of food products found in the large shopping centers in Rabat and Casablanca.

But fresh seafood, meat and poultry products, and vegetables and fruit can be purchased in the daily souk market or in smaller convenience stores sprinkled throughout the city. Availability of individual vegetables and fruits may depend on the season. Families residing in Tangier recognize that lack of proper sanitation and clean water in surrounding rural areas, as well as use of fertilizer of uncertain origin, require them to wash thoroughly all vegetable and fruit products purchased on the local market.

Tangier's reputation as a place where one can obtain hard-to-find items is still alive and well. Most expatriate families rely on occasional visits to Ceuta - the Spanish enclave an 1-1/2 hour's drive away-to take advantage of reasonable prices, European brand names, and greater variety of vegetables and other individual products.

Clothing

While most of the information pertaining to Rabat and Casablanca applies to Tangier, it should be noted that, despite the city's historic reputation as a more open city, there is a strong underlying strain of conservatism and strictness concerning Islamic morals and values. This manifests itself in a more conservative dress code for women, for example. Use of the djellaba by women is the rule, with fewer Moroccan females dressed in Western attire in public.

As elsewhere in Morocco, but perhaps even more so in a city that attracts a steady flow of European tourists, foreign women attract the attention of the male population. Expatriate female residents claim this uninvited attention can be more persistent in Tangier than elsewhere, at least until the newcomer is recognized as a resident and not a tourist. American women generally adhere to the rule that sleeves should extend to the elbow and skirts to the knee when they are shopping or otherwise in public.

Supplies and Services

Tangier has many competent hair stylists, beauty shops and shoe-repair shops. Drycleaning is more problematical; wash-and-wear should be selected over clothes which require drycleaning.

Religious Activities

Protestant services in English are offered by the Anglicans at St. Andrew's Church. A group of expatriates also meet regularly at the Tangier International Church for Sunday services. Regular Catholic mass in Spanish, or once monthly in French, also are available in the community.

Education

The American School of Tangier (AST), founded in 1950 to serve the needs of the American community, was established as a coeducational, non-sectarian institution open to children of all religious and racial backgrounds. Over the years, as the American community has dwindled, the composition of the student body has evolved so that today the overwhelming number of children attending AST are Moroccan, with a sprinkling of U.S. students and other nationalities. Nevertheless, its American headmaster of more than 25 years and his faculty of 45 teachers, seven of whom are Americans, have managed to continue the school's tradition of providing an English language, American-style education, and to place its graduates in institutions of higher education throughout the world.

The school has been assisted by grants from the Department of State. Together with grant moneys and donated funds, land was purchased and an academic complex was constructed beginning in 1962. The complex includes a modern building housing 20 classrooms, a large library, administrative offices and a fully equipped science and language laboratory. Later, a dormitory was opened to accommodate boarding students from outside the Tangier area.

AST is incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware as a pri-

vate, nonprofit educational institution and is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees, over half of whom must be U.S. citizens. While the school is not officially accredited with any of the various accrediting organizations which exist in the U.S. or Europe, AST has compiled a noteworthy record of turning out graduates who gain entrance to some of the best American, European or Moroccan universities.

AST follows an American curriculum from kindergarten through the 12th grade. While teachers represent various nationalities, textbooks are nearly universally American. Elementary school covers the fundamentals of reading, number concepts and writing. Students are taught the importance of accuracy, close observation and logical thought. Instruction in French begins in the fifth grade. Arabic is an elective except for Moroccan students for whom it is a compulsory subject. Spanish also is offered, along with art and music. The school produces twice a year a school magazine containing stories, essays and poems by students from all grades. AST's Archaeological and Historical Club meets regularly and takes field trips to historical places of interest around Tangier and elsewhere.

In 1998, the student body from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade numbered 340, with 9 Americans among them. Twenty-one other nationalities were represented among the student body. Secondary education is rigorous and designed to prepare the student for college, with heavy emphasis on English, history, mathematics and the applied sciences. A full range of athletic activities is offered, including track and field, swimming, soccer, volleyball, basketball, table tennis and tennis. But perhaps in the extracurricular field, AST is most well known for its dramatic productions which for over 30 years have earned a reputation for excellence and innovative techniques. Typically, these works involve virtually the whole secondary student

body who work up to three months to rehearse and stage the productions, with immense contributions from professional members of the artistic community who donate their time and talents to areas of particular expertise such as direction, set design, costume design, make-up or music.

Special Educational Opportunities

There are opportunities for language study in Tangier - French at the Alliance Francaise; Spanish and Arabic at various institutes.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

To the west of Tangier, less than 30 minute's drive, is Cap Spartel with first-class accommodations and restaurant at La Mirage. To the east, one can stop virtually anywhere on the scenic coastal route drive to Ceuta for great sea views and a meal at one of the many restaurants along the way. Ceuta itself has a number of hotels and a completely different atmosphere for those wishing to get away for a weekend. South of Ceuta, along the Mediterranean coast there are any number of resorts - including Club Med and several hotel complexes patterned after it - where bungalows or rooms may be rented. Farther east there is the beach town of Al Hoceima. Other smaller beach towns are located along the Mediterranean coast until you reach Melilla, the second Spanish enclave.

Traveling south of Tangier, Tetouan is worth a visit, if only to spend some time in its souk. Tetouan does not attract many foreign tourists; which makes the negotiating easier, and the city's stylized carpets are well known throughout Morocco. An hour and one-half farther south is the medieval mountain village of Chaouen. This fascinating town was founded by returning refugees from Iberia in the 15th century and remains surprisingly unfazed by modernity. It is a great weekend getaway spot.

Tangier does have the advantage of frequent ferry service to Spain, which opens up touring possibilities in Spain and Portugal. The overnight ferry to Sete, France also permits discovering the pleasures of that country.

(See Rabat and Casablanca sections of this article for descriptions of other Moroccan places to visit. Rabat can be reached in just over 3 hour's drive, most of which is tolled freeway.)

Entertainment

Tangier offers a number of good restaurants, from simple sawdust-on-the-floor, cheap cafes in the medina where fresh seafood is the house specialty, to more upmarket establishments which are licensed to serve alcohol. Many restaurants offer menus with an emphasis on Spanish-style cooking. There are several restaurants featuring Chinese or Vietnamese cuisine, as well.

The medina itself is a labyrinth of small shops and stalls selling every manner of Moroccan artifact. Prices, however, always start very high because of the constant tourist flow, so negotiating a fair price can be a challenge. One stop not to be missed is the site within the medina of the original American Ambassador's residence, now called "the American Legation." It was given to the new U.S. Government in 1777 by the Sultan Moulay Slimane and is considered an American Historic Landmark. The building now houses a museum.

Despite Tangier having fallen on hard times in recent years, the area still has a lively schedule of cultural offerings - from concerts, to film showings, to art exhibitions. The problem for Americans is that most of these cultural activities require French or Spanish in order to be appreciated, for they are sponsored by the Alliance Francaise, the Spanish Institute, the Italian Cultural Center or the German Goethe Institute. One would do well soon after arrival to pay a visit to these respective centers and get one's name on the mailing list.

Aside from the cultural activities listed above, people assigned to Tangier often have to make their own entertainment. Some choose to take mountain bike excursions; some drive up into the surrounding Rif Mountains for hiking; some arrange tennis games or golf outings. All make use of satellite TV systems to receive U.S. and European programming.

Because of language barriers and the fact that Moroccans are accustomed to spending spare time with their own extended families, invitations are not extended to Americans very often. Of course, when they are received, one can expect extraordinary Moroccan hospitality and a sumptuous meal. The best Moroccan cooking is always found in the home.

For cultural reasons mentioned previously, it is not always pleasant for the American woman to venture out in public alone. Local society is conservative and often not accessible.

Marrakech

Marrakech, the fascinating, walled, oasis city of Morocco in the foothills of the western end of the Grand Atlas, was twice the capital of the country. During the Middle Ages, it was one of the great cities of Islam, and a prospering commercial center. Today, this famed gateway city to the Sahara is still alive with color and confusion in the *souks*, in the bustling Djemma-el-fna Square, in the narrow streets, in the magnificent Saadian tombs and the gardens, and around the Koutoubya mosque with its 220-foot-high minaret. The 1989 population of greater Marrakech was 1,958,000, a figure that is swelled considerably by tourists throughout the year, but especially during the resort season from December through April.

Marrakech (also spelled Marrakesh) dates back to 1062 when, as the encampment of Yusef ibn-Tashfin, it marked the founding of the African capital of the Almoravides dynasty. The city was captured in 1147 by the Almohades, a Berber



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Old town souk, Marrakech, Morocco

Muslim sect who ruled Spain and Morocco in the 12th and 13th centuries. Marrakech was the capital of Morocco until 1259, and again from 1550 until 1660. It was founded as a modern European town in 1913.

The city still evokes thoughts of mystery and espionage, and of desert caravans (it was, in fact, once a starting point for slave caravans to the Sahara and Timbuktu). It draws thousands of tourists who are fascinated by the fabulous 12th-century gardens and beautiful marble palaces, and, mostly, by the minaret which has dominated the landscape since its completion in 1190.

The opportunities for sports, shopping, and sight-seeing are many. Tennis and golf are readily available. The hotels and restaurants are numerous, and information about these can be had at the centrally-located National Tourist Office. Many of the better restaurants

serve excellent French and Moroccan dishes.

Marrakech has several points of interest. The Koutoubia mosque, constructed in the 12th century, is the city's most-famous monument. The Koutoubia's minaret is a noticeable landmark. Also, the museum of Dar Si Said offers examples of art from southern regions of Morocco. Displays include weaponry, tribal costumes, silver jewelry, mosaics, lamps, chandeliers, and pottery.

The heart of Marrakech consists of the *medina*, with its myriad of kiosks and stalls, and the Djemmal-fna, which is a huge town square where drummers, dancers, acrobats, snake charmers, storytellers, and folklore groups gather during the late afternoon to entertain passersby.

The skiing season lasts from the end of December to the end of April. Ski-

ing is available at Oukaimeden and in the Ifrane area. Oukaimeden is about an 80- to 90-minute ride from the city and, at an altitude of 8,530 feet, it overlooks the plain of Marrakech. In the Ifrane area, Michliffen and Djebel Hebri offer skiing at a lower altitude of 6,500 feet. Michliffen is open only for a short season because of minimal snowfall. A restaurant and bar are located on the slope. Djebel Hebri has a very steep hill about 10 minutes beyond Michliffen. Hotels, country cottages, and camp sites offer accommodations for skiers during the winter and hikers throughout the rest of the year.

Fez

Fez (also spelled Fès) is the oldest city in Morocco. It was founded early in the ninth century by the Muslim ruler, Idriss II, and is still a religious and cultural center. It is, as one of the most sacred places in

the country, a city of ornate mosques and ancient tombs. The Qarawiyn University of Fez is the oldest university in the world and houses a library containing one of the finest collections anywhere of Islamic manuscripts. The ninth-century Karaouyne Mosque is the oldest institute of higher learning in the world.

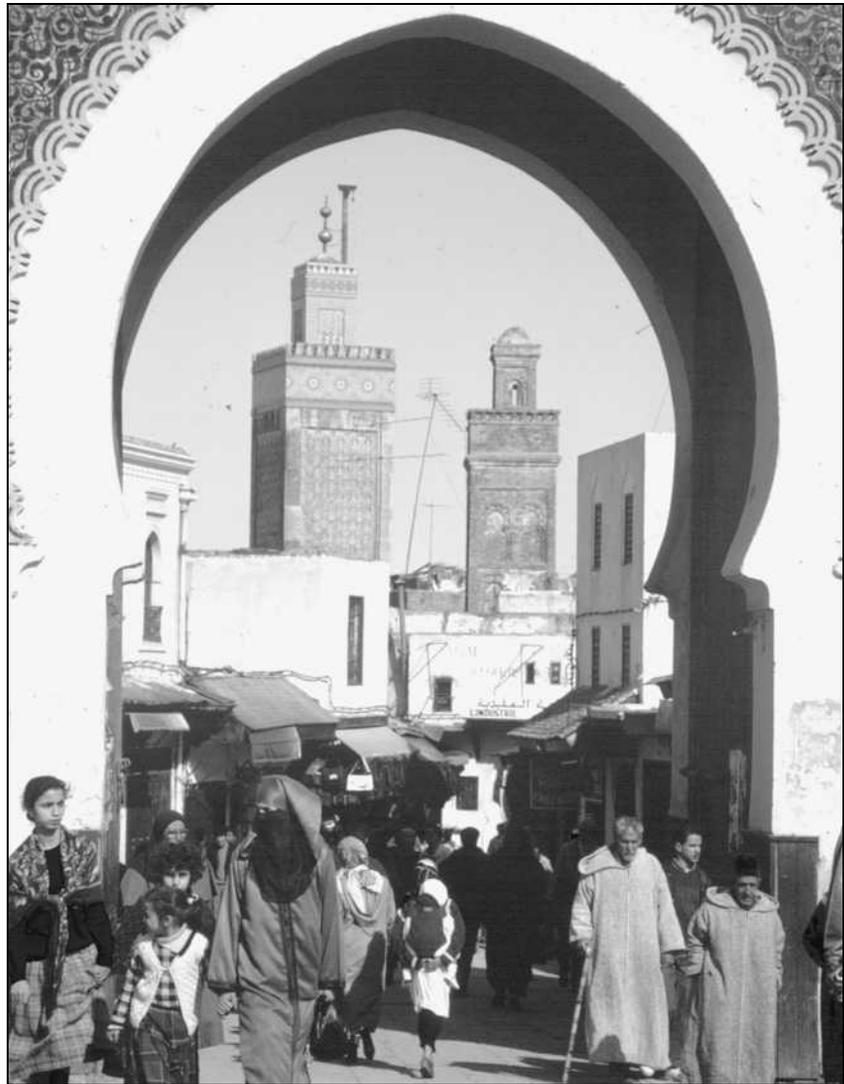
The *souks* and the *medina* provide many interesting hours of sight-seeing, as do the Neijarine Square, the Medrassa Bou Inania, and countless other examples of Moroccan architecture. From the hills, the beauty of the city is memorable, particularly toward evening, when the setting sun casts a glow over the tiled roofs and the labyrinth of narrow streets.

In the 13th and 14th centuries, several *madrassas*, or religious schools, were founded and these are open to the public. The best known are the Attarine and the Bou Inania, whose caretakers guide visitors through marble courts, under arches dripping with stucco stalactites, into rooms with carved cedar ceilings and intricate walls of tile. In the floors above, ornamentation is absent from the tiny rooms where students lived and studied. In appearance and atmosphere, these cells are strongly reminiscent of French and Italian monasteries of the Middle Ages.

Modern Fez offers good hotels and restaurants, several sports clubs, and many places to shop. It is noted for its Moroccan rugs and handicrafts, and is the city which lent its name to the brimless hats worn by Muslims in the Middle East.

Several crops are grown in the area surrounding Fez. These include wheat, beans, olives and grapes; sheep, goats, and cattle are also raised.

Good air, rail, and bus transportation make Fez easily accessible. Many visitors drive here from the capital, or from Casablanca or Tangier. The city has an international airport.



Part of the ancient city of Fez, Morocco

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

The present population of Fez is close to 1,105,000.

Meknès

Meknès is another large northern Moroccan city, 117 miles northeast of Casablanca. It is also a major tourist center. Each May 7, the birth of Mohammed is commemorated with a majestic display of lights and folkloric presentations, called the Feast of Mouloud. Meknès is an old city, founded in the 10th century. During the Middle Ages, it was an Almohades citadel.

Actually, as in other ancient cities and towns in Morocco, there are two

cities—the walled *medina* and the modern center. European influence began in Meknès in the mid-19th century, and the desire for colonization almost led to war between France and Germany. Protectorates had been established by France and Spain by 1912.

The sultan's residence, which was built in the 17th century, consists of gardens, gateways, palatial buildings, and parks covering miles in area. It took more than 50 years to complete, and is referred to as the "Versailles of Morocco."

Meknès has several interesting sites. The main gateway of Bab

Mansour is among the most imposing relics in Morocco. Its construction was started by Sultan Moulay Ismail and completed by his son Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah. Another point of interest is the Mausoleum of Moulay Ismail. It is one of the few Moroccan shrines which can be visited by non-Muslims.

Situated in the heart of the *medina* is the Grand Mosque. This is one of the oldest and largest mosques in Meknès. Outside the walls of the *medina* is the Palace of Par Jamai with its art museum which includes examples of pottery and carpets from the Atlas Mountains, as well as embroidery, jewels, weapons, and dressing objects.

Meknès is a main railroad center, and is a source of textiles, vegetable oils, canned foods, and cement. There are several hotels and restaurants, and a National Tourist Office, where information and guides are available. One of the newer points of interest is the Museum of Moroccan Arts.

No schools for English-speaking children have been established in either Meknès or Fez, but the American School at Tangier provides satisfactory boarding facilities.

Oujda

Oujda is a commercial center in northeast Morocco, near the Algerian border. A city of 260,000 residents, it is an important rail junction serving the extensive surrounding agricultural area. The city is a tourist center, has an international airport, and owes some growth to the coal, zinc, and lead mines to the south. Although Oujda has remnants of ancient walls, it is a modern city in appearance.

Oujda was founded in 944 and, in the ensuing centuries, often came under colonial rule. It became part of Morocco in 1797, but was claimed by the French for two different periods in the mid-19th century, and again in 1907.

The city's name is sometimes spelled Oudjda or, in Arabic, Udja.

OTHER CITIES

AGADIR, in southwest Morocco, is one of the country's three chief seaports (the others are Tangier and Casablanca). It was founded by the Portuguese in the early 16th century. Historically, Agadir is known as the site of an international incident which took place in 1911, during the establishment of a French protectorate. A German gunboat, intent on invasion, entered the harbor, and war was narrowly averted when France offered Germany a considerable part of its territory in what is now the Congo. Agadir, one of several Moroccan landing spots for Allied Forces in World War II, was nearly leveled by a series of earthquakes in the winter of 1960. It has been rebuilt and, in addition to its port activity, is also a seaside resort. With its date palm shaded bay, golf course, tennis courts and water sports clubs, Agadir offers the visitor a wide range of entertainment. The city continues to attract an increasing number of tourists. The city's modern market sells meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, flowers, carpets, caftans, ceramics, and handicrafts. A new road from Agadir leads to Marrakech. The population was estimated at 525,000 in 1994. A more recent population figure is unavailable.

CEUTA is a seaport and Spanish enclave and military outpost about 62 miles from Tangier, in northern Morocco. It is a duty-free area, and some Americans make occasional visits to shop. Its Jebel Musa (Mount Hacho), one of two opposite promontories at the entrance to the Mediterranean, commands an impressive view of the Straits of Gibraltar. It faces the other headland (the Rock of Gibraltar) in Spain and, together, they are referred to as the Pillars of Hercules. According to fable, they were one mountain range until Hercules tore them apart in his effort to reach Cádiz. Ceuta, whose current popu-

lation is over 70,000, has been administered by Spain since 1580. Before that time, it had been first an Arab trading town, and later was held by Portugal.

EL (or AL) JADIDA, a port city of over 120,000 residents on the Atlantic, is located 60 miles southwest of Casablanca. It ships agricultural products. El Jadida was founded by the Portuguese in 1502, and held by them for 217 years. It once was called Mazagan. The city is a favorite beach resort for Moroccans from the big cities. One attraction of note in El Jadida is the subterranean water cistern built by the Portuguese.

KENITRA, a city of about 144,000, is a port on the Sebou (Sebu) River in northwest Morocco, about eight miles from the Atlantic Ocean. It was built by the French to serve the surrounding fertile valley, and once was called Port Lyautey. Allied forces landed at Kenitra in late 1942, during World War II. Its population is about 293,000 (1994 est.).

SAFI (also spelled Saffi) is an Atlantic port and fishing center southwest of Casablanca. It is also an industrial city, and the site of a large chemical complex. The city is an important port for the export of phosphates. Safi is the site of a small 16th century Portuguese fortress, Chateau de la Mer (Sea Castle.) Its current population is 262,000 (2000 est.). Safi was another of the Allied landing sites in Morocco in World War II.

TÉTOUAN, set among picturesque mountains, is 37 miles from Tangier, and has one of the most interesting and attractive *medinas* in Morocco. Among its principal cultural attractions is the Orchestre du Conservatoire, which specializes in presentations of Andalusian music. Tétouan was the capital of former Spanish Morocco until 1956. It was founded in the 14th century and, in its early years was a pirate base. The city contains many monuments: a fort, walls with well preserved fences, a number of mosques, fountains, and an old imperial palace. The palace was built in the 17th

century, but was renovated and restored in 1948. Tétouan has two museums, a college of Fine Arts, and a school of Moroccan Art.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Situated in the northwest corner of Africa, the Kingdom of Morocco covers nearly 200,000 square miles. In size and variability of climate, it is comparable to California. Because of its geographical location, Morocco is known in Arabic as *El Maghreb el Aqsa*—the extreme west of the Arab world. Between Morocco's western coast and the mountains lies a wide plain, the Gharb, which produces most of the country's agricultural products. The High Atlas, the Middle Atlas, and the Anti-Atlas mountain ranges traverse the country from northeast to southwest. The summits of the High Atlas Mountains climb to 13,664 feet (Toubkal) and 12,300 feet (Ayachi). This range collects moisture from the Atlantic Ocean and distributes it over the western part of Morocco. Because this region lies between the Atlantic and the mountains, it enjoys a temperate climate. The Atlas range cannot, however, shut out an occasional "shergui" (hot easterly wind) from the desert. The eastern slopes of the High Atlas have a semi-desert aspect and a rigorous pre-Saharan climate.

In the north, and independent of the Atlas, the Rif Mountains loom up sharply and follow the curving line of the Mediterranean shore. Here, also, a mild climate prevails, which permits Mediterranean-type agriculture.

Population

Morocco's nearly 30 million people (excluding approximately 1.5 million Moroccans living and working abroad) are principally Berber and Arab, but also include several thou-

sand Jewish Moroccans. Some 50,000 French and a smaller number of Spanish and other nationalities reside in the country.

Islam is the state religion in Morocco. As such, Islam is an integral part of daily life and profoundly influences manners and personal conduct. Arabic is the official and principal language; however, Moroccan Arabic is distinctive, with some differences in pronunciation and vocabulary from classical Arabic. French predominates as a second language and much of the country's business is conducted in French. In the north, Spanish is widely understood and spoken. In rural areas, any one of the three Berber vernaculars that are not mutually intelligible may be used. Many Berbers speak Arabic as well as their own dialect of the Berber language. English is not widely spoken in Morocco, although in recent years increasing attention is being given to learning it. Among young Moroccans, English is the language most people study, after Arabic and French.

Recent statistics give the literacy rate for males to be 57% and 31% for females. An estimated 68% of primary school-age boys and 48% of primary school-age girls had attended primary school for at least some period, while 44% of males and 33% of females had attended secondary school.

In Morocco, food and its preparation are very important. People are proud of Moroccan cuisine, which is both imaginative and unusual, blending and combining various kinds of vegetables, fruits and meat or seafood with spices and condiments. "Couscous," a staple made of semolina and served with chicken, lamb, or beef and numerous vegetables, is the national dish. Another traditional Moroccan dish is "tajine," a spicy stew with as many variations as there are cooks; usually tajines have a meat or poultry base. Other Moroccan delicacies include roasted lamb (*mechoui*), flaky pigeon pie (*pastilla*), and a hearty soup (*harira*) of chick peas,

meat and vegetables. Green tea, with fresh mint and sugar, is the national drink.

In terms of apparel, both men and women often wear the "djellaba" in public. This resembles the long, hooded robe worn by Franciscan monks. In years past, Arab women avoided revealing their faces in public. Even today, in some rural areas and among some of the older generation living in cities, women wear veils when outside the home. But the younger generation of city-dwelling Moroccans appears to prefer Western-style clothes, except on holidays and ceremonial occasions. Likewise, in metropolitan centers men wear suits and neckties and women generally wear Western attire to their workplaces.

At certain social functions, Moroccan women sometimes wear caftans, beautifully designed and trimmed robes worn with exquisite gold belts. Men living in the hot and dry southern region of Morocco may wear robes in beautiful blue hues and black headdresses worn for protection from the desert sun.

Public Institutions

Morocco became independent in 1956 with the abrogation of French and Spanish protectorate agreements. Tangier, formerly administered as an international zone, was restored to Morocco two years later and Ifni, a small enclave in the south, was handed back by Spain in 1969. The Spanish departed from the Western Sahara, the disputed territory directly south of Morocco, in 1975. A UN-sponsored referendum to determine whether Morocco's claim to the Western Sahara would be upheld is scheduled to be conducted in the territory in July 2000. Two small enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla, both located on Morocco's northern coast, remain under Spanish control.

In 1962, a popular referendum approved Morocco's first constitution. It provided for a two-chamber parliament, prefectural and provincial assemblies, rural and municipal

councils, and local professional chambers. A second constitution, approved by popular referendum in July, 1970, provided for a unicameral parliament composed of 240 representatives. Ninety of these representatives would be elected directly; the rest would be elected by local and professional assemblies. In early 1972, a popular referendum approved a third constitution. It increased the number of representatives in Parliament to be directly elected by two-thirds. A fourth and somewhat more liberal constitution was adopted by referendum in September, 1992.

Morocco is a monarchy with a constitution; the King is considered to be both the spiritual and temporal leader of the country. King Mohammed VI, who has ruled Morocco since July 1999, is the son of King Mohammed V, a national hero who led the movement for independence from France, and is the latest in the line of the Alaouite dynasty which has ruled Morocco continuously since the 17th century. The Alaouite monarchs trace their descent to the prophet Mohamed, and King Mohammed VI thus bears the title "Commander of the Faithful."

Although dominated by the monarchy, the Moroccan political system since independence has been characterized by political pluralism. The principal political parties include the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), which in 1999 controlled the largest number of seats in the Parliament. The USFP, a member of the "Kutla" (or Democratic Bloc) of parties, which served for many years as the Government's main opposition, represents urban intellectuals and workers. The Kutla also includes the Istiqlal (Independence) party, a nationalist party that has been active since independence, as well as other former socialist and communist groups. The coalition government which took over in 1998, headed by Prime Minister Abderrahman Youssofi (USFP), includes parties of the Kutla as well as centrist parties, such as the National Grouping

of Independents (RNI) and the National Popular Movement (MNP). The traditional pro-regime parties include the Constitutional Union (UC) party founded in 1983, and the Popular Movement (MP), which represents largely rural and Berber interests. A small conservative Islamist-dominated party also is represented in Parliament.

A referendum in 1996 created a bicameral legislature, composed of the directly elected 325-seat Chamber of Deputies and the indirectly elected 220-seat Chamber of Counselors. The current Parliament was elected in 1997 for terms varying from five to nine years.

Other potential political forces include Morocco's major labor federation, the Union Marocaine du Travail (UMT). The UMT claims 200,000 members, most in the modern economic sector. The Confederation Democratique du Travail (CDT), which claims about 150,000 members, is allied with the USFP, and the Union Generale du Travail Marocaine (UGTM), a third union, is affiliated with the Istiqlal. Moroccan political institutions are based on Islamic tradition, Moroccan history, French precedent, and modern evolution.

According to the constitution, the King-chief of state and commander-in-Chief of the armed forces-shares legislative authority with Parliament. But the King retains exclusive regulatory power and may issue royal decrees ("dahirs") having the force of law. He also is the supreme judicial authority with final appellate functions. All justice is administered in his name. The King appoints his ministers, and a wide range of other officials, including provincial governors and local administrators.

The Supreme Court in Rabat acts as the final appellate court and is charged with defining law. It is empowered only to interpret the law and cannot rule on its constitutionality. Under the Supreme Court are three Courts of Appeal at Casablanca, Fez, and Marrakech,

respectively. Although based on a mixture of French and Moslem judicial philosophy, Morocco's legal system also includes elements of Morocco's Berber, Spanish, and Jewish heritages.

Morocco's foreign policy, although officially attached to Arab, Islamic, and nonalignment groups, is generally friendly toward the U.S. and the West. Morocco is an active participant in the U.N., Arab League, Islamic Conference and the Non-aligned Movement. Morocco has been a player in varying degrees in the Middle East peace process over the years. Arab leaders and others frequently call on the

King for consultations. Morocco withdrew from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in a dispute over Polisario membership in 1984.

Morocco's military is nonaligned but is heavily influenced by the French - and to some degree by the U.S. Because of budgetary realities, U.S. military aid to Morocco ceased in 1994, but the U.S. continues to give the Kingdom excess defense articles as well as some education and training for limited numbers of Morocco's military.

Arts, Science, and Education

Morocco's rich cultural and artistic history combines both Moorish and Berber influences, visible in Moroccan music, dance, art, architecture, and literature. Since the early 20th century, traditional art has been supplemented by Western (mostly French) influences introduced and adopted in urban centers. In present-day Morocco, traditional and Western-oriented artistic and cultural systems exist side by side. Several exposition halls showing works of Moroccan and international artists are located in Casablanca, Fez, Tangier and Rabat. Many Moroccan painters trained in Europe have adopted Western techniques, but have retained an interest in traditional subjects as well.

Morocco is rich in traditional crafts such as rugmaking, pottery, leather goods, and metalwork. The country's most noted handicraft centers are Fez, Sale, Marrakech, Safi and Essaouira.

Both Moroccan and touring European theatrical and orchestral companies perform in the larger cities. In August the coastal town of Asilah, just south of Tangier, hosts a cultural festival to which artists are invited from various countries as well as from Morocco. Rabat stages a similar event in June. Fez hosts a sacred music festival nearly every year, usually in May. The coastal town of Essaouira hosts an international music festival, also in May. Andalusian Arabic music is popular and is often presented on TV, radio and in local night spots, but public concerts are rare.

Morocco's most important university, Mohammed V, established in 1957, is in Rabat. Its 36,000 students from Morocco, other areas of Africa, and the Middle East, study medicine, law, liberal arts, and the sciences. Other universities have been established at Casablanca, Oujda, Marrakech, Fez, Tetouan, Meknes, Agadir, El Jadida, Mohammedia, Kenitra and Ifrane. The Mohammedia School of Engineers, the Hassan II Agronomic Institute, and the National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (INSEA), respectively, are the three most important Moroccan institutions of higher education in their respective fields. In Fez, Morocco's religious capital, Moslem students from around the world study Islamic law and theology at the 1,000-year-old Karaouiyine University. There also are schools for judicial studies, information sciences, post and telecommunications, communications and information (journalism), a school for architecture, another for mineral studies, and finally, a National School of Administration.

A new private university, Al Akhawayn in Ifrane, was founded in 1993 and offers instruction in English according to a curriculum patterned

after the U.S. model. Many faculty members are either Americans or else U.S.-trained in their respective fields. Both undergraduate and graduate degrees are offered.

At the secondary school level, many Moroccan and French lycees (high schools) offer choices of English, Spanish, or German as a third language. University education, as well as elementary and secondary education undertaken in public institutions, is free. At the university level, most students receive scholarships for expenses relating to books, room and board. During the past few years, technical schools have been opening for those who are not university bound.

Commerce and Industry

Morocco's economy is based largely on agriculture, industry, mining and tourism. More than half of the population continues to depend on agriculture for employment, but agriculture's share of total GDP varies between only 12% and 20% depending on rainfall. Agricultural products - mainly citrus, fresh vegetables, dried peas, beans, olives and wine - comprise about 30% of Moroccan exports each year. Although cereal crops (wheat, barley, corn, and oats) occupy more than 80% of the planted crop land, Morocco must import cereals to cover its food needs. Morocco also is working to improve the exploitation of rich fishing grounds along the Atlantic coast. It already is the world's largest producer and exporter of sardines.

Morocco also leads the world in export of phosphates, with the country holding about 75% of all proven phosphate reserves. The country's most important export, both in tonnage and value, phosphates and derivative products totaled an estimated \$1.4 billion, or 38% of total exports in 1997. Other important mineral exports include manganese, lead, zinc, cobalt, barite and iron.

The economy's industrial sector continues to build on the base created during the protectorate period. The Office Cherifien des Phosphate's chemical complex at Safi and Jorf Lasfar turn raw phosphates into phosphoric acid, diammonium phosphate, and triple super phosphates. Two oil refineries process most of the country's needs for gasoline, industrial fuel oil, bottled gas, and kerosene from Middle East crude oil. Morocco is dependent on imported energy for 80% of its energy needs. A U.S. firm is involved in a \$1.5 billion Independent Power Project in Jorf Lasfar.

Other industries, most of which are found in the axis between Casablanca and Rabat, include tire factories, textile and thread mills, automobile and truck assembly plants, sugar mills and refineries, cement plants, food processing operations, and other light industries and handicraft enterprises.

Some 75 U.S. companies have manufacturing or service operations in Morocco, and many others have regional sales offices. With direct investment totaling \$352 million, the United States was Morocco's second largest foreign investor in 1997. Morocco's ongoing privatization process has resulted in the privatization of 52 firms for a total of \$1.5 billion since 1993.

Historically, most foreign trade has been with France. In 1996, France bought 28% of Morocco's exports and furnished 21% of its imports. Spain, Japan, India and Italy are Morocco's next most important clients, while France, Spain, the U.S., Italy, Germany and Saudi Arabia are the most important exporters to Morocco. The U.S. fluctuates from third to fifth place among suppliers, depending on the year. American exports consist primarily of grain (especially wheat), as well as mining and heavy equipment products. Morocco's exports to the U.S. are rising steadily; these exports consist primarily of phosphates and derivatives, textiles, barites and canned foods.

About 1.5 million Moroccan workers and merchants live abroad, nearly 700,000 of them in France. Their remittances (\$1.9 billion in 1998 versus \$1.2 billion for phosphate exports) provide an important positive contribution to Morocco's balance of payments, as does tourism.

Transportation

Automobiles

Plan to bring personally owned vehicles. The importation, sale, or export of personal property - including U.S. employee cars - must be in accordance with the laws, regulations, and conventions of the Kingdom of Morocco. Personal property which is imported by U.S. employees must be for their bona fide personal use or that of their dependents. The importation of a vehicle must not be for the purpose of sale, rent or transfer.

And the automobile should be shipped with its keys and current license plates. Bring with you the invoice or other proof of ownership if the vehicle is new, or the existing registration document under which it has been registered previously. These documents are mandatory for customs clearance and local registration. Also, bring an owner's manual for descriptive details to help with registration of your car.

Approval is not required for a vehicle to enter Morocco, provided it has temporary registration and is insured. A duty-free import request (*bon de franchise*) must be approved by the MFA and the vehicle registered locally within 1 month following importation.

As noted above, the original title and registration card are required by the Ministry of Transport before a vehicle can be registered. Vehicles imported to Morocco duty-free must be re-exported, sold to another person having duty-free privileges, or if sold to persons without duty-free privileges, customs duty must be paid.

Mandatory third-party insurance costs from approximately DH 1,800 to DH 3,400 (DH = Moroccan dirham), depending upon the size of the vehicle, horsepower of the engine, and intended usage. (A T VA tax of 15.3% is added to the insurance cost if the vehicle is registered in the PAT series.)

All types and makes of left-hand drive cars are driven in Morocco. European cars (locally assembled) are sold in Casablanca, Rabat and Tangier. Repair work on American cars costs less than in Washington, D.C., but spare parts are expensive and often unavailable. Local repair men are more skilled and experienced with manual transmissions than automatic transmissions. Repair work on European cars is cheaper and satisfactory; spare parts are more readily available. However, most spare parts unavailable in Morocco usually can be ordered from mail-order firms in the U.S. In recent years, Japanese and Korean manufactured vehicles have become quite popular in Morocco. Dealerships selling these automobiles generally have spare parts and service departments with trained staff.

Gasoline costs about \$3.50 a gallon on the local market. Diesel fuel is available throughout Morocco and is less expensive than gasoline. In 1998, unleaded fuel was available at many gas stations throughout the country.

A valid U.S., foreign, or international driver's license obtained outside of Morocco can be used temporarily. However, local law requires a Moroccan driver's license be obtained within a reasonable time after arrival. Eighteen is the minimum age to obtain a driver's license as of 1998.

Local

Use of public transportation is difficult without a working knowledge of French or Arabic. Very few ticket agents, information clerks, or other public utility employees can understand or speak English. Public transportation in Rabat, Casa-

blanca and Tangier consists of buses and taxis. Bus service is limited. Taxi service consists of more expensive "grand taxis" (Mercedes, or similar) and the cheaper "petit taxis" (Fiats or similar). The latter only operate within city limits and are generally inexpensive if the meter is in working order and used. In recent years, some taxi firms have begun operating radio-equipped taxis which are on call but these are rare. In some parts of Rabat, Casablanca and Tangier, particularly in residential areas, it is virtually impossible to hail a taxi.

The lack of adequate local public transportation can be a problem for employees without personally owned vehicles.

Regional

Adequate public transportation is available to and from the principal cities of Morocco with rail and bus fares less expensive than in the U.S. Morocco's major roads are generally well maintained and directions are clearly marked, especially on more traveled routes. Plane service links the cities of Agadir, Casablanca, Fez, Marrakech, Rabat, Tangier, Oujda, Al Houceima, Essaouira, Safi and Tetouan, with Casablanca the main airport - as the hub.

The rail system links Tangier to Rabat and Casablanca, with connections to Meknes, Fez, Marrakech, and other towns. Some trains are air-conditioned. Train travel time from Tangier to Rabat is about 5 hours. Daily air connections are available to Paris from Rabat airport. More regular international air travel, including direct flights to the U.S. and Canada, is out of Casablanca, the country's biggest international airport.

Auto ferry service runs between Tangier and Algeciras or Malaga, Spain; from Tangier to Sete, France; from Ceuta, the Spanish enclave, to Algeciras; and in the summer from Melilla, the other Spanish enclave, to Malaga. The auto ferry crossing takes 2-3 hours from Tangier to Algeciras, and 5 hours from Tangier to Malaga. Tangier to France

involves a voyage lasting 3 8 hours aboard the ferry. Weather permitting, faster hydrofoil service is available between Tangier and Algeciras or Tarifa, Spain, or between Ceuta and Algeciras.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local and international telephone and telegraph service is available. Weekday calls to Washington, D.C. using the Moroccan telephone system cost DH 12 a minute. Substantial discount rates have been offered for international calls placed on Saturday, or on other days of the week between midnight and 7:00 a.m. local time. AT&T and MCI telephone calling cards also may be used in Morocco, but their charges are costly. Morocco is five hours ahead of E.S.T.

A full-rate telegram costs about DH 4 a word. Charges for use of the FAX machine are about DH 24 per page to the U.S.

Internet

Internet access is available in Morocco, and the national connection is generally reliable and fast. Arrangements can be made for a connection at home with any one of dozens of Internet service providers in Rabat and Casablanca. The price of Internet access is higher than that found in the U.S. Residents who make moderate use of the Internet for web access and e-mail at home report costs of \$50-\$75 per month.

Numerous Moroccan businesses, media outlets, government offices and other organizations maintain web sites which can provide much useful information about Morocco. Below are some of the more interesting sites:

U.S. Embassy in Morocco: www.usembassy-morocco.org.ma
 Al-Akawayn University: www.alakawayn.ma (This web site contains one of the best collections of Morocco-related links.)
 Marocnet: www.maroc.net.ma

Moroccan Ministry of Communications:

www.mincom.gov.ma
 Maghreb Arab Press Agency (MAP): www.map.co.ma
 Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs www.wiam.net.ma
 Moroccan Trade and Development Services (MTDS): www.mtds.com (Rabat-based Internet service provider)
 Maghrebnet: www.maghrebnet.com
 ACDIM: www.acdim.co.ma (Internet service provider and cyber cafe)

Mail

Moroccan mail service to and from Western Europe generally is reliable. Fast courier services, FEDEX and UPS, operate in Morocco. Packages sent through one of these services from the U.S. ordinarily take at least 48 hours and must pass through Moroccan Customs.

Radio and TV

A good, shortwave set receives VOA, BBC or other international broadcasts. Local stations broadcast in Arabic, French, Spanish, and Berber dialects on AM and FM. One English-language program is broadcast daily. Local radio programs are broadcast 22 hours a day. Music programming is mostly Arab and pop/rock. Morocco radio offers classical music only occasionally. Before leaving the U.S., convert record players and tape recorders to 50 cycles. Two Moroccan TV networks broadcast using the 625 line, 25-picture-per-second system used in much of Europe; American TV's must be adapted for sound. The picture requires no adjustment. Parts for American-made sets are not available, and solid state systems are beyond the capability of local repair shops. TV's for sale on the local market are more expensive than in the U.S. TV programs are scheduled through midnight. Programming is about 60% Arabic and 40% in French. Most of the programs are in color. Two Spanish TV channels can be received in Tangier.

In recent years, satellite dishes enabling viewers to access a wide range of broadcasts have sprouted up all over Morocco as the prices for

such equipment have become more affordable. Such systems generally cost from several hundred dollars upward - depending on size of dish - to purchase and install. Viewers thus may tune in to CNN, BBC, NBC, TNT, the Cartoon Network or EUROSPORT for free, and also purchase decoding chips which enable them to receive additional movie or sports channels by paying a monthly fee.

When purchasing videotape equipment, remember that the electrical system is 220v 50 cycles locally. The VHS system is used.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

American publications and magazines can be received through the pouch or through international mail. The International Herald Tribune (available on newsstands late the day it is published) or USA Today can be subscribed to for local delivery. Many newsstands carry Time, Newsweek, daily newspapers from France and England, as well as Spanish, Arabic and German newspapers.

The American Women's Association maintains a small, popular, up-to-date lending library at its site in the Agdal district of Rabat. Library hours change seasonally. Volunteers from the American Women's Association staff the library. Membership in the American Women's Association Library requires a nominal fee. The American Language Center bookstores each offer a modest stock of English language bestsellers, classics, cookbooks, children's books and other popular paperbacks, all sold at prices somewhat higher than in the U.S.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Morocco has several adequate physicians and dentists. Rabat and Casablanca both have U.S. trained dentists. The doctors are trained in the French system; however a few speak English. Reputable oculists,

with comparable fees to the U.S., are also prevalent in Casablanca and Rabat. Medical and dental care is more of a problem in Tangier.

Some small clinics are used for medical, surgical, orthopedic, and obstetric care. Morocco has a modern cardiac center at the medical school hospital. Few nurses speak English. Patients requiring major surgery or the care of a specialist are evacuated to London which is the designated emergency evacuation site.

Diagnostic laboratory facilities are available in all major cities. Make arrangements to have ongoing prescriptions sent regularly from the U.S. Over-the-counter medicines such as aspirin, kapectate, cough syrup, etc., for self-care of minor illnesses are available on the local market. To avoid communication problems and differences in diagnostic and treatment procedures, attempt to complete all medical and dental treatment in the U.S.

Community Health

Public health standards in the cities are steadily improving. The Ministry of Health sponsors disease control programs for tuberculosis and other communicable diseases and has introduced mass immunization programs.

Preventive Measures

Tuberculosis, eye ailments, hepatitis, and diarrheal illness are common among local residents. Servants should be medically cleared before employment and have regular physical examinations during employment, especially if children are in your household.

Morocco has had no epidemics in recent years. There have been outbreaks of infectious diseases, but usually in poor sections of the country and localized. There have been few cases of hepatitis among Americans in recent years. Shellfish should be chosen with great care and preferably eaten cooked. Pets must be immunized against rabies before arrival, and children should be trained to avoid contact with

stray animals. There have been numerous cases of rabies reported in urban areas. The climate can prove difficult for people with sinus problems, allergies, and arthritis due to dampness and high mold and pollen counts during certain seasons.

In larger cities, milk on the local market is pasteurized, dated and refrigerated. Long-life milk (UHT) is widely available. Local markets sell excellent European dairy products. Meat is government inspected and stamped accordingly. Locally purchased meat should be cooked thoroughly. Fresh fish is plentiful. For Americans coming to Morocco, the change in diet frequently results in minor diarrhea. Soak all fruits and vegetables that will not be peeled or cooked in a chlorine solution for 15 minutes, then rinse them.

Quarterly tests on water samples taken in the U.S. Embassy and various residential areas in Rabat and Casablanca show no contamination. A number of families, however, have invested in a water filter of the type found in the U.S. This filter device strains out any particles which might be in the system where rusty pipes exist; moreover, users claim the filter actually improves the taste of tap water. In Tangier, station families all have been provided with a water distiller in their USG-leased quarters. Bottled water is widely available and not expensive, and is used when travelling away from home or in restaurants. Fluoride content is low in local water, but fluoride supplements are recommended.

Perhaps the major threat to continuing good health in Morocco is pervasive dangerous driving practices. The first few days of encountering, either as a pedestrian or driver, local driving habits can be traumatic for the uninitiated. Most local drivers, even within cities, drive with excessive speed and follow too closely behind the vehicle ahead of them. It is not uncommon for drivers to run red lights, come to a line of stopped cars at a traffic

light and forge into the oncoming lane to pass to the head of the line, squeeze three or four cars into space designed for two, or suddenly and without signaling, make a turn to the right from the left hand lane. Meanwhile, all manner of traffic may be encountered within cities and towns, from buses and heavy trucks, to underpowered motorcycles, to bicycles, to the occasional cart drawn by a horse. Pedestrians will cross the street anywhere they like, and at corners people cross without heeding a red light.

When driving in rural areas, one may expect to find tractors, farm machinery and donkey carts also sharing major roads. The latter lack either rear lights or reflectors. Motorists will attempt to overtake on curves or before hills, endangering both you and oncoming traffic. At night, drivers of oncoming vehicles refuse to dim their high-beam lights, which can be temporarily blinding. Be warned that the accident and fatality rates are high, traveling at night in rural areas on all but the major freeways should be avoided, and defensive driving practices are a must!

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Casablanca can be reached daily from New York via London, Amsterdam, Madrid, or Paris. Direct daily flights are also available via Paris to Rabat. Tangier is accessible from various European airports such as London, Madrid, Amsterdam or Barcelona, and flights are more frequent during the summer tourist season.

The Mohammed V Airport is located about 18 miles from Casablanca, and 70 miles from Rabat; the Rabat-Sale Airport is about 5 miles outside Rabat. The Tangier airport is about 9 miles outside Tangier.

Travelers to Morocco must bear a valid passport. Visas are not required for American tourists trav-

eling in Morocco for less than 90 days. For visits of more than 90 days, Americans are required to obtain a residence permit and return visa should they wish to return to Morocco for extended periods. A residence permit and return visa may be obtained from immigration (Service d'Etranger) at the central police station of the district of residence. For additional information concerning entry requirements for Morocco, travelers may contact the Embassy of Morocco at 1601 21st St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20009, telephone (202) 462-7979 to 82. The Moroccan Consulate General is located at 10 E. 40th Street, New York, NY 10016, telephone (212) 758-2625.

Moroccan customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Morocco of items such as firearms, religious materials, antiquities, business equipment, and large quantities of currency. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Morocco in Washington, D.C. or the Moroccan Consulate General in New York for specific information concerning customs requirements.

Fees are charged for vehicle registration, license plates, drivers' licenses, etc.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Morocco are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Consulate General in Casablanca and obtain updated information on travel and security within Morocco.

The U.S. Embassy is located at 2 Avenue de Marrakech in the capital city of Rabat, telephone (212)(37) 76-2265. The American Consulate General in Casablanca is located at 8 Boulevard Moulay Youssef, telephone (212)(22) 26-45-50. Please note that all consular matters are handled at the U.S. Consulate General in Casablanca. The Consular Section's American Citizens Services hotline is (212)(22) 43-05-78. The fax number is (212)(22) 20-41-27. The Internet web site is <http://www.usembassy-morocco.org.ma/>.

Pets

To bring a cat or dog into Morocco, submit a certificate of good health signed no more than 3 days before departure. A registered veterinarian must state that the animal is free from infections and contagious diseases, particularly rabies. A rabies certificate neither older than 6 months nor more recent than 2 months before the animal's departure is also required. The certificate must completely describe the animal (size, color, etc.), name the owner, and state the time of animal's departure from port of embarkation. It must include a statement that the animal has not bitten anyone within 14 days before departure.

If at all possible, pets should accompany their owners rather than arrive either before or after arrival of owners. Additionally, flights with pets aboard should be scheduled so that arrival occurs during week days when veterinarians normally are on duty to examine documentation and permit entry. There have been cases when pets arrived at odd-hours and were forced to wait until the next business day to be freed from a holding area at the airport. In cases of weekends or during frequent religious or national holidays, delays are common.

Birds with parrot's beaks must be accompanied by a statement signed by the owner and countersigned by a registered veterinarian stating that the bird has been the owner's personal property for at least 6 months before date of departure, that it will not be sold or used for any commercial purposes, and will remain the owner's personal property. A registered veterinarian must also sign a certificate, dated no less than 3 days before departure, stating the bird is free from any visible symptoms of psittacosis (parrot disease) and ornithosis.

For other birds, a signed certificate by a registered veterinarian must be submitted, and dated no less than 3 days before departure, certifying the bird free from contagious or parasitic diseases that can be

transmitted to humans or other animals; that the bird is free from ornithosis, plague, and Newcastle disease; and the bird does not come from an area where such diseases are prevalent.

For other animals (turtles, reptiles, etc.) bring a health certificate signed by a registered veterinarian stating that the animal is free from any disease peculiar to its species, and free from any contagious or parasitic disease transmittable to humans or other animals. Importation of rodents, guinea pigs, hamsters and rabbits is prohibited.

Firearms and Ammunition

Only the following non-automatic firearms and ammunition may be brought to Morocco:

Shotguns, 3 (gauge 20,16 and 12)
Ammunition, 1000 rounds.

Firearms must be registered with Moroccan police authorities on arrival. A hunting permit and hunting insurance is required (about \$100 a year). Any ammunition purchase must be noted by the seller on the hunting permit. A hunting permit will cost approximately \$100 a year. Except as listed above, no other types of firearms or ammunition are permitted in Morocco; i.e., no rifled weapons are licensed for private individuals.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The official currency is the Moroccan dirham (DH). In 1999 the exchange rate was about DH 10 to US\$1.00. Morocco prohibits import or export of dirhams. Other currencies may be brought into Morocco, and visitors should be prepared to declare funds in their possession on arrival.

Travelers' checks and credit cards are accepted at some establishments in Morocco, mainly in urban areas. Travelers' checks may be cashed at most banks, although some require the bearer to present both the check and the receipt. ATM machines are available in Casablanca and Rabat, and some Ameri-

can bankcards may be used to withdraw local currency from an account in the United States. Current Moroccan customs procedures do not provide for the accurate or reliable registration of large quantities of American dollars brought into the country by tourists or other visitors. As a result, travelers encounter difficulties when they attempt to depart with the money. In particular, American citizens with dual Moroccan nationality have been asked to provide proof of the source of the funds and have incurred heavy fines. Moroccan currency cannot be converted back into U.S. dollars prior to departure

Local weights and measures follow the European metric scale.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1. New Year's Day
 - Jan. 11. Independence Manifesto Day
 - May 1. Labor Day
 - May 23. National Day
 - Aug. 14. Oued Ed-Dahab Day
 - Aug. 20 The King & People's Revolution Day
 - Nov. 6. Anniversary of the Green March
 - Nov. 18. Independence Day
 - Id al-Adah*
 - Ramadan*
 - Id al-Fitr*
 - Hijra New Year*
- *variable

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Maputo, Mozambique

MOZAMBIQUE

Republic of Mozambique

Major City:

Maputo

Other Cities:

Beira, Moçambique, Nampula, Quelimane, Tete

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated April 1993. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The area of what is now **MOZAMBIQUE** has been inhabited for 6,000 years. Historic and picturesque, it is the site of the original settlement by Portuguese explorers in their quest for a trade route to India in the 15th century. Its boundaries were determined in 1894, and it became an official colony in 1907. Eleven years of guerrilla operations finally forced negotiations with the Portuguese Government, and independence was achieved in June 1975. Until 1990, Mozambique remained a socialist, one-party state shrouded by an ongoing civil war. Its first multi-party democratic elections were held in 1994.

MAJOR CITY

Maputo

Maputo is an attractive, modern city with wide, tree-lined avenues, high-rise buildings, and one of the best harbors on the continent of Africa. It still reflects the characteristics of a former Portuguese city: pastel houses with graceful balconies, sidewalk cafes, parks, and bustling vehicular traffic.

In the outskirts, however, the visitor feels that he is truly in Africa in passing through the Caniço—a heavily populated area with self-made houses surrounded by high cane fences, outdoor markets, small cultivated plots, public water fountains, and numerous winding dirt roads.

The city of Maputo is on the western shore of Delagoa Bay, formed by the confluence of five rivers, in the extreme southern part of the country. Its climate is subtropical, with an average rainfall of 31 inches, most of that coming during the October-to-April summer. Daytime temperatures in Maputo often reach the upper 90s, and rise even higher during occasional short periods of hot north winds.

As Lourenço Marques, Maputo superseded the city of Moçambique as Portuguese East Africa's capital city in 1907. The estimated population of the Maputo area is over 3 million.

Education

Most English-speaking children of school age have been privately instructed by their parents via correspondence courses. The American International School of Mozambique offers American curriculum education from kindergarten through grade eight. Correspondence courses are available for grades nine through twelve. An International School operates in Maputo, but it is government-supervised, and the standards are low. The beginning classes, however, are improving and many people enroll their children. Some foreign diplomatic missions have their own schools, but instruction is in their particular languages, and non-nationals are discouraged from enrolling.

South African, English-language secondary schools have comparatively high scholastic standards. They differ, however, from the better American public high or preparatory schools, in that they are based on the British system. American students often find it difficult to adjust to the differences in curricu-



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Maputo train station in Mozambique

lum, discipline, and general atmosphere.

Waterford-Kamhlaba School in Mbabane, Swaziland, is a multiracial, coeducational, secondary school based on the British O-level/A-level system. A number of American diplomats and missionaries in southern Africa have found the school satisfactory for their children, both scholastically and socially.

Recreation and Entertainment

The principal sports in Mozambique are fishing, boating, golf, tennis, and swimming. There are excellent beaches north of Maputo, but those in the bay area of the city are polluted. Swimming at unprotected beaches is discouraged because of sharks. No hunting is permitted anywhere in the country.

The Gorongosa Game Park, about two-and-a-half hours by car from the seaport city of Beira, is one of the most pleasant and best-stocked game reserves in Africa. Occasional tours are organized to the park. The Maputo game reserve is about a three-hour drive from the capital. It is considerably smaller and more limited in variety, but has elephants, hippos, and white rhinos. Roads in both parks are unpaved

and require four-wheel-drive vehicles. Small parks with children's playgrounds can be found throughout Maputo.

The city has several movie theaters which show some American, British, French, Italian, Russian, and Indian films with Portuguese subtitles. Most films are "B" class and several years old.

There are several good restaurants, many of which specialize in the grilled prawns and *piri-piri* (hot spiced) chicken, which have become strong favorites of foreigners. Others feature Portuguese, Italian, and Chinese cooking. Some have orchestras, but dancing is discouraged in Maputo. Bars usually serve only beer.

The capital city's Hotel Polama is considered the most elegant in East Africa. Built in the 1920s, it retains an unmistakable style in spite of Mozambique's strained economy.

OTHER CITIES

There are several other cities in Mozambique, but most of them are small and do not usually attract English-speaking business people or travelers. Some diplomatic mis-

sions are in operation throughout the country.

BEIRA, which is capital of the Manica and Sofala districts on the southeastern coast of the country, is a principal port for central Mozambique, and for the landlocked nations of Zimbabwe and Zambia. Principal exports passing through Beira are ores, tobacco, food products, cotton, hides, and skins. Canneries and processing plants opened at Beira in the early 1980s. Because of its position on the Indian Ocean, and its broad and beautiful beaches, it has become a popular resort. Beira's metropolitan area population is close to 300,000.

The city of **MOÇAMBIQUE**, in the north, is on a small channel island in the Indian Ocean. It once was the capital of Portuguese East Africa. Moçambique is an important commercial center and has good harbor facilities.

NAMPULA, also in the northern part of the country, is situated on rail and road routes, and is the center of a greater area with a population of more than 200,000.

QUELIMANE is a seaport town of about 11,000 on the Quelimane River in Zambezia Province. Founded in 1544, it is one of the oldest cities in the country. It was established as a Portuguese trading station and later became a slave market during the 1800s. Sisal plantations were organized by German planters in the beginning of the 20th century. The major industry for the city is fishing, but corn, sugar, and tea are also exported. One of the world's largest coconut plantations is located here.

TETE, the capital of the western province of Tete, is situated on the Zambezi River, 50 miles from the Zimbabwe border and 270 miles northwest of Beira. The city was founded in 1531 by the Portuguese and was long a headquarters for traders, gold prospectors, and slave raiders. The climate and soils of the surrounding Angonia Highlands favor some cattle raising and the

cultivation of cassava and sorghum. Today, Tete is a trade center with coal mines located nearby at Vila Moatize. There are deposits of bauxite, gold, manganese, and titanium in the area. Of note in the city is the cathedral, built in 1563. It has a population of about 105,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Mozambique has an area of 303,769 square miles, almost twice the size of California. It is bounded on the north by Tanzania; on the west by Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe; on the south by the Republic of South Africa and the Kingdom of Swaziland; and on the east by the Indian Ocean. Its 1,737-mile coastline stretches along the Indian Ocean from the mouth of the Rovuma River in the north to Ponta de Ouro in the south.

Topographically, Mozambique is made up mainly of flat coastal lowlands, rising in the west to a plateau 800 to 2,000 feet above sea level, and on the western border to a higher plateau (6,000 to 8,000 feet). Mountains in the north reach heights of over 8,000 feet. Africa's fourth longest river, the Zambezi, divides Mozambique in half. Many varieties of game are found in the interior, among them lion, elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, leopard, baboon, and gazelle.

The climate in the plains and along the coast is generally warm and humid; the mountainous areas tend to be cooler and drier. The hot rainy season lasts from October-November to April-May. The rest of the year is comparatively moderate, except for the decidedly cool winter months of June and July, particularly in the south and the higher altitudes. The rainfall is uneven and unpredictable; periodic droughts and floods occur.

Population

Mozambique's population of about 20 million is mainly Bantu-speaking and is divided into 10 ethnic groupings. The Ronga, Changane, and Chope tribes inhabit the south; the numerous and widespread Macua are in the north and center; the Maconde are in the northeast along the Tanzanian border; and the Ajaua (Yoa) and Nyanja live along Lake Niassa. About 15,000 to 20,000 Portuguese citizens still reside in the country, as well as smaller numbers of descendants of immigrants from other European countries and the subcontinent of Asia.

Portuguese is the official language and the only language of instruction and information. African Mozambicans have mastery of a number of indigenous tongues, and many have learned English while working in Zimbabwe and South Africa or while in exile with FRELIMO in Tanzania and Zambia. In the northern coastal area, which has experienced considerable Arab influence, Swahili is widely spoken.

Although most Africans continue to practice traditional religions, there are many Muslims (especially in the north) and Christians (both Catholic and Protestant). Christian missionaries have been active throughout the country; many of the latter were affiliated with English and American churches. Freedom of worship is assured under the constitution.

History

Historically, Mozambique lies at the southern edge of Arab influence along the East African coast; the Arabized town of Sofala was the southernmost port from which the annual monsoon permitted an easy return by sail. First visited in the late 1480s by the intrepid Portuguese traveler, Pero da Covilhã, Mozambique entered modern history when Vasco da Gama ventured here on his historic voyage to India in 1498.

Sofala, the first Portuguese settlement, dates from 1505, but the administrative and commercial capital of the area was soon established on the fortress island of Mozambique. Besides being an important way station on the route to India, Mozambique was also a source of gold (real as well as legendary). Trading posts, fortresses, and precarious settlements soon were established up the Zambezi River (at Sena and Tete), along what was hoped would become a secure trading route to the fabled African kingdom of Monomotapa. During its early history, Mozambique was also a source of slaves at various times, although never to the extent of other Portuguese possessions in West Africa.

Maputo, the capital, developed slowly as a minor trading post after the mid-1700s. At the end of the 19th century, it attained economic and strategic importance as the rail outlet to the mining area of the Transvaal in what is now the Republic of South Africa. After 1875, Maputo developed rapidly as a port, railhead, and commercial center.

In 1890, the Portuguese abandoned claims to the hinterland between Mozambique and Angola, which in effect established the boundaries of present-day Mozambique. A series of military campaigns effectively secured Portuguese occupation of the territory, previously limited to a few coastal forts and trading stations. During much of the early 20th century, the central and northern parts of the territory were administered by chartered companies. In 1907, the capital was moved from Mozambique Island to Lourenço Marques (renamed Maputo after independence in 1975).

Mozambique's pre-independence status was varied. For many centuries, it was a dependency of the Portuguese viceroy in India, and later it was considered an integral part of Portugal. In 1961, full Portuguese citizenship rights were extended to all Mozambicans. In 1964, the Mozambique Liberation Front

(FRELIMO) launched a guerrilla campaign aimed at forcing the Portuguese Government to grant independence and majority rule to Mozambique. From 1964 to 1974, FRELIMO soldiers carried out military operations in the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa, Sofala, and Manica. FRELIMO was supported politically and materially by several neighboring independent African states and by the Organization of American States.

Shortly after the April 1974 coup in Lisbon, FRELIMO ended its military campaign against Portugal. A transition government was established in September 1974, following negotiations in Lusaka (Zambia) between FRELIMO and the Portuguese Government. Mozambique became an independent country on June 25, 1975.

Government

Following independence from Portugal in 1975, Mozambique adopted a one-party Marxist political system with FRELIMO serving as the sole legal party. Samora Moises Machel was selected as the country's first president. As president of the FRELIMO party, Machel served as chief of the armed forces and was given authority to annul the decisions of provincial, district, and local assemblies. In October 1986, Machel was killed in a plane crash and succeeded by Joaquim Alberto Chissano.

Under Chissano's leadership, Mozambique has experienced dramatic political changes. In July 1989, FRELIMO abandoned its commitment to Marxism-Leninism. Also, a new constitution was adopted in November 1990. This document abolished FRELIMO's status as sole legal party, authorized the creation of opposition political parties, and introduced a Bill of Rights including the right to strike, freedom of the press, and the right to a fair trial. Since 1990, opposition political parties such as the Liberal Democratic Party of Mozambique (PALMO), the Mozambique National Union (UNAMO),

and the Mozambique National Movement (MONAMO) have been created.

Mozambique's legislative branch consists of the 250-member Assembly of the Republic. Members are elected by universal suffrage to five-year terms. The president is also elected by universal suffrage to a five-year term, and may only be reelected to two more consecutive terms.

The country is divided into ten administrative provinces, with the city of Maputo under the administrative direction of a city council chairman.

The flag of Mozambique consists of three equal horizontal bands of green (top), black, and yellow with a red isosceles triangle based on the hoist side; the black band is edged in white; centered in the triangle is a yellow five-pointed star bearing a crossed AK47 rifle and hoe in black superimposed on an open white book.

Arts, Science, Education

Mozambique has an adult literacy rate of about 42 percent. Theoretically, schools were integrated under the Portuguese administration, although in practice it was difficult for Africans to get more than a rudimentary education. This was particularly true outside the cities where few secondary educational facilities existed.

After independence, the Mozambique Government nationalized all schools in the country and banned the system of private tutors. About half of the country's primary schools were destroyed during the civil war. In 1990, private schooling was reintroduced. The educational ladder remains basically the same as under the Portuguese, with five years of primary education followed by two years of *preparatoria*, then a secondary, a commercial or industrial course (three years) or a *lyceu*, the five-year traditional college pre-

paratory course. The government is seeking to expand educational opportunities for all Mozambicans.

The Eduardo Mondlane University (called University of Lourenço Marques until independence) was established in 1967. The university, located in a residential neighborhood on the outskirts of the city, offers courses in agronomy, economics, engineering, liberal arts, medicine, science, and veterinary medicine.

Mozambique possesses considerable talent in its poets, novelists, artists, and sculptors. Many of their works depict political themes. Periodic exhibitions of local and foreign artists are sponsored by the government, and art objects are available for hard currency only in government-supervised stores.

Several foreign embassies have brought native dance troupes to Mozambique as part of their cultural programs. Traditional art, mostly African masks, rough leather goods, tourist items, beads, metal trinkets, and wood carvings are hawked in the cities, as are some excellent black wood sculpture produced by the Makonde in Mozambique's northern areas.

A Museum of Natural History, a Money Museum, and a Museum of the Revolution exist in Mozambique. The National Library in Maputo is open and houses an extensive collection. The National Gallery of Art has a limited collection of sculpture, artifacts, and paintings. Mozambique also has a school of photography that holds occasional exhibits, a National Institute of Cinema that produces mostly political documentaries, and a National Dance Company that gives regular performances.

Commerce and Industry

Mozambique is underdeveloped and has a largely agricultural economy. A major source of income is derived from its ports and railroads.

Maputo, a busy regional port, is a natural transit point for the South African Transvaal and Swaziland. Beira is an important outlet for Zimbabwe and Zambia, and the port of Nacala in the north serves Malawi and other central African countries.

Major economic problems face the country. About one-third of Mozambique's land is suitable for agriculture, but only some 4 percent is under cultivation at any one time. Most of the rural population is engaged in subsistence farming; corn and manioc are the principal crops. Livestock is found primarily in the south and far north where the tsetse fly is not prevalent. Mozambique, the principal cashew producer of the world, exports about \$65 million worth of that crop annually. Other important products are copra, cotton, sugar, tea, sisal, timber, and vegetable oil. Since independence, agricultural production has dropped precipitately, affecting export earnings and domestic food supplies. Civil war and recurrent droughts have seriously affected the economy.

Although Mozambique is famous for its shrimp (prawns), the fishing industry remains small and undeveloped, and much of the catch is taken by foreign ships fishing outside territorial waters.

Local industrial production is mainly confined to processing agricultural products. Some industries exist, including assembly plants for transistor radios, railroad cars, and truck bodies; and manufacturing plants for furniture, plastic goods, metal containers, shoes, cosmetics, soap, cigarettes, and beer. Mozambique also has large cement and textile factories. Manufacturing is centered in Maputo and Beira.

Various parts of Mozambique are believed to be rich in a number of minerals, but production thus far has been small. Coal, gold and gemstones are all important mineral commodities. Other products are colombo-tantalite, copper, fluorite, microlite, and bentonite. A natural

gas field has been discovered at Pande, south of the Save River. All mineral rights in Mozambique belong to the government, which issues concessions for prospecting and mining.

There is a considerable amount of unofficial trade along the borders as well as unreported fish exports to Asia. In the mid-1990s, an estimated \$50 million in gold and \$50 million in gemstones were being smuggled out of the country annually. In 1997, the Mozambican government contracted a private British firm to take responsibility for the regulation of foreign trade in order to reduce smuggling and corruption.

Mozambique's Chamber of Commerce, *Camara de Comercio de Moçambique*, is located at Rua Mateus Sansão Mutemba 452, CP 1836, Maputo; telephone: 491970; telex: 6498.

Transportation

Roads and railroads in Mozambique have historically concentrated on linking the coastline with bordering countries—Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. The major rail connections are from Maputo to Swaziland and South Africa, from Beira to Zimbabwe, and from Nacala to Malawi and Zambia.

Roads in general are in poor condition. Paved roads from Maputo to Beira and from Chimoio to Tete and Cahora Bassa have been completed, and a new program to connect Beira by paved roads to Quelimane and Nampula and places farther north is underway. Mozambique has over 4,700 kilometers (2,900 miles) of paved roads and 27,000 kilometers (17,000 miles) of dirt and gravel roads, but many of the latter are impassable during the rainy season.

Efforts are being made to improve north-south road connections and to construct rural feeder road systems. Overland rail or road travel to or from Mozambique or within the country is discouraged due to poor

conditions. Travel at night outside of major cities is hazardous.

The Mozambican airline, LAM, provides domestic service to Beira, Lichinga, Nampula, Pemba, Quelimane, and Tete.

Bus service exists between many of the main population centers throughout the country, but bus trips can be long, hot, and crowded. Bus schedules are very erratic.

Local bus service in Maputo is poor and buses are usually overcrowded. Taxis are extremely scarce, but are sometimes available at stands near the major hotels and in downtown areas. They are impossible to obtain during rush hours, and no taxis serve the international airport of Maputo. Fares are metered and are lower than in the U.S.; special hourly sight-seeing rates can be negotiated. Tipping is permitted and is usually 10 percent of the fare.

For those employed by foreign firms, or on official government duty in Mozambique, a private car is a necessity, since car rental service is limited. New Japanese and French automobiles are now appearing on the streets of Maputo. Small, used, foreign vehicles can be bought at varying prices (expensive by U.S. standards).

Since traffic moves on the left throughout southern Africa, right-hand-drive vehicles are generally used.

Communications

Long-distance telephone connections within Mozambique, to nearby countries, and worldwide are fair; service is sometimes slow. Maputo's automatic dial system usually works reasonably well but, sometimes, lines are overloaded during business hours. Satisfactory teletype service is available to all points, although extremely expensive.

International airmail service is usually reliable, but slow. Letters take



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Aerial view of Maputo, Mozambique

from two to three weeks to reach the U.S. east coast.

Maputo has a few radio stations; all broadcast in Portuguese. One is FM, (operating from 5:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.) and presents mainly local news, classical, and light musical programs. Reception of Voice of America (VOA) and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news is usually good on shortwave, as are stations from South Africa and nearby countries.

Television service, on a limited basis, served some 68,000 receivers in 1995. It is also possible to receive TV broadcasts from Swaziland and South Africa. All use the PAL system.

Maputo has two daily newspapers, a Sunday paper, and one weekly magazine (Portuguese). There are a few other magazines and periodicals. All papers report primarily domestic news. International news reflects Mozambique's foreign policy

preferences. One daily newspaper, also in Portuguese, is published in Beira.

Time and *Newsweek* are not available from local bookstores. Practically no English-language books can be obtained locally, except for those of a technical or scientific nature.

Health

Shortly after assuming power in 1975, the FRELIMO government nationalized all medical practice, facilities, and services. This action led to a serious deterioration of the country's limited medical care and facilities, including the exodus of the vast majority of its qualified medical personnel.

Hospitals in urban areas, primarily in Maputo and Beira, are seriously overcrowded, doctors and medical staff are overworked and often minimally trained, emergency cases frequently do not receive prompt attention, and sanitary conditions

are often substandard. Beyond the two major urban centers, medical facilities and care decrease in quality or are nonexistent. Dental and eye care in all areas are deficient.

Obtaining even the most routine medical assistance is generally time-consuming. Application for services is highly bureaucratized, and long waiting lines are the norm.

Hospital equipment is often inoperative because of the lack of maintenance and/or spare parts. In some cases, there are no trained medical technicians to operate the equipment. Pharmaceutical supplies and drugs are constantly in short supply, and even the most common medications often are unavailable. Routine laboratory work can be done, but is often of low quality and dubious validity. Emergency ambulance services are theoretically available, but are unreliable because of a severe shortage of vehicles.

In all but the most routine medical cases, American diplomatic personnel or businessmen and their families seek medical attention outside of Mozambique, generally in South Africa or Swaziland. Both of these neighboring countries' facilities are about four hours away by car. The facilities offered in Nelspruit, South Africa, approximate care most likely to be found in a small American city. However, Johannesburg/Pretoria, the largest metropolitan area in South Africa, is about eight hours by car from Maputo or a one-hour flight (flights are scheduled only twice weekly). Both have a full range of quality medical services and facilities. Medical care in Swaziland is fair.

Mozambique has the usual variety of tropical diseases such as malaria, filariasis, typhoid fever, bilharzia, tick fever, and infectious hepatitis; nevertheless, Maputo is a clean city and is relatively free of such illnesses. Flies, ticks, mosquitoes, ants, cockroaches, and parasitic worms are present, but well-controlled, in the better residential areas. Living in Maputo should present no real threat, provided immunizations are complete and up-to-date and prudence is exercised.

The water in Maputo (and in a number of the northern cities) is unsafe to drink; boiling and filtering are recommended. Most buildings in the city's center are connected to a central sewage system, but some outlying districts still use septic tanks.

Garbage is collected regularly, efficiently, and noisily at night in residential areas.

Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is widespread throughout the country; it is extremely dangerous to wade, swim, and wash in fresh lakes, ponds, puddles, or streams.

Cholera is endemic in practically all areas of Mozambique and has been most severe in the central and northern provinces. A serious outbreak occurred in Maputo in 1980,

killing at least 12 persons. The epidemic was contained, however, and no additional fatalities from cholera in the Maputo area have been reported. Nonetheless, the disease remains a potential threat, even in the capital area. Visiting Americans should take the following precautions: drink only bottled or boiled and filtered water; treat locally purchased fruit and vegetables (including purchases from South Africa and Swaziland where cholera is also prevalent) in a permanganate solution before consumption; observe the strictest sanitary practices; and avoid designated, unsafe, local beach areas.

Persons subject to hay fever, asthma, rheumatism, and arthritis may find the climate uncomfortable and should follow appropriate treatment. Respiratory ailments such as colds, bronchitis, and influenza are common. Inoculations against typhoid, yellow fever, polio, and hepatitis are essential, and anti-malarial medication should be started before leaving for Mozambique.

Clothing and Services

Americans find that suitable clothing is not available in Maputo. However, South Africa and Swaziland have a fairly good selection for all. Light cotton clothing is needed for the hot, humid summer; medium-weight garments are required for the cool, relatively dry winter.

Women need a reasonable number of dresses in Maputo, as sun and frequent laundering are hard on clothes. Slacks and pantsuits are frequently worn. A medium-heavy coat is handy for travel to South Africa and Swaziland during winter, when temperatures drop below freezing in the higher altitudes. Cardigan sweaters and shawls are useful on chilly mornings and evenings, even those days with surprisingly hot mid-days.

Sportswear is generally conservative, although bikinis are seen at

the beach and around swimming pools. White dresses are worn for tennis, and slacks or Bermuda shorts for golf.

Men's clothing is usually simple. Suits and ties are not always required for business, and often bush jackets or leisure suits are worn in offices. Official calls require coat and tie. Shorts and sport shirts are worn for informal occasions.

A fair selection of children's clothing is available in South Africa, and prices are reasonable. Styles and sizes of shoes, however, are limited. Boys under 12 usually wear shorts.

Most basic services are available in Maputo, and are of fair to good quality. Tailors are quite skilled for repair work. There have been serious shortages of food items, with supplies erratic and unpredictable, and Westerners on extended stays often travel to Swaziland and South Africa for groceries. Tourists, of course, encounter no difficulties, as they use the services of restaurants and hotel dining rooms.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Most Americans enter Mozambique by air from Johannesburg, Lisbon, or Paris. Direct connections are also available to Mbabane, Harare, Dar-es-Salaam, Berlin, Luanda, Lusaka, Rome, and Moscow.

Visas can be obtained through the Mozambican Embassy in Washington, its Mission in New York or by applying directly by cable with pre-paid response to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Maputo at least six weeks in advance. A valid passport is also required.

Pets can be imported only if there are accompanying health and vaccination certificates. The veterinary record must state that there have been no cases of rabies within a radius of 50 miles from where pets have resided for the previous year.

In Maputo, religious services in English are conducted only at the Anglican Church. Other places of worship include Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches, a Jewish synagogue (Portuguese and Orthodox rites), Buddhist and Hindu temples, and a mosque for two Muslim sects.

The time in Mozambique is Greenwich Mean Time minus two hours.

The Mozambique unit of exchange is the metical, which is divided into 100 centavos. No foreign currency may legally be imported into the country.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan. 1 New Year's Day
 Feb. 3 Heroes' Day
 Mar.
 (2nd Mon). Commonwealth Day

Apr. 7 Women's Day
 May 1 Worker's Day
 June 25 Independence Day
 Sept. 7 Lusaka Agreement/Victory Day
 Sept. 25 Armed Forces Day
 Nov. 10 Maputo City Day
 Dec. 25 Family Day

RECOMMENDED READING

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NAMIBIA

Republic of Namibia

Major Cities:

Windhoek, Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, Luderitz

Other Cities:

Grootfontein, Keetmanshoop, Mariental, Tsumeb

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2001 for Namibia. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

NAMIBIA is a recently independent, multicultural country still grappling with the implications of its colonial and apartheid past. Namibia offers a clean, modern capital city, highly developed infrastructure, striking desert landscapes, abundant wildlife, charming coastal towns, and endless opportunities for recreation and adventure. Pleasant housing, good schools, English-speaking environment, and diverse recreational and social options help ensure that everyone in the family enjoys their stay.

MAJOR CITIES

Windhoek

Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, is built on and among hills rising above a large plateau, and has an altitude of 5,600 feet. Windhoek is a small and sometimes sleepy city, but with well-developed infrastructure, services, and amenities.

Windhoek came into existence because of its springs. In 1849, Jan Jonker Afrikaner, a leader of the Orlam Namas, settled at the largest spring in what is now the residential area of Klein Windhoek. Reportedly, Afrikaner named the city after the Winterhoek Mountains in the Cape of Good Hope, where he was born. In time, Winterhoek was corrupted to Winduk in German and Windhoek in Afrikaans. It translates from the Afrikaans as "Windy Corner." In those days, Windhoek was the site of fierce struggles between the warring southern Namas led by Jonker Afrikaner and the northern Hereros. The wars largely destroyed the then-prospering Windhoek by the 1870s.

When South West Africa was declared a German colony in 1884, Major Curt von Francois stationed his garrison in Windhoek. The site was chosen both because it was stra-

tegically situated as a buffer between the Namas and the Hereros, and because the 12 strong springs provided sufficient water for drinking and the cultivation of food.

The present Windhoek was founded on October 18, 1890, when von Francois laid the foundation stone of the fortress that is now known as the Alte Feste (Old Fort) and serves as a museum. Today, Windhoek is a trim, clean, and attractive city, with remnants of German inspired architecture creating a charming downtown district.

Utilities

Public utilities in Windhoek function well, and telephone, water and electricity outages are rare.

Food

Food supplies in Windhoek are plentiful, easy to obtain, and generally inexpensive by U.S. standards.

In general, the quality of food available in Namibia is high, and extra safety precautions are not required during food preparation. Windhoek has good, quality supermarkets that carry mostly South African and Namibian products, with some European items as well. Supermarkets stock most products sold in standard U.S. supermarkets, including occasionally some Mexican foods (e.g., taco shells and sauces, salsa);



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Tintenpalast or government building in Windhoek, Namibia

however, shoppers find very few U.S. brand names on the shelves.

A wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, mostly imported from South Africa, is available in good supply, but availability is seasonal. In addition to supermarkets, a number of stores specialize in fruits and vegetables. Produce typically available includes apples, melons, grapes (including seedless), plums, peaches, nectarines, oranges, tangerines, bananas, tomatoes, celery, potatoes, yams, a variety of lettuces, spinach, corn (on the cob), beets, and green beans. A shop specializing in fresh fruit juice offers a wide selection, including mango, orange, apple, and mixed varieties.

Local meat, including lamb, beef, poultry, and pork, is of high quality and leaner than meat in the U.S. A variety of game meat, including ostrich, oryx, and kudu, is available from supermarkets and butchers and is generally very mild, tender, and lean. Frozen turkeys are imported and available around the holidays. Chicken is available (whole or in parts, including boneless breasts), but because some farmers use a combination of grain and fish meal, the meat may sometimes have a fishy taste. Sausages are also widely sold and delicious, but may be unfamiliar in taste and

texture to most Americans. Hamburger can sometimes be too lean to fry. Most supermarkets have deli counters similar to their U.S. counterparts, as well as pre-packaged high quality deli meats. Deli counters also sell marinated, uncooked meats and kabobs for grilling. Bacon and hotdog-type sausages are available at most supermarkets.

Dairy products pose no health hazards and are generally stored chilled and pasteurized when appropriate. Fresh whole and low-fat milk is generally available, and one store has recently begun to stock skim milk, as well. Long-life milk (whole, low-fat, and skim) is readily available. A range of cheeses (including cottage and cream cheese), yogurt, and butter is consistently available. Brown shelled eggs from grain-fed chickens are available in small, medium, and large sizes and are excellent.

Good-quality bakeries and supermarkets throughout Windhoek make white and grain loaf breads; slicing machines yield sliced rectangular loaves familiar to the American sandwich consumer. Heavier loaves, including rye, pumpnickel, and seed breads, are always available, as are German-style "broetchen" bread rolls—a breakfast

favorite. European-style cakes and pastries are also available. A wide variety of breakfast cereals is available, some sold under well-known U.S. brand names. In some cases, however, the actual products differ in flavor or texture from their U.S. counterparts.

Supermarkets are stocked with limited but adequate selections of frozen foods, including meat, vegetables, fruits, ice cream, and ready-to-eat dishes, but consumers in Namibia will find far fewer microwave-ready products than in the U.S. Some supermarkets have recently expanded their ranges of ready-to-eat convenience foods sold from deli counters, and options ranging from full-course dinners to sushi are available.

A wide range of baby foods and other baby products is available, including formulas (milk or soy), baby cereals, jarred foods, disposable diapers, and wipes. Some U.S. consumers may prefer familiar brands to local brands.

Food prices are generally less than in the U.S.; however, some imported items (e.g., cheeses) can be significantly higher.

South African wines of excellent quality and reasonable prices are available locally. Namibia also produces a variety of good-quality and inexpensive beers. Namibian breweries adhere to German purity laws; local beer has no chemical additives.

Clothing

Western clothing and footwear including clothing suitable for office, recreation, safari, workout, and casual, weekend wear, are available in Windhoek, but selection can be limited. Reasonably priced clothing is not of high quality, and high-quality clothing may cost more than in the U.S. or South Africa. Name brand athletic shoes are available at sporting goods stores, but dress and casual shoes are limited in selection and quality. Unusual shoe sizes are generally not available.

Casual children's clothing and shoes are readily available, reasonably well designed, and moderately priced, although generally not as high in quality as comparable items from the U.S.

For those who sew, equipment, patterns, fabrics and notions are readily available in Windhoek. All-cotton fabric, however, is difficult to find and very limited in selection.

Office attire is comparable to that worn in the U.S. Men wear a suit or blazer and tie; women wear suits, dresses, or skirts/pants and blouses. Cotton dresses or suits made from non-synthetic materials or cotton-synthetic blends are best during warmer months (October-February). During hot summer days, most men and women shed their coats and blazers, unless engaging in a meeting where the more formal suit coat is a necessity. In winter, (March-September), sweaters and heavier-weight suit coats and blazers are good for cold mornings and evenings, although less essential during the warm afternoons. Very few social functions require formal attire, and a dark suit or cocktail dress is generally a suitable substitute for most formal occasions. Representational and non-representational social functions generally take one of three forms - sit-down dinner, cocktail or catered buffet, or braai (outdoor barbecue); corresponding dress ranges from business attire to "smart casual" (coat, no tie for men; slacks, blouse for women) to "weekend casual" (polo shirt, khakis).

Supplies and Services

Pharmacies, supermarkets, department stores, and specialty stores are well stocked, with many U.S. brands (although South African-made) of personal products or easily recognizable equivalents available. A broad range of women's cosmetics (Revlon, Max Factor, Clinique, Lancome, etc.) and hygiene products are available at reasonable prices. Men's toiletries are also readily available. All common drugstore items are found in Windhoek, including some American products.



Street in Swakopmund, Namibia

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Non-prescription and prescription drugs are available, but brands may differ from those sold in the U.S. Depending on the item, cost of medicine can be substantially less than, or more than, U.S. equivalents. Some over-the-counter medications in Namibia would require a prescription in the U.S., so caution should be used when purchasing any over-the-counter medication.

Maintenance, household repair, and housekeeping supplies are readily available and reasonably priced. A wide selection of hardware, plus manual and power tools, is available. Cleaning supplies comparable to U.S. products are available at reasonable cost.

Entertainment items, such as china, glassware, candles, and serving pieces, are available although selection is limited and prices for imported items are higher than for comparable items purchased in the U.S.

Basic paper products, such as toilet paper, tissues, paper towels, and paper plates, are available, as are food wraps and trash bags. Quality is generally lower than U.S. equivalents, and paper products suitable for entertaining (i.e., sturdy or decorative paper plates) are generally

not available or very limited in selection.

A wide variety of cigarette brands, including American brands manufactured in South Africa (but which differ in taste from their American counterparts), are sold in Namibia.

Windhoek has a wide selection of good, quality haircutting establishments (men's, women's, unisex), as well as a small number of day spas offering facials, manicures, pedicures, massages, etc. Costs are comparable to U.S. prices.

Numerous professional dry-cleaning and laundry facilities exist; dry-cleaning prices are generally comparable to those in the U.S., but laundry prices are higher. "Express" same-day service is available at added cost. Basic tailoring services are available and affordable, although high skill dressmaking or tailoring is not readily available. It is unusual to have clothing made in Namibia. Shoe repair services are comparable in quality and price to U.S. establishments.

Repairs for electrical appliances are of reasonable quality and price, although service can be quite slow and all parts are not readily on hand.

Veterinary services in Namibia are comparable to those in the U.S., and offer the full range of vaccinations and “veterinarian” pet foods (i.e., lams, Science Diet). Pet foods and other pet items are also available in grocery stores and pet stores. The SPCA and private kennels offer boarding services. The SPCA is also a good source for inexpensive pets, although private breeders exist as well.

Domestic Help

Competent maids and garden cleaners are available in Windhoek, but it requires a little effort to find the right one. Most are able to speak and understand a little English, although fluency and literacy are harder to find. Maids are generally competent at housekeeping, laundry, and ironing. Garden cleaners are able to sweep leaves, water plants, and cut grass, but are rarely skilled gardeners. Commercial gardening services are available for about US\$15 per day. Cooks are rare; some employees use private, good quality caterers for representational entertaining. Good, experienced nannies are available, although more difficult to find than maids. It is extremely unusual to hire a driver in Windhoek, although qualified drivers can be found for this purpose, if needed.

Salaries for domestics who do basic housecleaning and laundry vary from US\$80 to US\$150 per month, full-time on average, varying with experience and additional responsibilities; gardeners receive about US\$8 to US\$10 a day and are usually only needed 1 or 2 days a week. In addition, some employers provide food or a food allowance, and/or a transportation allowance.

Most domestic help is not live-in, although live-in help can be found, if needed. Full-time domestic employees must be enrolled in local social security at the employer's expense and granted at least 24 days of paid leave per year. A year-end bonus is traditionally given to employees, sometimes equal to one-month's pay, but this is not required.

Religious Activities

Services are available for most faiths commonly practiced in the U.S., although facilities and English-language services are limited in some cases. Christian denominations include Baptist, Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Dutch Reformed, Roman Catholic, and the Church of the Latter-Day Saints. Windhoek has a small Jewish community that hosts a Hebrew Association, a Bahai community, and a mosque and Islamic Center.

Education

The Windhoek International School (WIS): A State Department-supported school covering grades prekindergarten through grade 12. It is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and the European Council of International Schools. WIS has an enrollment of approximately 450 students, with a diverse mix of Namibian and expatriate students and faculty. WIS offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) program in both primary and secondary schools. Enrollment in the IB program facilitates the academic integration of students as they move from WIS to other international schools or to IB magnet schools in the Washington area. In addition, WIS offers the Southern African IGSCE and HIGSCE examinations. WIS's school year runs on an approximately American schedule - from mid-August to late June, with breaks in October, December, and March. WIS's curriculum is designed to address the needs of local and other international students, as well as American students; the curriculum does not fully correspond to all U.S. curriculums and new students, especially those in secondary grades, may find themselves behind or ahead of their peers in certain subjects. WIS does not require school uniforms.

St. George's Diocesan School (Anglican): Covers grades pre-kindergarten through grade 7. It has an enrollment of approximately 450 students, predominantly Namibian, but with a mix of expatriate stu-

dents as well. The St. George's school year runs from January to December, and the school requires uniforms.

St. Paul's College (Catholic) offers classes from grades 5 to 13, with an enrollment of approximately 375. Students from St. George's typically feed into St. Paul's for their secondary education. St. Paul's offers the IGCSE and HIGCSE examinations, which are geared for students intending to attend southern African universities. The St. Paul's school year runs from January to December. St. Paul's requires uniforms.

Deutsche Hohere Privatschule (DHPS): The most prominent of several private German schools, covering grades kindergarten through 13 with an enrollment of 1,000 students. Instruction from grade five to 12 is in English, and instruction in the lower grades is a mix of German and English. The 13th grade, which is taught in German, is intended to prepare students to attend university in Germany or Austria. The DHPS school year runs from January to December, with classes from Monday to Friday, plus every other Saturday. The DHPS requires uniforms.

Windhoek offers a variety of pre-school options. The Windhoek International School has the most comprehensive and the most expensive at US\$3,350 per year. Windhoek's Montessori pre-school costs approximately US\$1,000 per year. Other preschools are run mostly from private homes. These typically cost US\$500 per year, and also are available short-term or for as little as 1 day per week. Pre-school hours typically run from 7:30 am to 1:00 pm.

Special Educational Opportunities

The Windhoek International School is the only school of international standard in Windhoek with some resources for children with special learning needs. Its resources are limited, however, and parents of children with special requirements



Street scene in Luderitz, Namibia

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

should contact WIS before accepting an assignment to Windhoek to determine whether the school can accommodate their children's needs.

Sports

Windhoek has excellent facilities for a wide range of sports. A number of stores sell most of the sports equipment and clothing needed.

The city of Windhoek has an excellent 8-lane, 50-meter outdoor pool, with separate diving pool. Admission fees and seasonal passes are very inexpensive. One private health club has an indoor 25-meter lap pool. Swimming instruction for adults and children is readily available and affordable.

Several tennis clubs are available with outdoor hard surface courts. Some courts are lighted for night play. Memberships are very inex-

pensive. Instruction is available and affordable.

Windhoek has an excellent grass 18-hole golf course set in a scenic desert landscape. Single membership costs about US\$250, plus an annual fee of about US\$200. Greens fees are about US\$5 for members and US\$10 for non-members. Instruction, caddies, and equipment rental are available and inexpensive by U.S. standards. The coastal resort of Swakopmund, about 3 to 4 hours from Windhoek, also has a nice 18-hole course.

Windhoek has a number of health clubs. The largest of these is equivalent to a high-end U.S. facility and costs about US\$240 per person, per year. It has free weights, circuit training, aerobics, bikes, treadmills, stair machines, rowing machines, squash courts, and a 25-meter indoor pool. Personal training and

diet planning are available and relatively inexpensive.

Windhoek has clubs and/or facilities for basketball, soccer, baseball/softball, volleyball, and cricket. Bicycling is very popular, with several road races organized throughout the year. Motor sports are also very popular among the Namibian population, with facilities in or near Windhoek ranging from go-karts to motocross to a race track for occasional car races.

Horseback riding is available from private stables, with well-kept horses, equipment, and facilities. Registration fees are nominal and lessons cost less than \$10 an hour, but there is often a waiting list. Guided trail tours and horseback game viewing are available at several lodges, and multi-day horseback trips to the coast are offered periodically.



Aerial view of Luderitz, Namibia

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

The coastal towns of Swakopmund and Walvis Bay offer opportunities for sea sports including surfing, sea kayaking, and deep-sea fishing, with boat charters, equipment, and instruction available and affordable. Surf fishing, possible along 450 kilometers of coastline from Sandwich Harbor in the south to Terrace Bay in the north, is reputed to be among the best in the world. Also centered on the coast and the adjacent Namib Desert are facilities for adventure sports, such as quad biking, sand surfing, para-sailing, skydiving, hang-gliding, and micro-light flying.

Licensed hunting is permitted both on privately owned game farms and on communal lands. Numerous professional hunters offer their services to newcomers. Bird watching is another popular pastime in Namibia, home to a wide variety of southern Africa's vast and valued bird life.

Windhoek offers high-quality, inexpensive instruction in a variety of sports for children and/or adults, including aerobics, yoga, martial arts, horseback-riding, ballet, gymnastics, and tennis. Soccer, rugby, and cricket are the most popular spectator sports, and national and international matches can be viewed at Independence Stadium or on television.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Namibia is a paradise for tourists and outdoor enthusiasts. Namibia was the first country to include environmental conservation in its constitution. To protect the country's wildlife and scenic natural beauty, several national parks and conservation areas were created, covering 14% of the country's surface area. The Department of Nature Conservation operates rest camps at 22 locations, offering a range of camping and lodging

options, including reasonably priced hotels, kitchen-equipped bungalows, developed camp grounds, and undeveloped wilderness camping. These locations provide comfortable bases from which to explore Namibia's wildlife and breathtaking landscapes. Many privately run hotels, guest and game farms, and lodges are also available, and offer excellent rooms and service.

The largest game reserve, Etosha National Park, is about a 5-hour drive from Windhoek. It offers a range of overnight accommodations at spot lit watering holes, and has some of the world's best game viewing: abundant elephants, rhinos, giraffes, zebras, many types of gazelles and antelopes, lions, cheetahs, leopards, hyenas, warthogs, and more. Many other reserves and game lodges offer accommodations ranging from basic to luxurious, all with excellent game-viewing possibilities. The closest reserves and

lodges are within 20 minutes of Windhoek. The very expensive Skelton Coast Park in the far northwest of Namibia offers the chance to see extremely rare desert-adapted elephants and rhinos.

Namibia offers excellent hiking and camping in a variety of stunning landscapes. Camping facilities range from basic and remote to luxury, with potable water, electrical outlets, and kitchen/toilet facilities. The Fish River Canyon - second in size only to the Grand Canyon - can be hiked in 4 to 5 days. The Orange River, along Namibia's southern border offers rafting and canoeing, as well as camping.

Soothing hot springs at the Gross Barmen resort and Rehoboth are less than an hour away from Windhoek. The hot springs of Ai-Ais, in southern Namibia, provide respite to hikers of the Fish River Canyon. The Namib-Naukluft Park and the Skeleton Coast give windows on the beauty of the Namib, the world's oldest desert. The Namib is also home to the world's tallest sand dunes, many easily accessible from the road for climbing. In contrast to these examples of untamed nature are the coastal towns of Luderitz and Swakopmund, quiet resort areas carved from the desert landscape that lines Namibia's coast. These towns offer quaint German architecture and comfortable lodging and restaurants. Swakopmund is also a center for "recreational" shopping. Luderitz is adjacent to fascinating ghost towns being reclaimed by the desert, as well as to Namibia's diamond region where access is strictly regulated.

A common activity for seeing many of Namibia's sights is a camping safari. Several safari companies in Windhoek offer "drive-in" or "fly-in" guided tours of Namibia's beauty and wildlife. At night, tourists sleep under a brilliant night sky untroubled by pollution or city lights.

Other popular excursions include visits to Namibia's numerous prehistoric rock paintings, a trip to a petrified forest, excursions to see

the rare welwitschia, a desert plant that lives for thousands of years, and trips to various regions and festivals to experience Namibia's fascinating indigenous cultures.

Namibia offers a handful of small, but good museums of history and culture. Museum subjects include history, traditional tribal cultures, geology and gems, railroads and transportation, and art.

Entertainment

Windhoek sometimes seems like a sleepy little town, but it does have nightspots and entertainment features. The National Theatre of Namibia has a variety of presentations, from musical groups to film festivals to plays. Namibia boasts an amateur, but good symphony orchestra made up of members of the community, and an opera group that sponsors a handful of sold-out performances each year. The Warehouse Theatre is a popular venue for live jazz and other performances suitable to the small stage. There are also a small number of nightspots that feature dancing and live or recorded music. The College for the Arts features frequent recitals and offers inexpensive art and music lessons for both children and adults. A three screen movie theater shows recent U.S. movies (about 3 months after their U.S. release). There are numerous video rental outlets (PAL system) with good selections of VHS tapes; many rent DVD videodiscs and electronic game cartridges. Saturday mornings find most of Windhoek strolling through downtown, shopping, sitting in outdoor cafes and restaurants, or browsing the handicraft vendors along the Post Street Mall shopping area. Sidewalks roll up promptly at 1 p.m. when the stores close and everyone leaves for home or the country, although Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning store hours are gradually becoming more common.

Windhoek has a good number of restaurants that are good and inexpensive. Many restaurants are steak houses or otherwise meat-oriented, and there is a limited range of inter-

national cuisine beyond Italian and Chinese. Restaurant meals generally cost less than \$10 per person. Some restaurants include standard German cuisine on their menus, while others offer more exotic game entrees (e.g., ostrich, kudu, oryx, springbok). A gourmet restaurant situated in an early 1900s castle is reputed to be the best, and is certainly the most expensive, in town. Kentucky Fried Chicken is the only American fast food franchise operating in Windhoek, although several South African fast food chains are present as well.

Social Activities

Windhoek, for all its amenities, is a quiet town, and social life is what each individual makes of it.

Americans have the possibility of a great deal of social contact with both Namibians and other nationalities. There is a large anglophone international community, with more than 50 countries and international organizations represented in Windhoek.

Contacts with the local and international community are facilitated by a Rotary Club and Roundtable, which provide business networking opportunities. Namibia has a small, but active, Scientific Society, that sponsors occasional seminars and publishes papers, reports, and books on subjects related to Namibia - commonly wildlife, biology, and geology. Parents and children in schools with international enrollments have opportunities to meet and befriend people from other countries at various school activities held throughout the year. The Association of Diplomatic Spouses has a very active calendar, sponsoring several fund-raising events each year in support of grassroots charities offering aid to women and children in Namibia. There are also any number of non-governmental organizations who welcome people willing to volunteer their time and skills supporting programs that help nature conservation and wildlife, the poor, battered women and children, orphans, HIV/AIDS victims, and the victims of landmines.

Security

Windhoek is rated high for crime by the Department of State. The most common crimes are non-violent crimes such as residential break-ins, pick-pocketing, purse snatching, vehicle theft, and vehicle break-in. Common sense measures, such as using residential locks and alarms, not leaving valuables in parked cars, safeguarding purses, keeping wallets in front pockets, and being alert to one's surroundings, are the best deterrents against crime.

Due to unrest caused by the civil war in neighboring Angola, as well as to the lingering effects of a secessionist effort in the Caprivi Strip, the northern regions of Kavango and Caprivi are not considered safe.

Swakopmund

Located in northwestern Namibia, Swakopmund was once Namibia's most important port. Today, it is the country's primary resort destination. Its temperate climate and beautiful beaches make it a popular spot for sunbathers, surfers, anglers, and water sports enthusiasts. The city was founded in the 1890s as a German colonial town. A very strong German influence remains today. The city attracts many German tourists and many German-speaking Namibians have homes and beachfront cottages here. Swakopmund is clean and attractive, with palm trees lining the streets and seaside promenades.

In addition to tourism, Swakopmund is the site of the Rössing mine. This mine, which is the largest opencast uranium mine in the world, forms the backbone of the city's economy and infrastructure. Swakopmund had a population of approximately 15,500.

Recreation

Many visitors to Swakopmund enjoy viewing the city's German colonial architecture. One of the most prominent is the Woermann Haus, which was constructed in 1905. It has been restored to its

original grandeur and declared a national monument. Today, it serves as a library. The tower of Woermann Haus offers visitors an excellent view of the city.

Swakopmund has a good museum, which is located on the site of an old harbor warehouse. The museum offers exhibits detailing the history and ethnology of Namibia and displays relating to the plant life which surrounds the city.

Other recreational activities near Swakopmund include tours of the Rössing Mine and visits to a camel farm. Camel rides are offered in the afternoon.

Swakopmund has a number of shops and art galleries which specialize in prints and paintings of the area, from modern classic watercolors to modern surrealist African art. A tannery in town offers tremendously low prices for handbags, belts, sandals, and "Swakopmunders" (durable kudu leather shoes). Swakopmund also offers souvenir and curio shops featuring African crafts. Many tourists also shop at the city's jewelry stores. Jewelry is made from semiprecious stones and local gems. It is often quite expensive.

Entertainment

Most entertainment centers around eating and drinking. Swakopmund offers all types of restaurants, from exquisite dining to fast-food restaurants. The city's cafes and pubs also serve food and tend to be rather informal.

Aside from restaurants, entertainment is limited. Films or other events are occasionally scheduled at the city museum.

Walvis Bay

Walvis Bay is situated on the coast of Namibia, midway between the northern and southern borders. For over one-hundred and fifty years, Walvis Bay has served as Namibia's main port. Today, the town has modern harbor facilities and is linked to

Namibia's mines, farming regions, and towns by road, rail, and air links. The city was once the home to a sizeable fishing industry. However, severe overfishing during the mid-1970s has caused a drastic decline in fishing and a subsequent rise in unemployment. Many of the fisheries and canneries remain empty today.

Aside from fishing, Walvis Bay's economy is sustained by small-scale engineering and ship repair businesses. Between 1978 and 1994, South Africa directly governed Walvis Bay and used the city's deep-water harbor as a strategic base and training facility for its naval forces. Walvis Bay and twelve offshore islands were formally transferred from South Africa to Namibia on March 1, 1994, after three years of negotiations. The population of Walvis Bay was estimated at 21,000.

Luderitz

Luderitz is located on one of the last natural harbors along the Namibian coast. The site of the present day city was visited in 1487 by Portuguese navigator Bartholomew Diaz, who named the harbor Angra Pequena (Little Bay). The city gained importance as the first German settlement in southwest Africa. Founded as a trading post by a German merchant, Adolf Luderitz, the territory was placed under German protection in 1884. The discovery of diamonds in 1908 transformed Luderitz into a booming mining town. Eventually, the diamond boom faded and many parts of the city were largely abandoned. Today, Luderitz's diamond mines are owned and operated by the Consolidated Diamond Mines (CDM). Certain areas near the mines are cordoned off and heavily guarded. These areas cannot be entered without a permit.

In addition to diamond mining, rock-lobster fishing and processing is a major industry. New industries include seaweed and seagrass harvesting.

Recreation

Luderitz offers many fine examples of German colonial architecture. Among them are the Railway Station, Old Post Office, Magistrate’s House, and Concert & Ball Hall. Many of these buildings are open to the public.

Many visitors enjoy touring the remains of Kolmanskop, a small mining town located a few miles south of Luderitz. Kolmanskop was once a booming mining town. However, a sharp decline in diamond sales after World War I and the discovery of more profitable diamond areas elsewhere caused the town to decline. By 1956, Kolmanskop was virtually abandoned. A few buildings have been restored, but the ghost town atmosphere remains.

It is possible to travel to the spot where Bartholomew Diaz landed in 1487. This spot, Diaz Point, is located approximately 15 miles outside of Luderitz. Diaz Point offers wonderful opportunities to view cormorants, flamingos, a wide range of wading birds, dolphins, and seal colonies. Visitors should bring a warm jacket when visiting Diaz Point because of extreme wind and cold.

Shopping opportunities are limited in Luderitz. Luderitz is known for its beautiful rugs. They are very well made and woven in desert colors with local flora and fauna as favorite designs. A fine selection of newspapers, books, and jewelry can be found at the Luderitz Boekwinkel bookstore.

Entertainment

Entertainment opportunities are extremely limited. Two fine restaurants are located in Luderitz. The first, the Bay View, is located at the top of a converted colonial building. Spectacular views enhance the dining experience. Specialties include crayfish, local oysters, and kingklip. The Oyster Bar, a restaurant located near the Old Post Office, features a wide variety of light meals and snacks.

OTHER CITIES

GROOTFONTEIN is a small city situated in northeastern Namibia. The area was settled in the mid-1880s by Boers, who called the settlement *Grootfontein* or “Great Spring.” The discovery of copper in the late 1890s led to the development of productive mines near the city. Grootfontein is currently Namibia’s major cattle farming center and is renowned for its jacaranda and other flamboyant trees. The city is also a shipping point for the timber products from Namibia’s northeastern region. Local industries produce dairy products, meat, and leather goods. Grootfontein has an estimated population near 15,000.

Situated in southeastern Namibia, **KEETMANSHOOP** was founded in 1860 by the Rhenish Mission Society. It became a town in 1895 after the Germans stationed a military garrison there. Today, Keetmanshoop is a main transit point for visitors and freight from Windhoek, Luderitz, and the South African cities of Upington and Cape Town. Keetmanshoop is located in an area where karakul sheep abound and the city is a major processor of karakul skins. Other major industries include the manufacturing of leather goods and processed foods. Although Keetmanshoop has several fine examples of German colonial architecture, the city does not have many attractions or entertainment opportunities for visitors. Keetmanshoop has a population of roughly 15,000.

Located in south-central Namibia, **MARIENTAL** is situated 170 miles southeast of Windhoek. Mariental was founded in 1912 as a railway stop between Windhoek and Keetmanshoop. This city of 6,500 is mainly an administrative and commercial center. Processing and transport of animal skins serves as the main economic activity. Although there are not many points of interest in Mariental itself, there are several attractions nearby. The Hardap Dam, located 14 miles

northwest of Mariental, has a man-made lake and recreational area that is popular with campers and fishermen. The Hardap Game Reserve allows visitors to view over 260 bird species, kudus, springboks, ostriches, gemsboks, and mountain zebras. These wildlife areas are accessible by car or walking trails.

TSUMEB is a mining town whose prosperity is based on the presence of copper ore, lead, germanium, silver, and cadmium. Located in north-central Namibia, Tsumeb became a center for colonial mining activities during the 1890s. Today, more than 200 varieties of minerals are mined near Tsumeb. Many examples of these minerals are found in museum collections throughout the world. A small museum in Tsumeb chronicles the history of the town and is worth a visit. Several shops offer crafts, carvings, and jewelry made from locally produced minerals. Tsumeb has a population of approximately 16,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Namibia is an arid country covering more than 320,000 square miles, or about twice the size of California. It is bordered to the west by the Atlantic Ocean, to the north by Angola, to the south by South Africa, and to the east by Botswana; the Caprivi Strip juts out to the northeast to touch both Zimbabwe and Zambia. Namibia has four distinct geographic regions. The Namib Desert forms a 50- to 70-mile wide belt along the entire coastline. A semi-arid and mountainous plateau, varying in altitude from 3,000 to 6,000 feet, covers the central part of the interior and includes Windhoek, the capital city. The low-lying eastern and southeastern plains are extensions of the dry Kalahari Region of Botswana and South Africa. The northern, bush-covered plains include the relatively high

rainfall areas of the Kavango and the eastern Caprivi.

Windhoek, the capital, is at an altitude of 5,600 feet. This altitude and the extreme dryness of the air can initially make newcomers uncomfortable. Dryness and dust may persistently bother those who wear contact lenses, exacerbate or provoke allergies or respiratory problems, and cause extreme dryness of the skin.

The city itself is hilly and surrounded by sparsely vegetated mountains, creating a landscape that calls to mind Arizona or New Mexico. Indeed, with its bustling downtown commercial section, good-quality roads and public services, and trim residential areas, Windhoek proper could easily pass for a small, southwestern, American city.

Namibia's climate is typical of a semi-desert and high plateau country, with hot days and cool nights. In midsummer (December-February), daytime temperatures can exceed 100°F in lower elevations. In Windhoek, January average high temperatures are in the 90s. Winter (May-September) sees daytime highs of about 70°F; nights can be cold, dipping below freezing.

Windhoek enjoys about 300 sunny days a year. Rains usually come from December through March, peaking in February, for a yearly average rainfall of 12-16 inches in Windhoek. The unrelenting dryness of the rest of the year makes the rains refreshing, welcome, and eagerly anticipated, turning the mountains surrounding Windhoek green for the brief summer months.

Population

With a total population of 1.7 million people, Namibia has one of the world's lowest population densities. The population growth rate is high, at about 3%, although the United Nations estimates that population growth will turn negative in 2005, due to the HIV epidemic. Some two thirds of the population live in the

north of the country, in Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshana, Otjikoto, Kavango, and the Caprivi Region. Nearly 160,000 people live in Windhoek. The Ovambos (55%) are the largest single ethnic-linguistic group among the black population, which also includes Kavangos, Hereros, Damaras, Namas, Caprivians, San (or Bushmen), and Tswanas. Whites, mainly of Afrikaner (South African Dutch), German, or English descent, comprise 6% of the population. Afrikaans-speaking, mixed-race peoples, such as the "Coloureds" and the Rehoboth Basters, make up 7%.

English is Namibia's official language, but is very few Namibians' first tongue. Indigenous ethnic languages are the first language of 90% of the population. Afrikaans is widely spoken; German is also used extensively. The main indigenous languages are Oshiwambo, spoken by the Ovambo; Kwangali, spoken by the Kavango; Otjiherero, spoken by the Herero; Nama-Damara, a "click" language spoken by both the Nama and Damara; Lozi spoken by Caprivians; and Setswana, spoken by the Tswana.

Eighty to 90% of the population is Christian. Lutheran is the predominant Christian faith. Ten to 20% of the population practices indigenous beliefs.

Standards of living vary markedly among the population, largely along racial lines—a vestige of the apartheid policies of Namibia's colonial past. Annual per capita income in Namibia exceeds US\$1,500, but the per capita income for many blacks is less than US\$200. In Windhoek, these imbalances are readily apparent when crossing from the city's well-to-do and predominantly white neighborhoods into the black and mixed race former township areas of Katutura and Khomasdal.

Namibia's independence brought a substantial international community to Windhoek; more than 30 nations and international organizations are represented.

History

The area of present-day Namibia was first inhabited by Bushmen (or San). They were followed by the Nama and Damara peoples. During the 16th and 17th centuries, two Bantu-speaking peoples moved into Namibia. Northern portions of Namibia were settled by the Ovambo while the Herero inhabited northwestern and central Namibia. The early inhabitants of Namibia lived a nomadic existence and survived through a process of hunting and gathering.

The peoples of Namibia remained isolated from the outside world until the late 1700s when the first Europeans began exploring the coast and limited inland areas. They were soon followed by groups of traders, hunters and missionaries. By the mid-1800s Europeans, particularly the Germans and British, began vying for control of Namibia (then known as South West Africa). In 1878, the British annexed the coastal enclave of Walvis Bay and made it a part of South Africa. A dispute arose between Germany and Great Britain in the 1880s regarding who would control South West Africa's rich coastal regions. After a series of intense negotiations, the Germans were allowed to control all of the coastal regions with the exception of Walvis Bay. Also, on July 1, 1890, Great Britain and Germany signed an agreement granting Germany control of the Caprivi Strip. Great Britain was given the island of Zanzibar in return for its concessions in South West Africa. Germany administered South West Africa until World War I. In 1915, with Germany preoccupied with the war in Europe, South African troops marched north and occupied South West Africa. Following Germany's defeat in World War I, South Africa was granted permission in 1920 by the League of Nations to administer South West Africa. The League required that South Africa must strive to promote the moral, material and social well-being of the people.

South Africa's treatment of the people in South West Africa was extremely harsh, however. All opposition to South African rule was ruthlessly crushed. In 1933, South Africa petitioned the League of Nations for formal permission to incorporate South West Africa as its own colony. However, member nations were very displeased with South Africa's repressive methods and refused the request.

At the end of World War II, the League of Nations was dissolved and replaced by the United Nations. In 1946, South Africa asked the United Nations General Assembly for permission to formally annex South West Africa. The United Nations refused, citing South Africa's brutal treatment of people in the territory. South Africa challenged the UN's decision on the grounds that only the League of Nations had the right to question the manner in which South Africa governed South West Africa. Because the League was defunct, they held, any restrictions imposed by the League on South Africa's administration of South West Africa were null and void. In the 1950s, the United Nations petitioned the assistance of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to help resolve the dispute. After reviewing the case, the ICJ decided that South Africa should be required to relinquish control of South West Africa to the United Nations. Despite this ruling, South Africa refused to leave the territory.

Within South West Africa, resistance to South African rule was becoming increasingly organized. On April 19, 1960, a national liberation movement known as the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) was formed. SWAPO adopted a policy of armed resistance against South African rule and sent many of its fighters abroad for guerrilla warfare training. The United Nations General Assembly, weary of South Africa's uncooperative attitude, issued a declaration on October 27, 1966. This declaration stated that South Africa's presence in South West Africa was illegal and

that all South African forces should be withdrawn from the territory. Buoyed by the UN resolution, SWAPO launched a guerrilla campaign against South African troops after infiltrating South West Africa from secret bases in Zambia. On May 19, 1967, the United Nations established a special council to administer South West Africa, draft a constitution, hold free elections and create an independent government. Despite the UN declarations and SWAPO military campaign, South Africa refused to leave the territory. The UN's special council was denied entry into South West Africa on the grounds that the United Nations resolutions were invalid. On December 16, 1968, the United Nations General Assembly voted to change the territory's name to "Namibia."

In 1971, the International Court of Justice supported the UN's contention that South African occupation of Namibia was illegal. The ICJ ruling touched off a series of strikes and demonstrations against South African rule. These activities were brutally suppressed. Also, South African authorities launched a crackdown on SWAPO during late 1973. Leaders of SWAPO were arrested and imprisoned while suspected SWAPO activists and supporters were publicly flogged. In May 1975, Prime Minister Vorster of South Africa stated that although South Africa would be willing to discuss future Namibian independence with the UN, it would not negotiate with or recognize SWAPO as a legitimate representative of the Namibian people.

On May 17, 1977, a referendum was held on a new constitution that called for equal representation of Namibia's eleven major ethnic and racial groups. The constitution was enthusiastically endorsed by 95 percent of Namibia's white voters. However, SWAPO rejected the plan and called for a constitution that would guarantee black majority rule. In late 1977, UN Security Council representatives from England, Germany, France, Canada and the United States traveled to

Namibia in an attempt to broker a peaceful solution to the Namibian conflict. After a series of negotiations with South African and SWAPO officials, the representatives presented a proposal to the United Nations in April 1978. This proposal, approved by the United Nations as Security Council Resolution 435, called for the ending of armed conflict between South African troops and SWAPO guerrillas and the holding of free elections under UN supervision. Both sides agreed to the plan. However, South African officials stressed that they would not give up their claims to Walvis Bay or several islands off the Namibian coast.

The hopes for a peaceful resolution to the Namibian problem were shattered in December 1978 when South Africa held unilateral elections in Namibia without UN approval or supervision. SWAPO angrily boycotted the elections and denounced the results as null and void. The South African action led to a resumption of intense fighting between SWAPO and South Africa. In May 1979, South African troops crossed into Angola and Zambia and attacked suspected SWAPO bases. During 1980 and 1981, several UN attempts to bring South African and SWAPO officials to the bargaining table failed. Heavy fighting continued in 1981 and 1982 as South African troops and paramilitary police launched a series of raids into Angola. On December 8, 1982, representatives from Angola and South Africa met in Cape Verde to discuss a possible cease-fire and Namibian independence. South Africa stated that it would not withdraw its troops from Namibia until Cuban troops were removed from Angola. The Angolans countered by declaring that South Africa must stop its attacks on Angola and drastically reduce the number of South African troops in Namibia before the Cubans would be withdrawn. The talks ended in February 1983 without an agreement being reached.

On June 17, 1985, the South Africans installed a new "Transitional Government of National Unity"

(TGNU) in Namibia. This new government was composed of a 62-member National Assembly and a cabinet of eight ministers. However, this government was rejected as illegal by SWAPO officials and a vast majority of Namibians. In addition, the TGNU failed to gain the recognition of the international community.

In early 1986 the president of South Africa, P.W. Botha, announced that South Africa would abide by the UN Security Council Resolution 435 on the condition that all Cuban troops were withdrawn immediately from Angola. This proposal was rejected by SWAPO. Also, more violence erupted in Namibia during 1986. On November 30, a SWAPO rally in Katatura was broken up by police. One person was killed and 21 seriously wounded.

Hopes for a peaceful settlement in Namibia gained momentum in 1988. In May and June, the United States and the United Nations mediated a series of negotiations between South Africa, Angola and Cuba. All sides eventually agreed that all Cuban troops should be withdrawn from Angola and South African troops from Namibia by April 1, 1989. Also, the South African-installed Transitional Government of National Unity agreed to resign on February 28 to make way for a new government. United Nations peacekeeping troops and civilian advisors were sent to Namibia to monitor troop withdrawals and to ensure the holding of free elections. An election was held in November 1989 with SWAPO winning a majority of seats in a new National Assembly. Once in place, the National Assembly drafted and ratified a new constitution on February 9, 1990. Also, one week later, the assembly elected SWAPO's Sam Nujoma as Namibia's first president. Namibia became officially independent on March 21, 1990.

In 1994, South Africa transferred to Namibia control of the deep-water port, Walvis Bay, along with twelve offshore islands. The peaceful resolution of this territorial dispute,

which dated back to 1878, followed three years of bilateral negotiations.

Public Institutions

Namibia's constitution established the new nation as a multiparty democracy, with an elected President and bicameral legislature. President Sam Nujoma was elected by the constituent assembly in 1989 to his first 5-year term, and was reelected by popular vote in Namibia's first post-independence general election in 1994. The constitution was changed to allow Nujoma - as Namibia's first President - to run for a third term in the 1999 general election, and he was reelected by an overwhelming margin. Barring another constitutional amendment, he will serve until 2004.

The Prime Minister is appointed by the President, and serves as head of the Cabinet and Civil Service. Namibia has more than 40 Ministerial and Deputy Ministerial positions, as well as other officials with Cabinet rank. All Ministers and Deputy Ministers must be either voting or non-voting members of Parliament. One result is that there are very few "backbenchers," or ruling party parliamentarians without Cabinet responsibility. The Ombudsman's Office and the Directorate of Elections are independent entities.

The more powerful legislative house is the National Assembly. It is comprised of 72 members elected on the basis of proportional representation from among countrywide party slates and 6 nonvoting members appointed by the President. Members are elected for 5-year terms and their election is contemporaneous with the presidential election. The National Assembly has primary responsibility for drafting and passing legislation. In the 1999 general election, the ruling South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) won 55 of the 72 voting seats, and thus, has the two-thirds majority needed to pass constitutional amendments. Two opposition parties, the Congress of Democrats (COD) and the Democratic Turn-

halle Alliance (TA), won some 10% of the national vote and seven seats each. The United Democratic Front won two seats and the Monitor Action Group secured one seat. With support from the UDF, the DTA holds the position of "Leader of the Opposition."

The other legislative house is the National Council, comprising 26 members, two each chosen by regional councilors to represent each of Namibia's 13 regions. The regional councilors themselves are directly elected by popular vote, so the National Council was designed to be more reflective of popular sentiment at the local and regional level. The National Council was formed in 1992 and members are elected for 6-year terms, so those members elected in 1998 will stand for reelection in 2004. The National Council cannot vote down legislation, but can return bills to the National Assembly for review.

The judiciary is independent and has full authority to review laws for constitutionality. The Supreme Court hears constitutional cases and is an ad hoc panel of two High Court judges and the Chief Justice. The next highest judicial body, the High Court, is the primary appellate body. Generally, citizens have initial contact with the judicial branch through lower courts chaired by magistrates or, in communal land areas, the traditional courts headed by traditional authorities.

Arts, Science, and Education

With a culture combining German antecedents and deep African roots, Windhoek offers its residents a diverse variety of cultural experiences. The National Theater of Namibia presents concerts, plays, film festivals, and various special events. The National Symphony performs periodically as do other local groups, with occasional visits from performing artists from the southern African region and beyond. The Windhoek Youth Choir

performs several times a year, giving residents the opportunity to hear Western music in indigenous African rhythms. The Warehouse Theater provides informal and experimental entertainment in a coffeehouse setting.

Local private galleries feature exhibits by local and regional artists. The State Museum focuses on the natural sciences (stones and fossils) and indigenous cultures. The National Art Gallery, next to the National Theater in downtown Windhoek, frequently features special exhibits by local artists in addition to its permanent collection of Namibian art. The Namibian Crafts Center and adjoining Omba Gallery sell and exhibit Namibian handicrafts and artwork. The Alte Feste (or Old Fort) Museum, Windhoek's oldest building, was formerly the garrison for the first contingent of German colonial troops sent to Windhoek; it now houses a collection of historical artifacts and photographs.

In addition to the Alte Feste, several other German colonial buildings dating to the early 1900s add to the architectural interest of downtown Windhoek. The historic seat of government, known as the Tintenpalast [Ink Palace] now houses Namibia's Parliament. The historic Christuskirche church dominates a traffic circle in front of the Alte Feste.

Namibia's unique natural environment, featuring significant populations of endangered species (such as cheetah and black rhino) and the world's oldest desert, the Namib, engenders many interesting research initiatives. Several private American citizens are at the forefront of these research efforts, particularly in animal conservation and at an institute for study of the Namib Desert. The Cheetah Conservation Fund, also run by an American, has received international acclaim for its efforts to preserve Namibia's cheetah population.

Windhoek's adult educational opportunities are extensive and relatively inexpensive. The University of Namibia, established in 1992, offers degree and non-degree instruction in English in law, economics, management, arts, science, education, health sciences, and Namibian languages. The Polytechnic of Namibia focuses more on vocational and career based training, although it too is slated to become a degree-granting institution in the future. The College for the Arts offers instruction in art, music, dance, and performance for adults and children, as well as occasional student and faculty recitals. The Franco-Namibian Cultural Center offers instruction in French.

Upgrading the availability and quality of education for the non-white population is a priority of Namibia's Government. Qualified teachers, particularly those competent in English, are in extremely short supply. Schools, particularly in rural areas and the black townships, are overcrowded and lack instructional materials. In January 2001, children in the north of Namibia, as well as in some poorer areas of Windhoek, were turned away from schools because of a shortage of teachers.

Education is a major thrust of U.S. assistance to Namibia; the U.S. Peace Corps provides teachers and teacher trainers. Education is one of four focuses of USAID's program in Namibia. The Humanitarian Assistance Program of the DOD provides both financial and in-kind assistance for the improvement of primary and secondary education facilities in underprivileged population areas. USAID is helping the Ministry of Basic Education upgrade its staff capabilities and implement its policy reform agenda. Program achievements to date include the training of nearly 2,500 teachers in the use of new instructional and assessment materials and production of these materials in five local languages. USAID is now shifting its focus to improving the quality of educational systems and services provided to primary schools

and to fostering stronger community and parental involvement in the schools. USAID's education program is targeted at the northern areas of the country.

Commerce and Industry

Namibia's economy depends heavily on a few primary commodity exports, such as diamonds, uranium, copper, lead, zinc, grapes, livestock, and fish. A budding tourist sector has also emerged, capitalizing on Namibia's vast natural attractions. The economy remains highly integrated with the Republic of South Africa, with more than two-thirds of its imports coming from there. In addition, well developed telecommunications, power, and transport infrastructures link the two countries.

Namibia has a strikingly dual economy, with the modern market sector producing most of its wealth, but involving a small minority of the population, and a traditional subsistence sector that barely supports most of the population. Government economic policy is geared primarily toward creating jobs in value added manufacturing, to lessen the economy's dependence on resource extraction, and to address chronic unemployment. Government priorities focus on fisheries, mining, oil and gas, and export processing zone development. Another focus of the Government is development of the Port of Walvis Bay as the gateway to the region, exploiting the port's geographical advantage and the superior transport network linking it to the industrial regions of South Africa and the landlocked countries of southern Africa.

Namibia is a member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the region's primary regional integration organization. SADC has initiated a process to establish a free trade zone throughout southern Africa. Namibia also belongs to the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), along with

South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. South Africa collects the customs and excise duties for all members, and then distributes a share of the total customs collections, determined by an established formula, to other members. Namibia is a member of the Rand Common Monetary Area (CMA), along with South Africa, Lesotho, and Swaziland, and as such, the South African rand is legal tender throughout Namibia. The Namibian dollar, which is equal in value to the rand, is accepted only in Namibia.

Transportation

Automobiles

U.S. driver's licenses are valid in Namibia, and no other licenses (such as the AAA international driver's license) are needed. Unleaded and leaded gasoline and diesel fuel are always available in Windhoek. Unleaded gasoline is not available in some, remote areas of Namibia.

Roads in Windhoek are paved and kept in excellent condition. Main roads linking cities and towns are generally paved, undivided roads with one lane in each direction. Rural roads are largely gravel, although well maintained. Four wheel drive is not needed for most driving in Namibia, but the more adventurous may find it helpful for some rural driving conditions. Certain roads in Windhoek and elsewhere in Namibia flood briefly during the rainy season, which can make high ground clearance a useful feature.

Traffic moves on the left (non-American) side of the road, so cars made for local conditions are right-hand drive (steering wheels on the right side of the car). A variety of new and used right-hand-drive vehicles are available locally and from South Africa, Japan, or Europe. Toyota, Isuzu, Mazda, Nissan, Honda, Volkswagen, Chrysler, Mercedes, BMW, Audi, Ford, and Chevrolet have dealerships in Namibia. Many vehicles, such as most sport-utility vehicles, are more expensive than

comparable models in the U.S. Some vehicles, such as Mercedes and BMW, can be less expensive than U.S. models. Local vehicles are not built to U.S. specifications and are not suitable for bringing to the U.S.

Repair and maintenance services are roughly equivalent to those in the U.S. for vehicles purchased locally or from Europe and Japan. Authorized dealers are generally willing and able to perform maintenance and repair on corresponding U.S.-purchased models, although exceptions and problems sometimes occur. For U.S.-purchased models that do not have local dealer representatives, it may be necessary to provide garages with repair manuals and/or parts.

Third-party-liability insurance (covering the cost of repairs to the other vehicle if you are responsible for causing an accident) is required and available locally for about US\$120 per year. More comprehensive coverage is available from local or U.S.-based insurers.

Rental cars are readily available, but rather expensive compared to the U.S.

Local

Public transportation consists of municipal buses, private buses, and taxis. Municipal and private buses link the city with the Katutura and Khomasdal townships and run limited routes through Windhoek. Taxis can be hired at the various taxi stands throughout Windhoek, but some are of questionable roadworthiness and sometimes occupied by thieves in cahoots with the taxi driver. "Radio" taxis ordered by phone are safer than those hired on the street. Passengers must be sure to ask the rate when calling for the taxi and to confirm the price with the driver prior to entering the taxi.

Namibia has over 26,710 miles in the national road network, of which some 3,381 are paved. Roads are generally undivided and straight, open, and monotonous, with one lane in each direction and little shoulder. Four-wheel drive is not

necessary for most of Namibia's roads, but is helpful for exploring the bush, the desert, and the mountains.

Main roads from Windhoek to the principal towns are paved, as are the roads linking Windhoek with the South Africa, Angola, and Botswana borders. Secondary roads are gravel, but generally well graded and well maintained. Gravel roads can become rough or corrugated, especially toward the end of the rainy season. The coast has "salt" roads - a foundation of gypsum, which is soaked with brine and compacted to form a surface as hard and smooth as tarmac, but extremely slippery when moistened by the frequent coastal fogs.

Driving outside of Windhoek requires caution and prudence. The narrowness of roads and the lack of shoulders cause many head-on and rollover accidents. Gravel roads can be deceptively smooth, causing drivers to exceed safe speeds and resulting in loss of control of the vehicle. Curves on gravel roads should be approached and negotiated at reduced speeds, even in the absence of warning signs. Rental car rates in Namibia are high, in large part due to the frequency with which drivers severely damage rental vehicles on gravel roads. Animals (wildlife and livestock) are a serious danger on open roads, especially when curves or high grass limit visibility. Either hitting or swerving to avoid animals can cause serious accidents, so reduce speed to provide for a reasonable response time. Driving at night is strongly discouraged, as darkness compounds the hazards of driving in Namibia - few roads are lit, other vehicles often lack working lights, and animals become more active.

Regional

Namibia has 1,400 miles of rail lines; the main lines link Windhoek to Walvis Bay, Swakopmund, and Gobabis, Otavi to Grootfontein, Otjiwarango to Outjo, and Keetmanshoop to Luderitz. Few passenger trains operate, but poor quality passenger cars are often attached to

freight trains that move between these towns. A luxury train service runs between Windhoek and Swakopmund; it is a 24-hour trip each way with several tourist excursions en route. Buses and trucks serve centers that do not have rail links, but are unsafe and operate unreliably. Inexpensive and safe bus service operates between Windhoek and the Namibian coast, Cape Town, and Johannesburg.

Windhoek has two airports: Eros Airport is a small municipal airport on the south side of town offering commercial and charter service to various cities and towns in Namibia, as well as commuter service to Johannesburg, South Africa. Hosea Kutako International Airport is about 30 minutes east of Windhoek, and offers service to Frankfurt and Munich, Germany; London, England; Luanda, Angola; Gaborone and Maun, Botswana; Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe; Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa and various destinations within Namibia. Several airlines have daily flights to Johannesburg and Cape Town. From Johannesburg there are frequent flights to the U.S., Europe, Asia, South America, and other African countries. Lost baggage and baggage theft are recurring problems in Johannesburg, so travelers are advised to pack and safeguard their luggage accordingly. Cape Town offers service to a smaller number of international destinations. South African Airways has a code share agreement with Delta Airlines and has daily flights connecting Johannesburg to New York and Atlanta. Delta code share flights from Cape Town to Ft. Lauderdale and Atlanta are available, but less frequent. Lufthansa Airways has a code share agreement with United Airlines to fly daily from Johannesburg to New York and Washington, D.C. via Frankfurt, Germany.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Telephone service in Windhoek is generally reliable, although prob-

lems with service and billing are not infrequent. The telephone structure within Windhoek is in flux, with new technology, such as fiber optic lines and Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN), existing with old copper wiring, which fails in the rainy season due to deteriorating insulation. There is a substantial push to replace the aging lines with the newest technology, which gives hope for more a more reliable telecommunications infrastructure in the future.

Namibian phone service is compatible with U.S.-based callback services, which can substantially reduce the cost of calls to the U.S. or other international locations. Typical callback rates are currently around 75 cents per minute.

Cellular phones are widely available in Namibia, with coverage in all of the most important cities and tourist locations, although often not on the roads or in the towns in between. Cellular phones are in much more evident use in Namibia than in the US. and, in many instances serve as the primary means of communication. Cellular service is reliable and is complete with options for Callmail, International Roaming, Call Forwarding, Short Message Service, Call Barring, Call Wait/Call Hold, FAX Mail, and Call Line Identity, just to name a few.

The cost of cellular phone instruments - chiefly Motorola, Nokia, and Siemens - ranges from under \$100 to more than \$400 depending on features. Fees include a one-time connection fee of about US\$30 and monthly subscription fees of US\$15. A pay-as-you-go option, called Tango, does not require a connection fee or subscription service. Cell to cell calling charges are about 15 cents per minute, and there is no charge for receiving calls. Local cellular service covers 52 countries in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, but not the U.S. The instruments themselves also work in much of Europe, but require a separate service subscription. Instru-

ments purchased in the U.S. will generally not work in Namibia.

Windhoek has five Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to choose from for residential access. Users can dial into the ISPs using a standard analogue modem with a maximum speed of 56Kbps (average is around 36Kbps) or via an ISDN Basic Rate Access (BRA) line at 64Kbps. All ISPs provide Internet access, as well as e-mail services. For analogue ISP service, the monthly service charge is about US\$14, and the cost of a local call to the ISP is about two cents per minute. For ISDN service, the monthly service charge from the ISP is about US\$52, the monthly charge from the phone company for the ISDN line is approximately US\$25, and the one-time installation fee is about US\$40.

Mail

The local international mail service is reasonably effective and affordable, although delays and pilferage are recurring complaints. The average transit time for a letter from Namibia to the US. via local mail is one to two weeks.

Windhoek offers two express mail services: DHL and Federal Express, which have proven to be reliable and safe, although costly. For documents or parcels weighing less than one kilogram, the cost of sending items from Namibia to the US. is about US\$26. The cost for a one kilogram package is about US\$46, and the cost of larger packages goes up from there depending on weight.

Radio and TV

The Namibian Broadcasting Corporation ("NBC," although unaffiliated with the U.S. network with the same initials) broadcasts radio programs in all of Namibia's major languages, with a combination of news and music during the day and evenings, and mostly music at night. South African Radio, the BBC and VOA can be received with a shortwave radio and via satellite TV subscription.

NBC also runs the TV station, broadcasting English-language programs from 5:30 in the evening until 11 or 12 at night. A 45-minute news program features local news, sports and weather, and limited coverage of international events every day. Programming includes some popular British and American series, a few Australian and Canadian shows, and sports events. NBC broadcasts on the PAL system. A second commercial station, focusing on sports and entertainment and with some local content, is expected to begin broadcasting shortly.

To supplement free commercial broadcasting, a company called MNET provides several menus of cable TV programming, as well as Digital Satellite TV (DSTV) with some 40 channels. These channels include CNN, ESPN, MTV, VH1, Discovery Channel, National Geographic Channel, BBC Prime, BBC World, Sky News, Super Sport, Cartoon Network, and several movie channels. DSTV also offers numerous audio music and news channel received via television sets. The cost of obtaining DSTV is about US\$410 for equipment purchase and installation, plus monthly fees of about US\$40.

There are several video rental stores in town, as well as a limited selection of videos for sale. Videos are in PAL format, requiring a PAL or multi-system, video cassette player, and TV DVD disks are also available at many video outlets.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The Namibian (issued five times per week), the New Era (twice weekly), and the Observer (weekly), are English-language newspapers, with local coverage, as well as some regional and international coverage. Daily newspapers are also published in German and Afrikaans. English-language newspapers from South Africa and the U.K. are available at some larger bookstores, as are dated copies of the International Herald Tribune. Time, Newsweek, and The Economist are available on

local newsstands, as well as several other popular American, British, and South African magazines.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Windhoek has a small number of good private medical hospitals/clinics capable of providing emergency care and performing many routine procedures. In general, medical facilities in Windhoek are comparable in quality and breadth to those of a mid-size American city.

Doctors, both general practitioners and specialists, as well as dentists, generally have training and facilities that match U.S. standards. Medical care in Namibia often costs less than it does in the U.S., and doctors seldom impose the long waits in waiting rooms that are the norm with their American counterparts. Windhoek's small number of specialists cover a wide range of specialties, including dermatology, ENT, obstetrics/gynecology, internal medicine, ophthalmology, orthopedics, neurology, neurosurgery, psychiatry, pediatrics, plastic surgery, radiology, and dentistry.

Patients requiring more sophisticated care than that available in Windhoek are generally evacuated to South Africa. If warranted by the patient's condition, Windhoek-based "medevac" companies are available to evacuate patients by air, accompanied by appropriate doctors and equipment, on short notice.

Pharmacies in Windhoek are well stocked and professionally run. Some pharmacies are open 24 hours a day. Depending on the particular medication, costs may be more or less than in the U.S.

Community Health

Windhoek poses few health hazards to Americans. Sanitation is excellent, and tap water is potable in Windhoek and throughout most of Namibia. Windhoek is connected to

a central sewage system. A high-tech wastewater-treatment facility purifies water for residential use. Garbage is collected by municipal trash trucks once a week and disposed of in landfills. Milk, dairy products, meat, and produce are safe when purchased from reputable retailers. Industrial and automobile pollution is not a problem in Windhoek. The main residential pests are ants. Some areas of Windhoek have large numbers of mosquitoes during the rainy season, but as Windhoek is in a non-malarial zone, they are a nuisance more than a health hazard.

Preventive Measures

The chief ailments afflicting Americans in Windhoek are allergies and respiratory problems. Pollen and dust, some largely unique to Namibia, can cause problems even for those who have not experienced allergies or respiratory problems elsewhere.

Namibia's high altitude can cause fatigue, especially for newcomers. Namibia's extreme dryness can cause uncomfortably dry skin and chapped lips. Frequent applications of skin lotions and lip balm help. Windhoek's windy climate kicks up dust storms that can complicate medical conditions and make contact lenses uncomfortable. Lens-wearers often find they use more lubricating fluids in Namibia, and some find short-term disposable lenses to be most comfortable.

Namibia has one of the world's highest rates of HIV infection and AIDS. Most segments of the rural and disadvantaged urban population suffer from a lack of adequate sanitation and public health facilities. Incidences of tuberculosis, enteric diseases, and hepatitis are high among this group. Although HIV/AIDS testing of prospective employees is prohibited by Namibian law, it is prudent to screen prospective domestic employees for other health problems.

Namibia's strong sun, high altitude, and clear skies have given it one of

the world's highest incidences of skin cancer. If spending any time outdoors, it is essential to use common-sense precautions, such as sun block (SPF 15 or higher), hats, and skin-covering clothing. In reflection of the seriousness of this risk, the Windhoek International School does not allow children to play outside unless they are wearing broad-brimmed hats.

Namibia has a variety of venomous snakes, scorpions, and spiders, but bites or stings from these are rare. Namibia also has rabies, but the risk of contracting rabies is low if one avoids undue contact with wild animals. Occasionally, tourists are injured or killed in game reserves by wild animals. It is essential that visitors to game reserves remain in their vehicles at all times, and avoid coming too close to or aggravating the wildlife.

Food items purchased from reputable stores require no special precautions or handling. Those susceptible to stomach ailments should thoroughly clean and disinfect unpeeled produce.

Although malaria does not exist in Windhoek, it does in many northern and northeastern areas of Namibia, including the Etosha National Park. Visitors to those areas should begin taking antimalarial medication at least 1 week prior to travel and should take sensible precautions against mosquito bites, such as using insect repellent, skin-covering clothing, and mosquito netting.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

A passport and visa are normally required. Bearers of U.S. passports who plan to visit Namibia for tourism for less than ninety (90) days can obtain visas at the port of entry and do not need visas prior to entering the country. Travelers coming for work, whether paid or voluntary,

must obtain their visas prior to entering Namibia. Travelers should obtain the latest information from the Embassy of Namibia at 1605 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009, telephone (202) 986-0540, or from the Permanent Mission of Namibia to the U.N. at 135 W. 36th St., New York, NY 10016, telephone (212) 685-2003, fax (212) 685-1561. Overseas, inquiries should be made at the nearest Namibian embassy.

Air Namibia and LTU Airlines have direct flights to Windhoek from several European cities. Most flights from South Africa to Windhoek arrive at Hosea Kutako International Airport, approximately 30 minutes outside of Windhoek. Some flights, on smaller commuter planes, land at Eros Airport, located on the outskirts of the city. While Eros is a more convenient airport, the size of the planes may limit how much luggage can accompany the traveler.

Baggage theft and pilferage is a recurring problem at Johannesburg International Airport, so travelers should pack valuables and necessities in their carry-on luggage and safeguard their checked luggage as much as possible.

U.S. citizens living in or visiting Namibia are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Windhoek and obtain updated information on travel and security within Namibia. The U.S. Embassy is located at 14 Lossen Street, Ausspannplatz, Windhoek, telephone (264-61) 22-1061, fax (264-61) 22-9792. The mailing address is Private Bag 12029, Windhoek, Namibia.

Pets

Importation permits are required for all animals entering Namibia. Cats and dogs with valid rabies shots are not subject to quarantine. Birds are subject to a 30-day quarantine. The application process for importation permits requires sending documents back and forth between the pet owner and the

Namibian Ministry of Agriculture, Water, and Rural Development's State Veterinarian office, so it is recommended that you start the process at least 2 months ahead of arrival. The State Veterinarian office issues a permit form, which must be filled out by the pet's own veterinarian. A current rabies shot is required, and must have been administered not less than 30 days and not more than 1 year prior to the pet's arrival in Namibia. Once completed by your veterinarian, the permit is returned for final processing and the permit is then issued and returned to the pet owner. The permit must accompany the pet during shipment. Certain animals, especially certain bird species, require an additional permit, so please allow 2 additional weeks if bringing a bird to Namibia. After arrival, dogs and cats will be immediately released to the custody of the owner on the understanding that the pet will be brought to the State Veterinarian in town for final health approval. The State Veterinarian requires notification of arrival of incoming animals.

Firearms and Ammunition

Importation of ammunition and firearms, except handguns, for sporting purposes is possible with the Government of Namibia licensing. Licensing of the item must be obtained from the Namibian Police. Namibia prohibits the importation of handguns. Age 18 is the legal hunting age in Namibia.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

Namibia's currency is the Namibia dollar. It is based on the decimal system, with 100 cents equaling 1 dollar. The currency is tied to the South African rand, which has a floating rate of exchange, and as of January 2001 the exchange rate was N\$7.90 = US\$1. The Namibia dollar is equal in value to the South African rand. The rand is legal tender in Namibia, but Namibian dollars are valid only in Namibia and are not accepted in South Africa.

Travelers to Namibia may wish to obtain a small amount of rand prior to their departure for Namibia or when transiting South Africa, as rand is easier to obtain internationally and accepted throughout Namibia. Upon arrival in Windhoek, U.S. dollars can be converted at airport currency exchange counters at reasonable exchange rates.

Namibia recently introduced a Value Added Tax. Third-party-liability insurance is required for all motor vehicles. This insurance is available locally for approximately US\$120 per year.

Traveler's checks can be used at hotels and banks, and major credit cards are accepted at most commercial establishments. Many ATM machines in Namibia accept U.S. ATM cards that are members of international syndicates (Cirrus, Plus, Honor, Interlink), issuing Namibian dollars at a reasonable exchange rate. The daily ATM maximum withdrawal is currently N\$1,500 (approximately US\$200) at most machines.

Namibia uses the metric system of weights and measures.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Mar. 21 | Independence Day |
| Mar. (2nd Mon) | Commonwealth Day* |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1 | Worker's Day |
| May 4 | Cassingda Day |
| May/June | Ascension Day* |
| May 25 | Africa Day |
| Aug. 26 | Heroes' Day |
| Dec. 10 | Human Rights Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| Dec. 26 | Family Day |
| *variable | |

RECOMMENDED READING

.These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on Namibia. In addition to the titles listed, a variety of travel guides on Namibia and neighboring countries is available at most bookstores and online booksellers.

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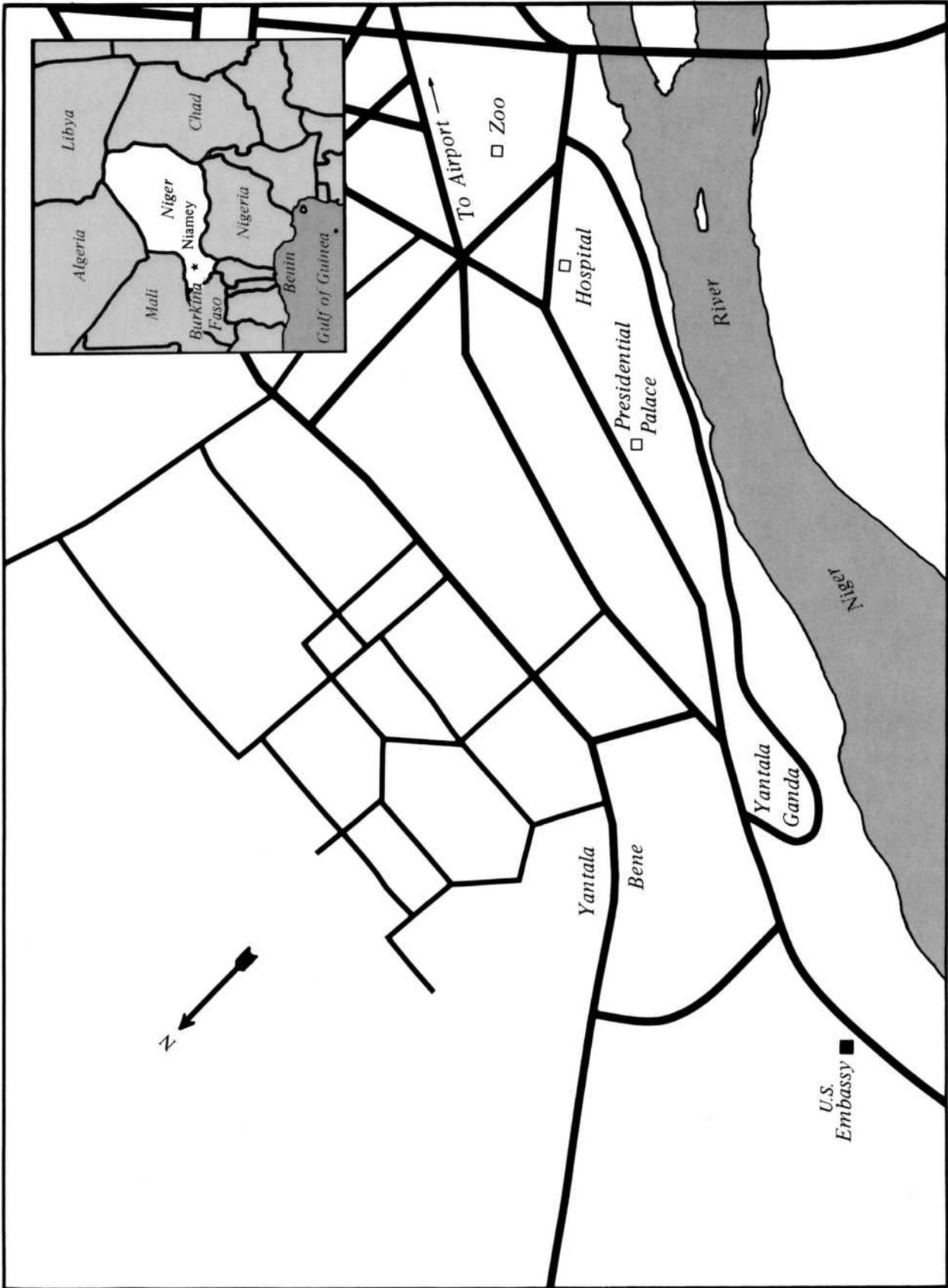
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Niamey, Niger

NIGER

Republic of Niger

Major City:

Niamey

Other Cities:

Agadez, Maradi, Tahoua, Zinder

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated January 1995. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Bienvenue à Niamey! You'll soon see that Niamey is one of the most exotic capitals in Africa. Camels are spotted daily, carrying a jaunty rider, bundles of firewood, or piles of straw matting. The inhabitants are diverse—coastal West Africans, Tuaregs (the famed blue men of the desert), Arab traders, Hausa, Djerma, Songhai and Peuls—and all can be seen as you drive a short distance. Around town, traffic is light by West African standards. Most newcomers are surprised by how green the city and countryside can become in the rainy season. In the evening, you can pull up a seat on the terrace of the Grand Hotel overlooking the river, sip a cool drink,

and watch the sun sink colorfully below the horizon. Getting out of the city is easy too, and there are ample opportunities for day trips: picnicking along the Niger River; looking for giraffes just outside of town; playing on the sand dunes; or camping at the wildlife preserve—home to elephants, lions, buffalo, antelope, and exotic birds—less than three hours away.

MAJOR CITY

Niamey

Niamey, the capital and principal city of Niger, is in the southwest corner of the country on the banks of the Niger River. Since its selection as capital in 1925, its population has grown from 8,000 to about 587,000. The city's 4,000 Europeans, mostly French, are almost all involved in providing some kind of development assistance. Niamey covers 15.5 square kilometers (six square miles) and forms a triangle that borders the river. An abundance of trees gives the city a greenness that contrasts with the general aridity of the surrounding countryside.

Food

Local markets and grocery stores offer a good variety of seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables and imported canned goods and dairy products. Some fresh fruits and vegetables are imported, but most are grown locally, and prices for all imported goods are generally high. Beer, Coca-Cola, Sprite, Fanta, Youki (tonic), and Bulvit (soda water) are bottled locally, and availability is consistent.

Local beef, veal, pork, and lamb are plentiful; chickens, although tougher than those sold in the U.S., are tastier. A local white fish called "capitaine", a variety of Nile perch found in the Niger River, is plentiful and delicious. Bakeries sell French-style baguettes, delicious croissants, and some pastries, although the variety is limited and quality varies.

Clothing

Bring an ample supply of clothing to Niamey, as frequent washing and strong sunlight take a heavy toll. Shoes and sneakers tend to wear out quickly. Clothing selections should be made bearing in mind the informal dress standards of the community, the hot climate, and seasonal variations. Although dry cleaning is available, the quality of

service and the high cost limit its use, therefore, washable fabrics are preferable. Cotton is a good choice, as it will keep you cooler than synthetics. Despite fairly high daytime temperatures, during the cool season (November-February) evening temperatures sometimes drop low enough to require sweaters or lightweight jackets. Bring all sports clothes and gear with you, since the local supply is limited and expensive.

Women: A supply of washable summer clothing is recommended as is a good sun hat. Stockings are rarely worn, even during the cool season. Because sand is found virtually everywhere, closed shoes are highly recommended, however, sandals are frequently worn by both women and men. Shorts, jeans, and slacks are worn frequently by American and European women when socializing in the community. More modest attire (e.g., skirts or dresses that cover the knee, loose-fitting slacks, shirts that aren't too bare or form-fitting) is more culturally-appropriate and, therefore, recommended for around town.

Local tailors do satisfactory work on simple dresses, men's shirts, and safari-type suits as well as exceptional decorative embroidery. A variety of imported and local fabric is available, the latter being particularly popular for casual clothing.

Children: A generous supply of summer clothing is suggested. Smaller children may require several changes of clothing each day because of heat and dirt. Young boys tend to wear shorts rather than long pants most of the year, but jeans are popular as well. Plastic sandals are sold at reasonable prices, and small children wear them often.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: A few American-brand cosmetics and hair preparations are available locally but are expensive. Bring a supply of favorite soaps,

shampoos, toiletries, sunscreen, vitamins, and dry skin lotions which are highly-recommended.

Religious Activities

Most Nigeriens are Muslims, but there is a Roman Catholic church that holds services in French. In addition, there is an International Christian Fellowship, and English Protestant, English/French International Protestant, and French Assemblies of God worships. There are no scheduled Jewish services.

Education

Established in 1982, the American School of Niamey (ASN) is an independent coeducational day school offering a pre-kindergarten through ninth grade program. Correspondence study courses for high-school students have been made available from the U.S. upon request. The school year consists of two semesters that begin in late August and end in early June. The school is governed by a seven-member board of directors, six being elected by the ASN Association for one-year terms, and the seventh appointed by the U.S. Ambassador. Membership in the ASN Association is automatically given to the parents and guardians of students.

The curriculum is similar to those of U.S. public schools. Instruction is in English, but all grades receive significant French language instruction. In addition to language arts, reading, math, science, and social studies, the curriculum includes music, art, physical education, computers, and Nigerien studies. English as a second language is provided to students who are not already proficient. Standardized achievement tests are administered annually. ASN is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and maintains membership in the Association of International Schools in Africa. Most of the teachers are Americans, but there are British, Dutch, German, French, Canadian and Senegalese teachers as well.

The ASN facilities are some of the best in Africa. In September 1985, ASN moved into its new buildings located on U.S. government-owned property. The facility consists of two single-story, air-conditioned buildings with six classrooms, a science lab, and a multi-purpose room. An administration building houses the offices, a library, and a computer lab. Another building houses a music/art room, a storage room, and large rooms for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. The playground area includes softball and soccer fields, basketball and volleyball courts, and a swimming pool.

Parents of children wishing to enroll in the ASN should contact the school in advance. You may call the school at the following numbers: phone (227) 72-39-42, fax (227) 72-34-57.

The French lycée, *La Fontaine*, is subsidized by the French Ministry of Cooperation and staffed by competent French teachers. Some American students attend but no special provisions are made for non-French speakers. Several French language day care facilities are available for pre-school aged children.

Numerous extra-curricular activities such as, piano, modern ballet, judo, folk dancing, scouting, swimming, and French classes are available for children. Classes in horseback riding and jumping for beginners as well as advanced riders are held at local riding clubs. Private tennis lessons are also available.

Sports

Softball is very popular, and weekly games are held every Saturday afternoon. American Embassies throughout West Africa host several tournaments during the year. These tournaments provide great pleasure for players and supporters alike, giving them the opportunity to travel to another country taking advantage of group refires. Pickup basketball games are also scheduled



Camel carrying woven millet in Niamey, Niger

Courtesy of Carolyn Fischer

twice a week. Both men and women participate in all sports.

People seriously interested in horseback riding might want to consider purchasing a horse locally; prices are usually reasonable. The riding style is European, and riders must provide their own tack. Other sporting opportunities include the Niamey golf club at Rio Bravo which has an 18-hole course and sand "browns"; the "Hash House Harriers" which is a weekly international running club and; a health and fitness club at the Stadium where regular aerobics classes are held.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Though no real change of climate and scenery can be found within a day's drive of Niamey, some interesting excursions can be made by car or plane. Docile and magnificent, the last herd of giraffes in West Africa

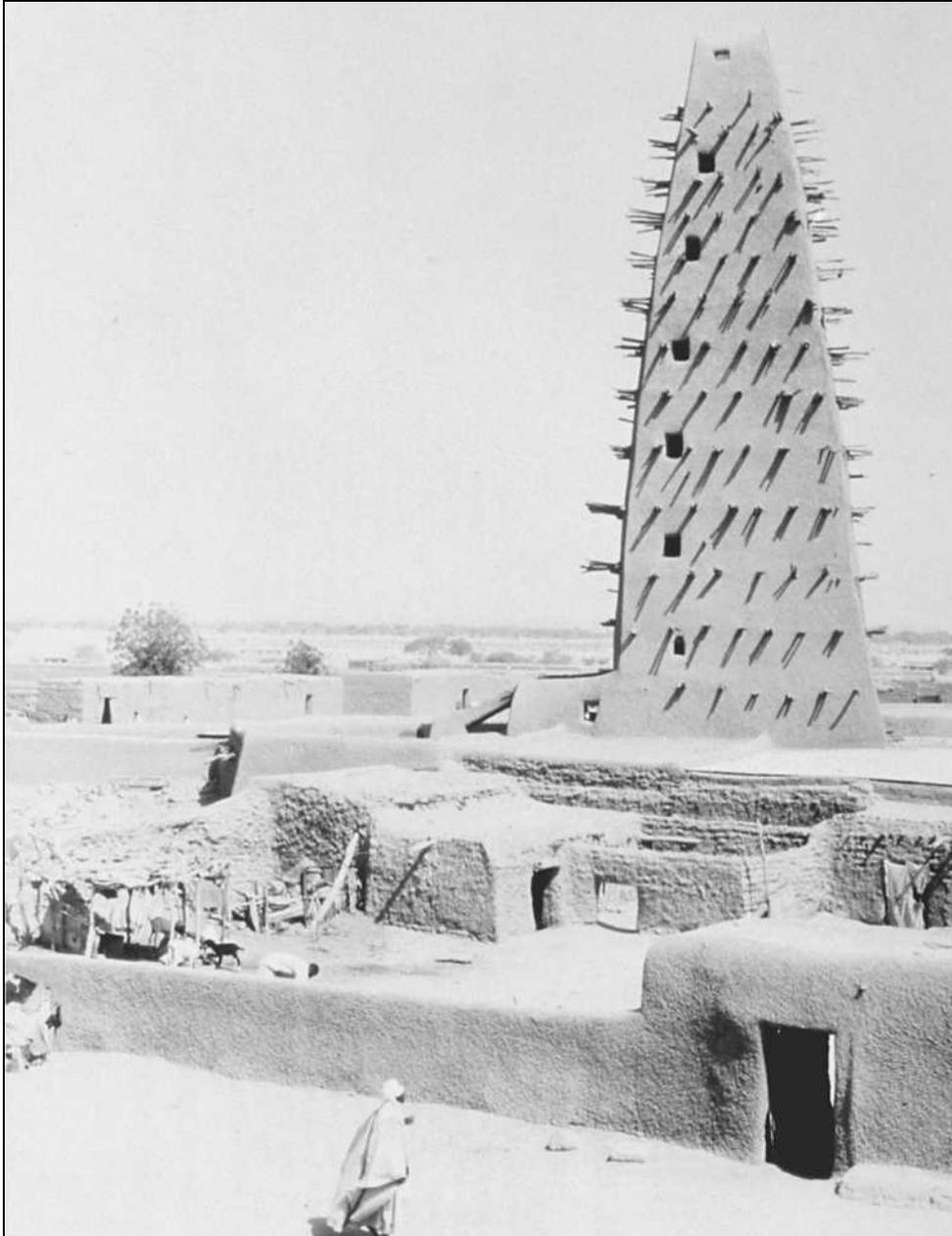
can be found just outside of Niamey, about a 45-minute drive away. Since they roam a vast area, it is recommended that you hire one of the inexpensive registered guides to help you locate them. This trip is one of the most popular ways to spend a weekend morning.

Park "W" is a wildlife preserve located in the extreme southwest part of Niger, flanked by Burkina Faso and Benin. At the edge of the park is a good hotel open all year, or if you prefer to camp, sleeping bags and blankets are available. The best time to visit Park "W" is during the cooler season (from November to March) when elephants, gazelles, baboons, water buck, an occasional lion, and other animals visit the water holes along the river. The preserve can be reached by car in about two hours, but most people stay overnight to be at the water holes by early light. At nearby Arly and Penjari Parks are camps which provide

sleeping accommodations and meals if prior arrangements are made in Niamey.

The Niamey Museum is considered one of the best in West Africa. Original and attractive in conception, it combines traditional exhibits with village reproductions of the major Nigerien ethnic groups. There are working artisans on the grounds whose products can be bought in the Museum gift shop. A small zoo, housing animals native to Niger, is also located at the Museum.

Fishing is possible in the Niger River, but the danger of many serious diseases prevents most people from swimming and water skiing. For more than half of the year, the Niger River is high enough for boating and there is enough wind for sailing. Some families rent a "concession" along the river for a weekend getaway and change of scenery. Bird-watching is also a popular



Minaret in Agadez, Niger

Courtesy of United Nations

activity in Niamey. Hunting is banned in Niger, but is permitted in Burkina Faso.

Entertainment

Air-conditioned and open-air movie theaters show European (mainly French), American, and Indian

films. Non-French films are dubbed in French.

The Franco-Nigerien Cultural Center has several activities a week, including films and art exhibits as well as occasional folk music, dancing, and performances by traveling theater troupes. The USIS Cultural

Center occasionally sponsors programs of interest to the American community.

Niamey has restaurants serving West African, French, Italian, Vietnamese, Russian, Chinese, and Lebanese cuisine as well as some snack bars specializing in brochettes or

hamburgers and fries. Pizza is available, although a bit different than the familiar American-style. Niamey has several lively discotheques featuring a variety of danceable music.

Social Activities

Among travelers, social life is informal and relaxed. Although Niger is a Muslim country, there are no special limitations for the foreign community regarding food or drink. As for dress, although not strictly enforced, women are expected to dress modestly. Opportunities in Niamey to meet and associate with diverse people are limited only by the interest and initiative of the individual and, in many cases, by the ability and willingness to speak French.

Apart from those already mentioned, a variety of clubs and activities are also available, including the American Women's Club of Niamey (which welcomes members of all nationalities) and sponsors a variety of events throughout the year and; the Rotary International and Lion's Club which are active in Niamey and open to both men and women of all nationalities (bring a letter of introduction from your home club) and; there is an international chorus and ensemble that rehearses and performs regularly.

OTHER CITIES

AGADEZ (also spelled Agadès) is situated in the central region of Niger, 460 miles northeast of the capital. Agadez is an ancient city, dating to the 15th century. It has a limited tourist trade but offers magnificent sights. It also is a marketplace for livestock, vegetables, and grain. The population is estimated to be 50,200, although it rises during the cool, dry season.

MARADI is a city of approximately 113,000 located in south Niger, near the border with Nigeria. The city was destroyed by floods in 1945, but

rebuilt on higher ground. It is on the main road connecting Niamey with Zinder. A major road also connects it with Kano, Nigeria. Maradi is the administrative and commercial center for an agricultural region specializing in peanut growing and goat raising. Peanut and cotton-processing are the primary industries. The city has a technical college and a center for research on poultry and goat breeding.

TAHOUA, a largely traditional town of about 51,600 (2000 est.), is about 225 miles northeast of Niamey. It is a farming community and trade center frequented by tribes of Tuareg and Fulani nomads. The Tuareg number about 300,000, and are unique because men are veiled and women are unveiled. Descent and inheritance are gained through the female line. Gypsum and phosphate are mined near Tahoua, and a teaching training school is located in the city.

ZINDER is located in southwest Niger, near the border of Nigeria. The city is an administrative center and Niger's second largest city. It is situated on the old trans-Saharan caravan route that connected northern Nigeria with the African coast as early as the 11th century. Zinder's history dates back to the 16th century, when the walled town was the capital of the Muslim state ruled by the Bornu, and remained that way until it was conquered by the French in 1899. The town grew rapidly after 1920 when nomads settled in the area, and served as the capital of the French Niger Colony from 1922 to 1926. Parts of the old walled city and the 19th-century palace of the ruler of Zinder still stand. Today, Zinder is a trade center for agriculture; grains and peanuts are grown and cattle and sheep are raised. It also manufactures millet, flour, beverages, and tanned goods. The population is approximately 120,900.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Niger covers 1,268,550 square kilometers (490,000 square miles) and is larger than Texas and California combined. Landlocked, it is bordered by seven countries—Algeria and Libya to the north, Chad to the east, Nigeria and Benin to the south, Burkina Faso to the southwest, and Mali to the west. Niger is in the heart of the Sahel, the transitional zone between the tropical West African coast and the Sahara Desert. Northern Niger is part of the Sahara, with vast expanses of rocky and sandy wilderness broken only by occasional oases. "Sahel" actually means border in Arabic. From north-central Niger to its northeast corner are the Air and Djado mountains with peaks rising to 1,850 meters (6,000 feet) while partially arable savannah is found south of the 15th parallel. Niger's capital city, Niamey, sits next to the Niger River, the 12th longest in the world and the third largest river in Africa, which flows through much of West Africa.

Niamey's climate varies with distinct seasons. April and May are the hottest months, with noontime temperatures often rising above 48°C (118°F) in the shade. Direct sunlight is intense during this period, and at night temperatures remain above 20°C (80°F). In June, the first rains come to the usually parched landscape and with them the planting of millet and sorghum, the major food crops. Niamey gets on average 55.8 centimeters (22 inches) of rainfall between May and September, normally in short torrential downpours preceded by high winds and dust or sandstorms. At this time, the surrounding countryside takes on a verdant hue as the crops and the native grasses begin to grow. The rainy season is followed by a short period of hot, humid

weather during October during which temperatures range between 15°C (60°F) and 45°C (112°F).

From November to March, the weather is dry and pleasant. During this season, clear days are interspersed with hazy, overcast skies caused by the *harmattan*—a hot, dry wind carrying dust from the Sahara. Normally, the winds stay at high altitudes, creating slightly overcast skies; the *harmattan*, however, occasionally causes localized dust storms.

Population

An estimated 10.3 million people live in Niger. The Hausa, whose territory extends into northern Nigeria, predominate in the central portion of the country and are about 56 percent of Niger's population. They are mainly traders and farmers. The Djerma, who are approximately 22 percent of the population, are traditionally farmers. They are an ethnic subgroup of the Songhai people, whose great kingdom in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries embraced what is now eastern Mali and western Niger. Because Niger's capital city is in their homeland, the Djerma influence has been strong in the central government, especially since independence. The Fulanis (called Peuls in French) and Tuar-egs, who are typically nomadic or semi-nomadic herdsman, and the Beri-Beri (also known as Kanouri) who are found in the Lake Chad region, are the next largest population groups.

About 90 percent of Nigeriens live within 161 kilometers (100 miles) of the country's southern border. Most live in rural areas away from good roads and more than 75 percent are subsistence farmers who grow millet and sorghum for food and peanuts, cotton, and cowpeas as cash crops.

Although French is the official and administrative language, Hausa is more widely spoken throughout the country. English is a required language in secondary schools, and

some Nigeriens speak English functionally well. However, French is necessary for shopping, social life, and most professional contacts and Djerma, even the most basic of greetings, goes a long way in the Niamey markets.

The majority of Nigeriens are Muslim and religion is a dominant force in their daily lives. A sense of tradition, fatalism, strong family connections, consideration, and tolerance for others characterize the typical Nigerien's approach to the world. Polygamy is widely practiced and families are generally large. Niger's population is growing at about 3 percent a year.

Government

After adoption of a new constitution, which established the Third Republic in December 1992, Niger conducted its first multiparty presidential and legislative elections in 1993. A coalition of eight parties joined to elect Mahamane Ousmane as President. International observers judged both elections to be free and fair. There are two major coalitions, each composed of several parties, which share executive and legislative power.

In January 1996, Colonel Ibrahim Bare Mainassara overthrew the government in a bloodless coup. Within six months, his regime drafted a new constitution that provided for a stronger presidency. It was approved in a national referendum in May 1996.

In 1999, Niger returned to a democratic government. Mamadou Tandja was elected president. His prime minister is Hama Amadou.

The Government maintains and promotes an open economic system and has a free-trade policy. Niger welcomes foreign investment. Several industrial enterprises are parastatals wholly- or partially-owned by the government. The government has made some headway in restruc-

turing but would like to move much further toward privatization.

One of the most important roles of the Government is to attract investment to help stimulate economic growth. While donor organizations have provided most of the capital budget in the past, today, private sector financing is increasingly sought, especially in the mining sector.

There are numerous development projects funded by multilateral and bilateral donors, including the World Bank and The African Development Bank, all the United Nations agencies, such as UNDP and UNICEF, as well as foreign assistance from the U.S., France, the European Economic Community (EEC), Germany, and other countries. This money was suspended, however, following a coup in 1999. A loan for \$35 million was approved in 2000 by the World Bank to aid economic reforms.

Commerce and Industry

Niger's industrial sector is a small component of the national economy. An enclave uranium industry generates substantial employment and revenue for the government, but it has few linkages with the rest of the economy. Modern production facilities are concentrated in Niamey and in Arlit, the uranium-producing area. State-owned or recently privatized manufacturing companies produce cloth, dairy products, soaps, perfumes, biscuits, and beer. The largest industrial entity is the electric power supply public utility. Talented artisans produce mats, baskets, pottery goods, furniture, farm tools, leather goods, and are especially known for their silver jewelry. Artisanal production takes place throughout the country.

Trade, especially long-distance trade, is the traditional route to wealth in Niger. Trading opportunities today are in the importation of manufactured goods from Nigeria,

Ivory Coast, Europe, and Asia and in the exportation of cloth, unprocessed agricultural products, and livestock to neighboring countries. Uranium is purchased by foreign corporations, especially French, participating in the mining operation.

Retail trade in Niamey is concentrated in two public markets, private shops in the central section of town, and shops in the residential areas. Fresh food products are sold at retail at a public, open-air market called the *Petit Marché* (Little Market). Other consumer goods are sold at an enclosed market, the *Grand Marché* (Big Market), where private traders rent stalls or shops. A wide variety of products, from television sets to matches, are sold under the shade trees in central Niamey. Markets outside Niamey are generally held weekly and are places where local agricultural products and livestock products are exchanged for food, clothing, household supplies, and cash.

About 90 percent of Niger's population earns its living in agricultural pursuits. Productivity and incomes are low, even by African standards, and most households can afford only basic needs. The market for more expensive consumer goods is limited to the higher-salaried civil servants, a small class of Nigerien entrepreneurs, and the foreign community residents concentrated in Niamey. The high prices of most imported consumer goods, reflecting high transportation costs and import duties, put them out of reach for most Nigerien households.

Transportation

Local

Private taxis in Niamey are numerous and inexpensive. There is also a long-distance bus system that services main routes which is only used by a few Americans.

Regional

International flights are available to capitals of neighboring francophone countries and to Europe. Niamey is a six-hour flight from Paris. Currently, the major foreign flag airlines servicing Niamey are Air Afrique, Air France, Royal Air Maroc, and Ethiopian Airlines. Air travel is expensive in Africa—a ticket from Niamey to Paris costs about 50 percent more than a ticket from Paris to New York. There is currently no scheduled local air service to Niger's major cities.

Niger's road network, totaling approximately 10,000 kilometers, is still rudimentary and the country has about 2,500 kilometers of paved inter-urban roads. A paved road extends west-east from Tillabéri through Niamey to Nguigmi, near Lake Chad. A second major paved road links Niamey through Agadez to the uranium mining region of Arlit. Stretches of washboard surfaces alternate with drifted sand and dirt, and some sections are inaccessible during part of the rainy season. Niamey itself has paved roads linking sections of the city, although, most houses are serviced by dirt roads.

Communications

Telephone, Fax, and Telegraph

Niamey has adequate telephone, telegraph, and fax facilities. Direct-dial is possible from Niamey to Europe, the U.S., and other parts of Africa (excluding 800 numbers and collect calls), but is very expensive. A direct-dial call from the U.S. to Niger is less than half the cost of a call the other way around. Individuals coming to Niamey should explore U.S. dial-back telephone services.

Radio and TV

Radio Niger (ORTN) broadcasts in French and in local languages (primarily Hausa and Djerma) from morning to night on medium and shortwave channels. Voice of Amer-

ica (VOA) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reception is also good. There are private stations and Radio France International (RFI) on FM that broadcast in French. Battery-operated radios may be used, but others must be able to operate on 220v current or have a step-down transformer.

The Nigerien Government operates a single-channel national TV network seven evenings a week. Most of the programs are educational and are broadcast in the various languages of the country. Each day's programming normally includes one film or sports event of French origin. U.S.-manufactured TV sets will not receive broadcasts from the Niger TV station. Niger's color TV system is SECAM D/K. (Note: It is **not** the SECAM L system which is the system used in France).

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The government publishes a daily newspaper, *Le Sahel*, in French, which covers selected local, African, and international news. There are also six additional private newspapers, some published daily and others weekly. Most well-known international periodicals can be bought in Niamey, including *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Le Monde*, *Le Point*, *Jeune Afrique*, *The Economist*, and the *International Herald Tribune*.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

A small French clinic, the Gamkalle Clinic, is used for emergency care, hospitalizations, consultation and x-rays. Specialists in Niamey are used occasionally.

Dental care in Niamey is minimal. Basic, uncomplicated care is available from a dentist at the Gamkalle Clinic (who is usually a French citizen performing the service in lieu of military duty and transfers every 15 months) or from a private

dental office. Have a thorough dental exam and any necessary work completed prior to arrival.

Community Health

Infectious diseases pose serious health hazards in Niger, malaria being one of the most threatening. Chloroquine-resistant malaria prevails, and you must always be on the preventive alert. Current recommended chemical prophylaxis calls for weekly doses of Mefloquine, weekly doses of Chloroquine (Aralen) combined with daily doses of Paludrine, or daily doses of Doxycycline. Paludrine, although currently not available in the U.S., is available at post. Meningitis is seasonally reported and vaccination is recommended every three years.

Poor hygiene detrimentally impacts health as intestinal parasites (amoeba and giardia) abound. Meticulous treatment of water and fresh produce is required to avoid intestinal diseases. Respiratory infections, allergies, skin infections, and fatigue are common problems. Niger has a harsh environment and good health requires, at the very minimum, a conscientious effort and commitment on everyone's part.

Preventive Measures

The following immunizations are required before leaving for Niamey: yellow fever, typhoid, polio, meningitis, and hepatitis A and B. You should also have annual tuberculin skin tests. Malaria suppressants are a necessity and should be started at least two weeks before you arrive, continued for the duration of your tour, during any travel, and for four weeks after final departure. Bring a good first-aid kit as well as over-the-counter drug supplies, sun screen, insect repellent, and an ample supply of prescription drugs. Mosquito netting for beds is recommended.

Niamey has a water treatment plant, but it is ineffective. Water should be filtered first and then boiled for five minutes. Soak

unpeelable raw fruits and vegetables in a bleach solution and then rinse with potable water before eating. All local meats should be well-cooked (*bien cuit* in French).

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

A visa is required. Travelers should obtain the latest information on customs and entry requirements from the Embassy of the Republic of Niger, 2204 R Street, N.W., Washington D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 483-4224. Overseas inquiries should be made at the nearest Nigerien embassy or consulate.

Travel in the northern and far eastern areas of Niger is dangerous and should only be undertaken by air or protected convoy. Despite the peace agreement between the government of Niger and the Tuareg rebel groups, there is a continuing threat of sporadic armed conflict and violent banditry. U.S. Government personnel and contractors wishing to travel above a line connecting (West to East) the communities of Tera, Tillaberi, Ouallam, Filingue, Tahoua, Keita, Bouza, Dakoro, Tanout, and Nguigmi must receive permission from the U.S. Ambassador through the Embassy's Regional Security Office. Areas in Niger's far east are also prone to sporadic violence.

Tourists are free to take pictures anywhere in Niger, except near military installations, radio and television stations, the Presidency Building, and the airport.

Pets should have a valid rabies certificate (within one year, but before 30 days, of departure for post) and a certificate of good health dated within 15 days of arrival. Be sure to check with the airline you are using since rules may vary.

The local currency is the CFA (Communauté Financière Africaine) franc,

which is pegged to the euro at the rate of 655.957:1. The same currency is used throughout Francophone West Africa. Banks with local branches in Niamey include the Bank of Africa (BAO) and the International Bank of West Africa (BIAO).

Weights and measures in Niger are based on the metric system. Temperatures are reported in Celsius. Niamey is six standard time zones ahead of E.S.T. (G.M.T. plus one).

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Niamey on Rue Des Ambassades, and to obtain updated information on travel and security in Niger. The mailing address is B.P. 11201. The telephone numbers are (227) 72-26-61 through 72-26-64. The fax number is (227) 73-31-67.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | | |
|----------|-------|------------------|
| Jan. 1 | ..... | New Year's Day |
| Mar/Apr. | ..... | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | ..... | Easter Monday* |
| May 1 | ..... | Labor Day |
| Aug. 3 | ..... | Independence Day |
| Dec. 18 | ..... | Republic Day |
| Dec. 25 | ..... | Christmas Day |
|  | ..... | Id al-Adah* |
|  | ..... | Ramadan* |
|  | ..... | Id al-Fitr* |
|  | ..... | Mawlid an Nabi* |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following books and films are recommended for anyone wishing to get a taste of Niger.

Africa South of the Sahara 1992. London: Europa Publications Limited, 1991.

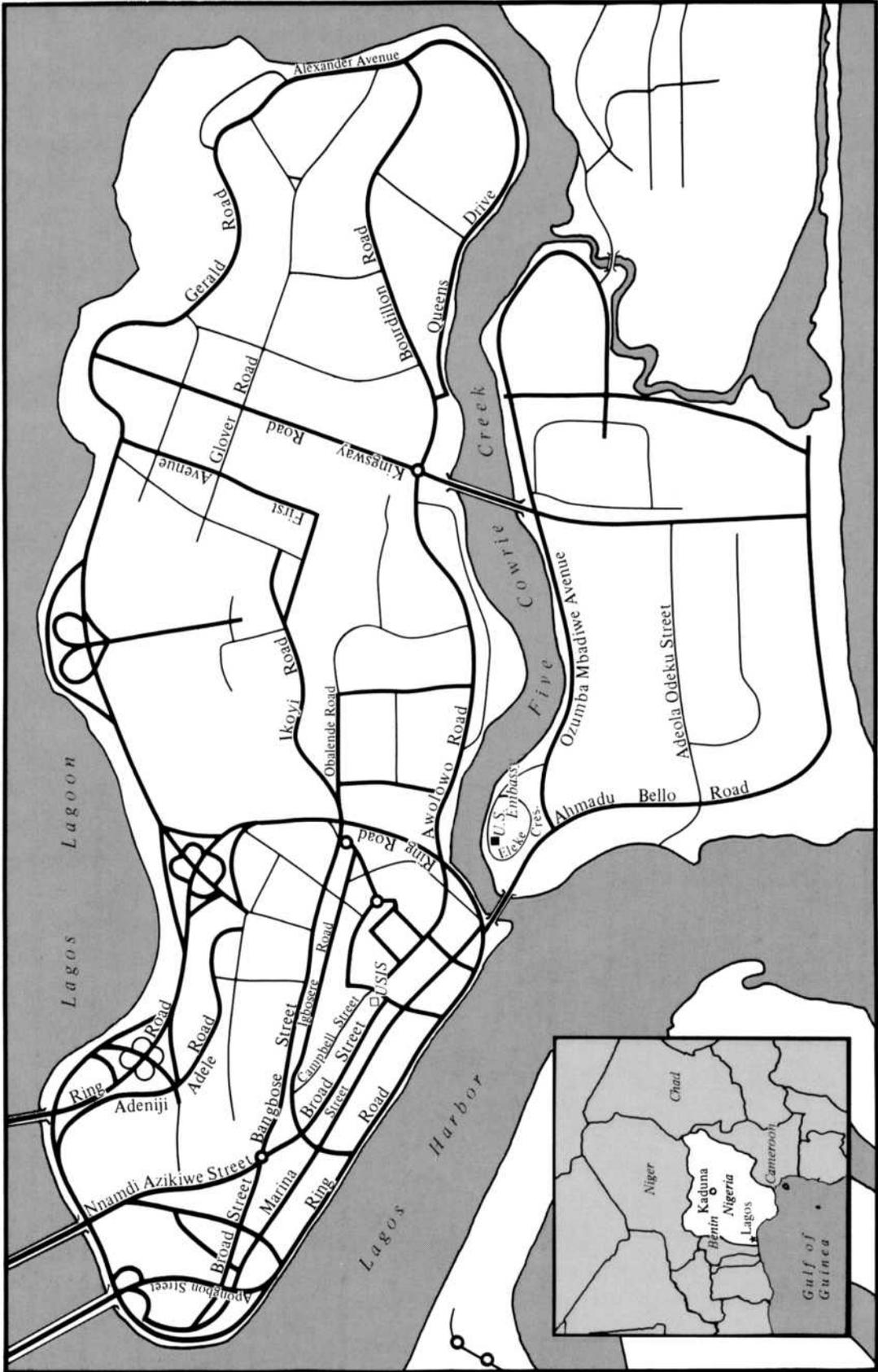
Charlick, Robert B. *Niger: Personal Rule and Survival in the Sahel*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991.

Decalo, Samuel. *Historical*

Dictionary of Niger. 2nd ed. African Historical Dictionaries, no. 20. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1989.

Discovery Guide to West Africa by

Kim Naylor and Michael Haag.
Fuglestad, Finn. *A History of Niger, 1850–1960*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.



Lagos, Nigeria

NIGERIA

Federal Republic of Nigeria

Major Cities:

Lagos, Abuja, Ibadan, Kaduna, Kano, Enugu

Other Cities:

Aba, Abeokuta, Ado, Benin City, Bonny, Calabar, Ede, Ife, Ilesha, Ilorin, Iseyin, Iwo, Katsina, Maiduguri, Ogbomoso, Onitsha, Oshogbo, Oyo, Port Harcourt, Zaria

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated April 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a large and energetic country, striving to revive an economy that has been battered by a slump in oil prices and a lack of political unity. About the size of Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi combined, its population of 122 million is the highest in Africa, and the tenth largest in the world. Nigeria's status and influence in West Africa and throughout the continent remain strong, as does its global voice. This international position is derived from its size, its prospect for economic stability, and its determined pursuit of an autonomous political course.

Since becoming an independent nation in 1960 with aspirations of a

democratic society, Nigeria has experienced the same evolutionary problems as did the United States in its early history. Regional rivalries, economic and ethnic differences, secessionist movements, civil war, and periodic unrest have all occurred. Since gaining independence from Great Britain, Nigeria has experienced many shifts between civilian and military government rule. Nigeria's evolving institutions are endeavoring to cope with the strains of a still-emerging nation.

MAJOR CITIES

Lagos

Nigeria is a federation containing some 250 linguistic groups and nearly as many tribes. The large variety of customs, languages, and traditions continues to give the country a rich diversity.

In the 17th through 19th centuries, European traders established coastal ports for the increasing traffic in slaves destined for the Americas. Commodity trade, especially in palm oil and timber, replaced slave trade in the 19th century.

Following the Napoleonic wars, the British expanded their trade with the Nigerian interior. In 1885, British claims to a sphere of influence in that area received international recognition, and in the following year, the royal Niger Company was chartered. In 1900, the company's territory came under the control of the British Government, and in 1914, the area was formally united as the "Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria."

After World War II, in response to the growth of Nigerian nationalism and demands for independence, the British Government moved Nigeria toward self-government on a representative, increasingly Federal, basis. It was granted full independence in October 1960.

Since 1960, the government has changed many times, but only two civilians have ruled during the 35 years of independence, for a total of about 10 years. In 1993, Nigeria held presidential elections, which most observers deemed to be the fairest in its history. Election results were annulled by the military ruler, who then turned over power to a non-partisan technocrat to rule until new elections in February 1994. In November 1993, the military took over again with promises of handing over to a civilian. After successfully consolidating

power, the military government later announced that a “constitutional conference” would examine and recommend the best way to restore democracy in Nigeria. The process of restoring democracy has been slow and continues to be a source of concern to the international community.

The most populous country in Africa, and one of the most richly-endowed with natural resources in the world, Nigeria accounts for one-quarter of sub-Saharan Africa’s people. The economy has declined precipitously in recent years, down from the oil boom of the 1970’s, subjecting most Nigerians to increasing hardships.

Lagos, situated on Nigeria’s southwest coast, is a sprawling metropolitan area with an estimated population of 13.5 million (2000 est.). The bustling, noisy, and congested city covers four major islands—Lagos, Iddo, Victoria, and Ikoyi—and several mainland towns, including Apapa, Yaba, Surulere, and Ikeja. Apapa is the location of Africa’s busiest port; Lagos Island is the center of business activity and government offices; and Victoria Island is the location of many embassies, including the American Embassy.

Food

Most families may find that they miss some food items available at home but there are several stores on the islands which specialize in American food products. The availability of items, however, is affected by factors such as accommodation exchange fluctuations, transportation or customs clearance. Prices of imports from other countries vary according to item and country of origin, but most are within reasonable limits for the average American budget. These imported items come from a variety of countries including several in Europe and Asia and include canned, bottled and occasionally frozen goods. Prices tend to change from day to day.

Most locally-produced goods, such as cookies, are somewhat cheaper

than U.S.-made products. Locally-bottled soft drinks (Coke, 7-Up, Pepsi, Sprite, orange soda, Bitter Lemon) and beer are less expensive although the soft drinks are sweeter than they are in the U.S. Many Americans shop in local grocery stores or butcher shops for meats, soft drinks, and some imported household products. While some food products are of good quality, many locally-produced processed goods (fruit, juice, coffee, canned goods, margarine, and yogurt) are not up to U.S. standards. Good bread and rolls, while somewhat more expensive, may be found in bakeries catering to foreigners and in some grocery stores.

Outdoor markets or vegetable stalls are the main source of fresh eggs, fruits, vegetables, and fish. The variety of products available in these local markets fluctuates. Some individuals venture a 20-minute drive across the bridge to Apapa on the mainland to obtain lower prices and fresher fish, as well as meat, fruits, and vegetables. However, fruit and vegetable stands abound on both Ikoyi and Victoria Islands. All prices in the markets and stalls are subject to bargaining. Eggs are always available in open markets and are usually fresh, but all eggs should be checked before use. Grocery store eggs are usually not fresh and should not be bought unless they have been refrigerated.

Quality and availability of fruits and vegetables vary according to season. Bananas, pineapples, papaw (papaya), and citrus fruits are almost always available and of good quality. Mangoes and guavas are available when in season. The lettuce grown locally is very good as are the tomatoes. Other local vegetables found in season are cucumbers, carrots, green beans, avocados, eggplants, onions, potatoes, parsley, peppers, spinach, cabbage, bread fruit, and cauliflower. A large variety of beans are also available locally.

Beef, chicken, mutton, pork, and goat meat are available locally, although some items, particularly

beef, may be tough. Some local products (e.g., baby food) may be suspect.

Some dairy products are available in local food stores, such as reconstituted long-life (UHT) milk, powdered milk, butter, margarine and cheese. American ice cream products such as Carnation brand can be found in a number of food stores which cater to expatriate tastes. Supplies of imported products such as New Zealand lamb, butter, long-life milk, and European margarine and cheese are also available. Fresh milk is sometimes available locally, but should not be consumed.

Clothing

Clothing worn in the Mid-Atlantic in the summer is suitable for Lagos. The weather is hot and humid year round, and some places are not air-conditioned. Bring a large wardrobe of washable summer wear, preferably cotton, which is more comfortable than most synthetic materials. Bring some warm clothing for trips to colder climates. Shoes are available locally and some Americans find them satisfactory. Nigerians are generally well-dressed for social and business functions so a good supply of dressy clothing may be useful.

Local fabric is plentiful, and some imported material can be found. High-quality imported fabrics for clothing, drapery and upholstery are available. Some local designers do beautiful work in fabric they dye themselves. Local tailors are readily available and do some very creative work in designing clothes or copying designs from pictures in magazines or catalogs. Ready-made clothing is available, but the variety and supply are very limited and often more expensive than buying from U.S. sources.

Hats, though not worn with street dress, are needed for protection from the sun at sports and at other outdoor events. Nigerian women wear hats to most local church services and also to local weddings, christenings, and other social functions. Hats are available locally but

there is only a small selection and they are very expensive. Gloves are seldom worn at social functions by foreign women. Some people use selected local dry-cleaning facilities, but the service is uneven and a few have experienced damaged clothing. Washable clothes are preferred.

A washable lightweight raincoat, rain hat, boots, and umbrella are very useful in the rainy season.

Men: Shorts are worn for outdoor activities. Washable suits (especially those with two pairs of trousers) are practical. White suits are seldom worn. Local tailors can make native-style shirts and trousers.

Women: For daytime outdoor wear most women prefer light cotton dresses. Seasonal change is slight, but wear and tear is considerable. Cottons are appropriate for office and daytime social activities, and dressier dresses, sun dresses, or long caftans are worn for evening events. Nigerians wear beautiful native dress to most social events and to important occasions such as weddings and christenings. Summer-weight slacks are worn for informal gatherings. Shorts are usually worn only at expatriate functions. Women's shoes are available locally but require a visit to the open market and may not be up to American standards. Rubber beach thongs and tennis shoes are available locally.

Children: Children need a good supply of washable clothing. Bring a good supply of children's shoes, especially sneakers and sandals. Local supplies are not adequate.

The American International School does not require uniforms. Girls' clothing ranges from dresses to shorts and jeans, with sneakers or sandals. Boys may wear T-shirts with shorts, jeans or slacks, sandals, and sneakers, which are needed for gym class. Shorts are worn most of the time, but long pants are worn on occasion. Bring a few dressy items for children. Junior high students often have dances which require dresses for girls and slacks for boys.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: Imported supplies on the local market are often limited, unreliable, and usually very difficult to find when needed. The sun is intense so a good supply of sun screening location should be brought with you.

Basic Services: Tailoring and shoe repair services are available but the final products are not commensurate with America standards. Dry cleaning services are available but the quality is not good. Hairdressers and barbershops offer basic services but it is best if you have your own hair care products for them to use. There are a number of beauty and hair salons that have recently opened up on the islands.

Religious Activities

The following churches conduct service in English: Anglican (weekly), Baptist (weekly), Lutheran (weekly), and Catholic (daily at several churches). A nondenominational service is currently being held weekly at a local restaurant on Victoria Island and a daytime bible study group meets weekly. Lagos has no synagogues or orthodox churches, but does have few mosques that serves the community in English. Dates and times of all services can be obtained from the CLO.

Education

The American International School of Lagos (AISL) is located on Victoria Island. AISL is a co-educational school for students in Kindergarten through Grade 9. It follows an American curriculum and has been affiliated with the Tacoma, Washington School District since 1965. The majority of the teachers at AISL are on leave of absence from Tacoma, although a number of other Americans, or American-trained teachers of other nationalities, with permanent residence in Nigeria, are also on the professional teaching staff at AISL. AISL has also established a secondary school-to-school partnership with the Klein School District in Houston, Texas. Recently the Office of Overseas Schools and

the Allowances Staff has determined that an away-from-post allowance can be provided for Grade 9. Parents have the option to send their child to boarding school for Grade 9 or enrolling them in AISL. Students of high-school age (grades 10-12) have the option remain in Lagos and study by correspondence courses, but most go away to school.

The school year extends from late August to early June with a 3-week break at Christmas and a 10-day break at Easter. The school day is 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for students in Kindergarten through Grade 6 and continues to 2:10 p.m. for students in Grades 7 to 9. AERA is currently providing transportation for children of all American employees. Each child entering AISL for the first time is charged a one-time building fund assessment. Advance registration is advisable. *AISL does not have the facilities for gifted students or students with special educational needs.* For more information on AISL, admission policies and requirements, and curriculum and course descriptions, please contact the school. You may write to:

Superintendent, American International School Lagos,
U.S. Department of State, Lagos
Washington, D.C. 20521-8300
Telephone (234) (1) 262-0775,
261-7793
Fax (234) (1) 261-7794

AISL has a good library with over 20,500 volumes and two science laboratories. Its resources include audiovisual equipment and related teaching aids. The school is equipped with computers. All children from Kindergarten through Grade 9 are given computer instruction. The regular daily physical education program is supplemented by an after-school activities program, run by parent volunteers and the teaching faculty. The school also has a gymnasium which seats over 700 people and a 25-meter, six-lane pool. The school employs a full-time nurse. Testing, placement, and counseling services are provided, and U.S.-recognized standardized tests are given.

Other elementary schools (e.g., French, British) in Lagos and on the mainland are open to American children, if space is available.

Several day nurseries or pre-schools are available for small children. AISL offers a pre-school program for four-year olds, but usually has a waiting list. Early enrollment is recommended. The fees at AISL are higher than in the other pre-schools in Lagos.

A pre-school called the American Parents Cooperative Playcenter offers an American enrichment program for 2-1/2 to 4 year olds several mornings per week. The Playcenter also has a waiting list for new students. It was originally co-founded as a cooperative of parents in 1986 by expatriates from the U.S. Embassy and Gulf Oil Company.

Special Educational Opportunities

Very few formal educational opportunities are available in Lagos for adults or children. Universities are often closed with striking teachers. Private instruction is available in several fields, especially in foreign languages. Courses are available in French at the Alliance Francaise, in German at the Goethe Institute, and in Italian at the Italian Cultural Center. Some private institutions will teach local languages and culture. Instruction in tennis, swimming, music, and exercise is offered either by individuals or through AISL if qualified teachers are available. The American Women's Club has several groups that pursue and develop hobbies, interests and skills. The National Museum offers seminars in local art, language and culture at times.

There are no schools or facilities in Lagos which offer educational opportunities for mentally or physically handicapped children, for those with learning disabilities or for children who require a gifted program.

Sports

Many sports are available in Lagos. Sporting activities constitute an



Courtesy of Kenneth Decker

One of many mosques in Abuja, Nigeria

important part of life in the Tropics. Softball, volleyball, soccer, golf, squash, ping-pong, swimming, and tennis are all popular in Lagos. Sports equipment, when available, is expensive in Nigeria.

Swimming is a year-round activity. Lagos has several beaches, but few are safe for swimming.

The nearby ocean, creeks, and lagoons afford many opportunities for deep-sea fishing, sailing and motorboating. It is possible to buy used boats, but motors are often a problem. Sailing is also popular.

Bicycling opportunities are limited. Bicycles are expensive in Nigeria.

An International running group, the Hash House Harriers, sponsors weekly runs and is a means for social get-togethers. Some people jog around the islands after work. As is common in this part of the world, soccer (or "football," as it is called in Nigeria) is a popular spectator sport. Tennis and polo matches are held frequently.

Private clubs offer a variety of sports and social contacts. A waiting list for membership is common. The Ikoyi Club has mainly expatriate members and offers a variety of sports, including golf, tennis, ping-

pong, badminton and squash. Two large swimming pools and a children's pool provide opportunity for swimming. The club also has a restaurant and bar.

The Polo Club affords its members the chance to ride as well as board horses. Riders are always needed to exercise the numerous horses boarded at the club. The restaurant and bar offer opportunities for social contacts within the Nigerian business community. You don't have to ride to be a member. There is also a Saddle Club in Ikeja for those interested in ordinary riding. They often sponsor several hour-long rides in the area.

The Lagos Lawn and Tennis Club offers tennis and squash; most members are Nigerian. Serious tennis players tend to prefer this club. Color tennis outfits are acceptable.

Two boat clubs are the Lagos Yacht Club, where members are required to sail on a regular basis, and the Lagos Motorboat Club, where the waiting list for membership is long.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Touring within Nigeria is for the adventurous. The traffic is heavy, the roads poor, and overnight and rest facilities very limited. Travel-

ers should always carry water, food and a first aid kit with them. Overnight stops require advance arrangements for food and lodging, a task that is very difficult to accomplish with the present telecommunication system. Travel to the north in Nigeria offers a change of scenery, climate and culture and some major cities do have adequate accommodations.

Lagos has no playgrounds or parks as we know them. The University of Ibadan has a small zoo and a botanical garden, but the animals are in very poor physical condition. The National Museum in Lagos has an adequate and well-arranged collection of antiquities from all parts of Nigeria, an interesting depiction of Nigeria's political history since independence, and a crafts center.

The Nigerian Field Society, an excursion group mainly for expatriates, has a low membership fee and is open to anyone. This Society, in existence for many years, offers field trips lasting from one day to one week to places within Nigeria. It also organizes seminars to educate members about the African environment.

Outside Lagos, interesting places include:

- *Badagry.* About 50 miles west of Lagos on the inland waterway in Nigeria, this port flourished in slave-trading days. You still can see remnants of the barracoons where slaves were held before transport to the New World. Market Day, held once a week, is quite colorful.
- *Porto Novo and Cotonou, Benin.* Porto Novo and Cotonou, Benin's capital, are 2 to 3 hours' drive from Lagos. Good restaurants, a Sheraton Hotel, a new Novotel Hotel and shopping are available in Cotonou, as are tours to game parks and to Ganvie, a fishing village on stilts, known as the Venice of Africa.
- *Lome, Togo.* Two hours' drive beyond Cotonou, Lome has several good hotels with sports facilities and French restaurants. Like Coto-

nou, Lome provides a change of pace from Lagos.

Entertainment

There has recently been an increase in the variety of plays, art shows and other productions, especially those being sponsored by foreign embassies or women's groups. Local movie theaters generally have very little to offer. A number of small African repertory theater groups perform under the sponsorship of a number of Nigeria's very large banks. Those who have attended have enjoyed the presentations.

The Musical Society of Nigeria, MUSON, offers a good variety of musical shows, plays and ensembles at reasonable prices. Most of MUSON's events are co-sponsored by one of the many diplomatic missions resident in Lagos.

Lagos has some nightclubs and there are a number of restaurants in the metropolitan area. There are several Lebanese, Chinese, Indian and Italian restaurants.

On occasion films, lectures, plays, and art exhibits are provided by the Alliance Francaise, the Italian Cultural Center, the British Council, and the Goethe Institute. The Nigerian Institute for International Affairs (NIIA) holds a number of events on a regular basis at which lectures are given on a variety of subjects.

While enjoying the various forms of entertainment, it is important to remember that cameras arouse concern among Nigerians. Limit your picture-taking and avoid photographing people, bridges, airports, military installations, the harbor, and some public buildings. Cameras may be freely used for family pictures.

Within the expatriate community are singing, theater, and reading groups. A women's book group concentrating on West African, especially Nigerian, novels has recently been formed. Members find that the novels offer insights into West African culture and that the group pro-

vides introductions to both Nigerian and other expatriate women. The waiting list for membership is long.

Home entertaining is popular. Buffet dinners, receptions, and informal coffee and dessert evenings are frequent. Many center an evening's entertainment on a VCR movie.

Social Activities

Among Americans: The American Women's Club (AWC) of Lagos, founded in February 1971, sponsors a monthly general membership meeting, as well as a wide variety of welfare and social activities.

Many informal groups meet for bridge and various card games, sports, and other activities. An international bazaar is held in December.

International Contacts: The international community is friendly and informal. Social clubs and churches offer good opportunities for developing rewarding friendships. The International Women's Society, which has a small but international membership, is mainly involved in volunteer activities for charity. Information about the society is available through the United Nations Development Fund Office in Ikoyi. The Nigerian American Women's Forum was created to encourage interaction between Nigerian and American professional women. The members are interested in information exchange and targeted action regarding issues that affect women and their welfare.

Special Information

Temporary duty (TDY) and visiting travelers must obtain a Nigerian visa and have confirmed hotel reservations before coming to Nigeria. Hotel accommodations are extremely difficult to obtain; make reservations well in advance. All travelers should notify the Mission well in advance of their arrival, giving the duration of the visit and any special requirements. Bring all the clothes you will need and do not rely on unaccompanied baggage shipments. Such shipments are allowed

into the country duty free but often take 4-6 weeks to process through customs.

Visitors who are staying in an hotel should be prepared to pay for your room and all meals when registering; a refund for meals not taken is made at checkout time. The Sheraton Hotel near the International Airport is recommended for those proceeding to Abuja or Kaduna within a day of their arrival. Do not pay for hotel, restaurant meals or any other service with credit cards and do not give out any financial information or account numbers to anyone. Personal financial information should never be left in the hotel room or in the home.

Crime and personal security is an issue on Ikoyi and Victoria Islands, but the risks are even greater in the rest of Lagos. Vigilance and caution should be a part of the daily routine. All houses have guards, and many people have watch dogs. In spite of this attention to security, most Americans have an active social and professional life without undue restrictions.

Abuja

Abuja was created in 1976 and was officially declared the new Federal Capital on December 12, 1991. The move was to promote a sense of national unity by creating a capital in a more central location not identified with any particular ethnic group and to escape the overcrowded conditions in Lagos. Since then the Federal Government has transferred some of its offices, including the Presidency and the Foreign Ministry to Abuja.

Abuja has a sub-tropical climate. The hot, dry season is from March through April, the rainy season is from May to September, then the dry, cool season runs from October to February. The harmattan, a north wind carrying fine dust from the Sahara, will start during this period and end about the time the rains begin. The fine dust settles everywhere and can cause sinus

infections and asthma attacks for those with respiratory problems.

Food

It is necessary to stock up on basic items, as well as special food items, baby food, baby formula, diapers, toiletries, etc. Although some items can be found in Abuja, supplies tend to be erratic and quality questionable. There are a few small general stores that sell a limited variety of imported, canned food, frozen food and cleaning products. The varieties and quantities tend to be limited, and are quite expensive. Certain items may be unavailable for weeks at a time. U.S.-produced items are rare; most imported items come from Europe or the Middle East. The quality of frozen food is often doubtful because of the power fluctuations. Fruits and vegetables can usually be found in local open-air markets though they need thorough cleaning and sterilizing. Eggs are available year-round, though quality is often poor. Local beef and chicken are also available but are quite tough. The only commonly-available fresh fish is Niger perch. Frozen seafood of acceptable quality is occasionally available. It is usually preferable to purchase local meats and seafood directly from vendors rather than from local stores.

Acceptable restaurants in Abuja are limited. Most Americans eat only at a few local restaurants, including Talk of the Town (Indian/Chinese) and McDowals (Lebanese), and those at the Abuja Sheraton Hotel (theme buffets and Italian) and the Nicon Noga Hilton Hotel (themed buffets and Chinese). Other local restaurants are not recommended. Even though eating in these restaurants is generally considered safe, it is critical to eat only properly cooked food, to avoid uncooked vegetables and to drink only bottled beverages.

Clothing

Men: There are no clothing stores in Abuja. Dry cleaning is available through a Kaduna-based firm, but turnaround time is several days. Local dry cleaning services are not

recommended. Bring enough sports clothes and shoes because both are unavailable locally.

Women: Lightweight cotton dresses are suggested for daytime wear. Tailoring services are available and fabric can be purchased in the local market. Dry cleaning service is limited, so bring washable items. Bring a good supply of shoes as there are no shoe stores and limited shoe repair services available.

Children: Bring a good supply of washable clothing and shoes, especially sneakers and sandals. The American International School does not require a uniform.

Supplies and Services

There are dry cleaning services at the Hilton and the Sheraton Hotels, but the services are not up to American standards. Better quality service is available in Lagos and Kaduna. Barbers and hairdressers are also available at each hotel but, again, the services are often unsatisfactory. Bookstores in Abuja have extremely limited selections.

Religious Activities

There are local Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Evangelical churches in Abuja. Most of the services are in English but the times and lengths are irregular. There is also the non-denominational International Church, Abuja that offers a more Western-style service in English. For Muslims, there are a number of mosques.

Education

The American International School, sponsored by the State Department, was started in 1993. It offers pre-school through 8th grade; 9th and 10th grades are available through an independent-study, correspondence program. The school year is from early September to mid-June and is divided into three terms. School hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for grade school children (K-8) and 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for pre-school. The school presently follows the Calvert curriculum. For more information, please contact

the school principal at (234) (9) 523-5464.

Special Education Opportunities

Special educational opportunities are not available.

Sports

Golf is one of the most popular sports among visitors. The Ibrahim Golf Course offers a beautiful, well-maintained 18-hole golf course. You can also join the Hilton Club or the Sheraton Club. Both clubs feature facilities including tennis courts, swimming pools, squash courts and fitness centers.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

On Muslim holidays and special occasions in older cities such as Kano, Katsina and Zaria, *durbars* (colorful parades of mounted warriors, clowns, jugglers and dancers) provide a medieval flavor not seen elsewhere in the country. Hotels are available in all major cities but quality and service rarely meet the standards of even budget-priced motels in the U.S.

Travel in the North as well as in the South to Enugu and Lagos is possible by road. Roads are generally adequate between major northern cities. Road accidents are frequent and banditry on the open road is a common problem. Traveling to the South by road is particularly dangerous due to the prevalence of road bandits.

Several local airlines also offer daily flights to and from Lagos and to some other cities. Air schedules, however, are unreliable, and long delays are common.

The areas listed below are points of interest in or near Abuja:

Aso Rock: The largest granite rock in the vicinity of Abuja, its appearance has an imposing and impressive effect on first-time visitors to Abuja.

Table Rock: Accessible by car, with a picnic area and barbecues, it offers a panoramic view of Abuja.

Gurara Falls: On the Gurara River about 100 kilometers from Abuja, it is quite a spectacular scene during the rainy season; no facilities for tourists have been developed.

Zuma Rock: An enormous granite rock that stands out of the countryside on the way to Gurara Falls and Kaduna.

Usuma Dam and Jabi Dam: Man-made reservoirs supplying drinking water as well as irrigation water for Abuja and the surrounding agricultural land, both dams provide beautiful scenery and are good spots for fishing.

Pottery Centers: Abuja is well known for its traditional African pottery. There are several pottery centers in Abuja. Ladi Kwali Pottery Center is the most famous; Ushafa Pottery Center at Ushafa Village offers modern pottery and ceramics as well as traditional; Giri Pottery Center, near Kwali in Gwagwalada Area Council, has the largest selection of pottery.

Other interesting attractions in the North include:

Kano: The commercial center and largest city in northern Nigeria, Kano is approximately 5 hours by car from Abuja. Relatively good accommodations are available at the Prince Hotel. With a large foreign business community and an international airport, the city has several good restaurants and the largest market in the North.

Jos: The city of Jos, on a 4,000 foot plateau, is about 3-1/2 hours by road from Abuja, and offers a change of scenery and a cooler climate. The city is host to the largest American community in northern Nigeria and is home to Hillcrest School, an American curriculum school catering to the missionary community.

Sokoto: About 8 hours away, Sokoto is the center of the emirate system

and the seat of the Sultan of Sokoto; major points of interest are the Sultan's Palace, two recently-built mosques and the tomb of first sultan Usman Dan Fodio, whose Fulani warriors conquered most of northern Nigeria early in the 19th century.

Yankari Game Preserve: Another 3 hours beyond Jos is the Yankari Game Preserve, a sanctuary with some tourist facilities. Accommodations are quite reasonable. Game can be seen during the dry season but do not expect either the number or variety of game seen in other parts of Africa. The preserve features a year-round natural hot spring.

Entertainment

There are two western standard nightclubs in Abuja—Dazzle, at the Abuja Sheraton Hotel, and Safari, at the Nicon Noga Hilton Hotel. There are neither cinemas nor performing arts theaters nor professional sports in Abuja. Diplomatic missions and cultural institutions occasionally sponsor drama or musical presentations. The Sheraton and the Agura Hotels have video clubs which stock PAL tapes pirated from subscription satellites and other sources. They are often of poor quality.

Social Activities

Among Americans: Since the American community is very small, social activities tend to be very informal and center around tennis courts, swimming pools and the golf course.

Kaduna

Kaduna was created in 1917 by the British Governor, Lord Lugard, as the administrative center of northern Nigeria. Several textile mills, a petroleum refinery, an auto assembly plant, a brewery and bottling plant, and other industries have been established. The city has retained the atmosphere of a government center, so it lacks the special character of older, walled cities

such as Kano and Zaria. Kaduna's population is estimated at 800,000.

Beyond Kaduna lie the thirteen states of northern Nigeria. The area contains roughly half of Nigeria's population. Islam predominates in the North, and the Hausa-Fulani, one of Nigeria's three major ethnic/cultural groups, are concentrated there.

Kaduna lies at an altitude of about 2,000 feet. The weather is not as extreme as in other parts of the country, but from November through February, the air, heavy with harmattan dust, irritates eyes and nasal and bronchial passages and affects allergy sufferers, often severely. The dust also permeates every nook and cranny, making house cleaning tedious.

Food

Kaduna has general stores and numerous specialty shops that sell a variety of imported canned and frozen foods, including chicken, beef, lamb and fish. However, inventories are erratic, and the quality, especially of meats, is unpredictable.

Imported, perishable items are expensive and often suffer a considerable loss of quality through improper handling and storage. Vegetables, such as green beans, carrots, yams, spinach, squash, potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, cauliflower and cabbage, are grown locally and are of fairly good quality. Because Kaduna is north of the citrus belt, however, grapefruit and oranges, as well as pineapples, do not compare in quality with the fruit that is available in the South.

Clothing

A two-year wardrobe similar to that required for the spring and summer seasons in the Mid-Atlantic should be brought. A few sweaters, long-sleeved clothes, etc., for the cool season should also be included.

Children: Uniforms are required by the Aisha Mohammed International School. Girls wear navy blue culottes with blue and white gingham blouses or blue and white gingham

drop-waist dresses. Material for girls' dresses is available locally. Boys wear navy blue shorts (long trousers in cool weather) and blue and white gingham shirts. Children in Grades 2-6 also need special clothes for physical education. Boys and girls need navy blue shorts, white T-shirts or polo shirts, white socks and sneakers (preferably white). All children need lunch boxes and school bags or backpacks.

Religious Activities

Major Christian denominations, both Catholic and Protestant, are present in Kaduna, and English-language services are offered at least once a week. Kaduna has several mosques but there is no synagogue.

Education

The Aisha Mohammed International School was established in 1985 as a nonprofit organization with no religious affiliation. The school year is from September to July and is divided into three terms. School hours are from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for primary school children and 8 a.m. to 12 noon for children in the nursery.

Private nursery schools and play groups are available in Kaduna at reasonable rates.

Special Educational Opportunities

No special formal educational opportunities are available in the area.

Sports

However, membership at one or more of the many private clubs in Kaduna offering golf, polo, rugby and soccer can also be enjoyable.

Bring all sports equipment, especially golf, tennis and equestrian. All clubs require membership fees.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Travel in the North is possible by road and, to some destinations, by air. Air schedules are unreliable, and long delays are common. Roads

are generally good in the North, although accidents and other mishaps are all too frequent. For security purposes no one should drive on the highway after nightfall.

Republics of Niger and Cameroon. Longer car trips may be made during the dry season to Niger and Cameroon. The roads are rough, and four-wheel drive is sometimes useful. An ice chest and a large Thermos are necessary for long trips, especially if traveling with children.

On holidays and other special occasions in older cities such as Kano, Katsina and Zaria, colorful parades of clowns, dancers, jugglers and mounted warriors provide a flavor not seen elsewhere in the country.

Entertainment

The National Museum has a small, interesting collection of traditional art in bronze, carvings, pottery, cloth, and leather. A crafts center located at the Museum sells good quality artifacts, which you can watch local artisans create. The Northern Historical Society offers lecture meetings in Kaduna on natural history and ethnographic topics.

The Kaduna Music and Drama Society meets regularly and offers one or two public performances each year. The Nigerian Field Society offers field trips and lectures.

A very limited selection of hardback and paperback books is available in the general trading stores and book shops. Books and periodicals are available for borrowing at the USIS library.

Kaduna has a few good restaurants that offer a variety of foods at reasonable prices. The most popular among these include the Arewa Chinese Restaurant, an Indian restaurant, and the Jacaranda In Town, which offers continental cuisine and local dishes in a picturesque and relaxing setting.

A few channels of television are available locally, and CNN and

other international signals are available via cable subscription. Short-wave reception in Kaduna is strong.

Social Activities

Among Americans: Kaduna's American community is very small. However, Americans have little trouble meeting host country nationals through work and many educated Nigerians accept invitations to American homes and attend functions with their spouses.

International Contacts: The International Women's Club (IWC) is a voluntary organization that offers many opportunities for charity work and for meeting people of all nationalities. There are local chapters of the Lions Club, Rotary and June Wheel Clubs.

Ibadan

Ibadan is the capital of Oyo State. It is the center of a rich agricultural area where most of Nigeria's cacao crop is produced. The city is built on a series of low hills, 750 feet above sea level and about 90 miles northeast of Lagos. Its estimated population of 1,739,000 is exceeded only by Lagos among cities south of the Sahara.

Ibadan was founded in the 1830s as a military camp during the Yoruba civil wars, and then developed into the most powerful Yoruba city-state. It came under British protection in 1893. Today, it is one of the major commercial and industrial centers in Nigeria.

Ibadan has been a center of agricultural development for many years, as is reflected in the name of the 27-story Cocoa House, one of West Africa's tallest buildings. Recently, one of the oldest research institutions in Nigeria, Moor Plantation on the Abeokuta Road, was incorporated into a system of 16 federal research centers throughout the country. Now called National Cereals Research Institute, Moor Plantation focuses on research and



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View of the rooftops on Ibadan, Nigeria

extension programs in grain cereals.

A long-established School of Forestry and Research Center is in the Jericho area of Ibadan. A sister institute for horticultural research was inaugurated in 1976, also on the west side of the city. About ten miles north of Ibadan, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) employs 55 scientists from various countries. IITA is one of six such institutes throughout the world, and is internationally funded, with the U.S. share coming from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. About a dozen American scientists and their families are assigned to IITA.

Ibadan is developing major industrial parks. Several steel construction plants, a tire processing company, wire and cable plants, a battery factory, soft drink (including

Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola) plants, cashew processing plants, three major breweries, a canning factory, and the National Tobacco Company are among Ibadan's industries.

The commercial area—with department stores, shops, banks, and other businesses, as well as a large market—is in the city's center.

Most Americans reside along with the British, Lebanese, Israelis, Germans, and Nigerians in outlying residential areas. Some live at the Institute of Tropical Agriculture or at the University of Ibadan.

Education

The International School, a university-owned secondary school for grades seven through 12, adjoins the University of Ibadan campus. Applicants for the school should send recent school transcripts and registration forms (obtainable from the school). Written tests determine eligibility and placement. However,

students with satisfactory records from American, international, or British Commonwealth schools rarely are refused. Students prepare for the London University Overseas Advanced Level Examinations and the American College Board Examinations.

The school follows British lines, but a flexible curriculum caters to the needs of both Nigerian/British- and American-education systems. The school year has three 12-week terms beginning in mid-September. Elective courses and activities are held after classes.

The nearby International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) operates a Calvert-system school, with local teachers in grades one through six. Several children of American expatriates have attended the school and found the instruction inadequate. The main constraint of the IITA school is that classes end with grade six.

Ibadan public schools are not considered adequate for U.S. children; teaching quality is subject to change. Inquiries should be made in advance. Many parents now feel that because of overcrowding, the International School is unable to provide quality instruction. Parents now send their children either to boarding schools abroad or to the American missionary school in Jos.

The University of Ibadan bases its curriculum on the British system, adapted to Nigerian needs. Admission requirements for degree courses are rigid, but special courses are offered with flexible admission requirements. Courses can also be taken on a non-degree basis.

Recreation

Soccer is the national sport in Nigeria, and in Ibadan it has an enthusiastic following. Liberty Stadium, built during the 1960 independence celebrations, holds more than 30,000 people. It is the site of many sports events and festivals, as well as major soccer games. Good swimming, golf, and tennis facilities also

are available in Ibadan, and some sight-seeing trips attract the adventurous. Fishing is good at certain times of the year.

About 125 miles east of Ibadan, on the main road, the agricultural center of Akure has been designated capital of Ondo State. About 15 miles from Akure is the village of Idanre, a well-fortified town that can be approached only by a long series of hillside steps. Idanre is a famous traditional center of Yoruba culture and religion.

Located on the Niger River outside New Bussa, about 200 miles north of Ibadan in Kwara State, is Kainji, a modern hydroelectric dam which attracts interested tourists from all over the world. Many large species of African game may be seen at the nearby Borgu Game Reserve. The natives in this area are relatively untouched by modern civilization.

Entertainment

Films, lectures, concerts, and exhibits are part of the social life in Ibadan. There are many Western-educated Nigerians, and the city has an international character. The Ibadan Rotary Club, one of several service clubs, meets regularly at the Premier Hotel. Membership includes men of several nationalities representing the city's various industries. The Men's Dining Club, with 25 Nigerian and 25 foreign members, meets weekly at the same hotel, as does its sister organization, the Ladies' Dining Club. Local branches of Girl Guides, Red Cross, YMCA, YWCA, University Women, and the National Council of Women's Societies are active here. Opportunities to do volunteer work for handicapped children and adults vary each year with the creation of new facilities and the amalgamation of existing institutions.

Public cinemas show mostly Indian and kung-fu films, and are neither clean nor comfortable. There are, however, a number of reasonably good dining facilities in the city, among them the Cabin, the Coco-Dome, and the Premier Chinese

Restaurant, which offer good food and pleasant atmosphere.

Several active amateur theatrical groups usually play to packed houses. Both Nigerians and foreigners participate. Music devotees join the Operatic Society, Music Circle, Music Society, or Madrigal Society, as well as the choral group of All Saints Church.

Photographers enjoy Ibadan and the surrounding area. These areas afford many interesting pictures, but local sensitivities limit photo opportunities. The prices here for equipment and film are very high. Permission should always be asked before photographing local people, as some may be greatly offended; others may expect money for posing.

Kano

Kano is the largest city in northern Nigeria, and the third largest in the country. For centuries, it was the center of caravan routes, and has served as a link between the Islamic north and West Africa. The walled Old City retains its ancient character.

As one of the seven original Hausa emirates, Kano keeps many links with its past while growing rapidly and trying to meet modern challenges. Situated in the savanna at the edge of the Sahara, it has long been an important trading and commercial center. Its international airport links it with London, Paris, Rome, Brussels, Amsterdam, Cairo, Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), Khartoum (Sudan), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Lomé (Togo), and other cities. The airport runways are also crowded with private jets belonging to local business representatives.

Kano's written history can be traced back to 999, when it was already several hundred years old. At that time it was a cultural, handicraft, and commercial center, trading with other parts of western and northern Africa. Kano figured prominently in the Negro wars of the 15th and 16th centuries and, for a short time around 1600, the city converted to

Islam. In 1809, it was conquered by the Fulani; in 1903, it was captured by Frederick Lugard and became British.

The climate, similar to that of the American southwest, is milder than Lagos' climate. Although extremely hot from March to June, with temperatures sometimes exceeding 100°F, the dryness makes the heat more bearable. The rainy season lasts from June through September, with an average rainfall of only 28 inches. From November through March, the *harmattan* brings dust from the Sahara. At this time, the midday sun is obscured, and everything is covered with a fine, white powder. Cooler temperatures prevail during *harmattan*; at night, the temperature sometimes drops to 55°F.

Kano, with a population estimated over one million in 2000, is the capital of Kano State, the most populous in Nigeria. The traditional homeland of the Hausa and the Fulani, it is now home to Nigerians from all over the country. Sizable British and Lebanese communities exist in the city; Chinese, South Asians, and other nationalities are also represented in large numbers. The approximately 50 Americans in Kano are mostly at Bayero University, or at the church-sponsored eye hospital and mission. A host of other educational institutions are located here.

People here march to a less-frenzied pace than those in some other cities in Nigeria. Traffic flows more smoothly, people are friendlier, and movement in and out of town is easier and safer.

Kano is the trade and shipping center for an agricultural region whose chief crops are cotton, groundnuts, and cattle. It is also the major industrial center of northern Nigeria, where peanut flour and oil, cotton textiles, steel furniture, processed meat, canned food, soft drinks, beer, concrete blocks, shoes, and soap are manufactured. Heavy industries manufacture asbestos, bicycles, automobiles, trucks, and

chemicals. Kano is also well-known for its leather work. The Kano traditional city, with its extensive market, is one of the north's most interesting tourist attractions.

Education

Although Kano has some national groups (Lebanese, French, Poles, and Belgians) which operate their own schools, most local educational institutions do not meet appropriate standards. Many British nationals send their older children to boarding schools in England.

The Corona Society has established a school for kindergarten and first grade students, which accepts American children. Teachers are British, with U.K. teaching credentials. Trustees are trying to procure funds for expansion.

Kano Capital and St. Louis Private are schools for children aged six to 13. Upper-level schools include St. Thomas Secondary and St. Louis Secondary, both in Kano, for ages 14 to 16.

Recreation

Within and surrounding Kano are many sites worth visiting, including the city's old Furmi market and its ancient dye pits. The towns of Dambatta, Katsina, Rano, Wudil, Kazare, and Jibiya have interesting markets on designated days.

The Niger border is only two hours away. Niamey, capital of the Niger Republic, is a 14-hour drive; the Nigerian consulate in Kano issues visas overnight.

Yankari Game Park in Bauchi State is a pleasant day's drive. Longer trips include Sokoto (six hours by car, 45 minutes by air), where the Argungu Fishing Festival is held each February or March; Maiduguri (five hours driving, one hour flying); and northern Cameroon, which takes about eight hours to the border and another two to the Waza Game Park; visas for Cameroon must be obtained in Lagos. Closer at hand is Bagauda Lake, formed by Tiga Dam, where there is a sailing club and a resort hotel. Zaria is

about 90 minutes from Kano by car; Kaduna is another hour down a dangerous road.

In town, the Kano Club offers tennis, golf, swimming, squash, and snooker (a variation of pool). It also has a restaurant. The Lebanon Club maintains dining facilities, tennis, billiards, and a new swimming pool. Dancing is offered here on weekends, and also at the French Club (Le Circle), which has an excellent, although not French, menu. There is dancing on Saturday evenings at the Peking Chinese Restaurant. Kano has several other good dining spots.

As a rule, men wear safari or bush suits for business, and casual attire for social evenings; suits and ties are worn for some functions. Women dress conservatively here so as not to offend local Muslim sensitivities, but sundresses are considered appropriate. Expatriates congregate at the bar in the Central Hotel.

Enugu

Enugu, with a population of 280,000 (1991 estimate), is situated in southeastern Nigeria, about 275 miles east of Lagos and 100 miles north of Port Harcourt. Enugu developed as an important town after the discovery of coal in 1909, but coal mining today has been sharply curtailed because of petroleum production.

Enugu served as capital of Nigeria's Southern Region from 1929 to 1939, of the Eastern Region from 1939 to 1967, and of the short-lived secessionist state of Biafra from 1967 to 1970. The campus of the University of Nigeria that includes an economic development institute is located here. The city is the site of a Mercedes plant, which produces Mercedes Benz cars as well as heavy trucks. Two breweries opened in Enugu in 1983. French firms have built a major hospital in the area. Enugu is served by several hospitals, including the Teaching Hospital of the University of Nigeria and an orthopedic hospital.

OTHER CITIES

ABA is situated in southeastern Nigeria, about 40 miles northeast of Port Harcourt and 275 miles south-east of Lagos. Originally a small Ibo village developed by the British as an administrative center early in the 20th century, Aba had a population of 264,000 in 1991. It is a regional market and manufacturing center for textiles, shoes, plastics, soap, beer, pharmaceuticals, and palm oil. Aba has a school of arts and sciences, secondary schools, a teaching college, and several technical and trade institutes.

ABEOKUTA, the capital of Ogun State, is located in southwest Nigeria, about 60 miles north of Lagos. It was established about 1830 as a refuge from slave hunters of the Yoruba civil wars and was the chief town of the Egbas, who made a treaty with the British in 1893. Abeokuta is the site of the famous Olumo Rock, where the city was originally founded. It is also known for its educational and medical institutions. Of particular interest is the Aro Hospital for Nervous Diseases, which sometimes can be visited by prior arrangement with the director. A campus of the University of Lagos was established in Abeokuta in 1984. The city is an exporting point for cocoa, palm products, kola nuts, and fruit. Industrial capacity is small-scale, with an emphasis on sawmills, fruit-canning plants, and a plastics factory. Abeokuta's population is approximately 377,000.

ADO, sometimes known as Ado-Ekiti, is 35 miles west of Lagos, and has a population over 300,000. Located in a region where rice is grown, Ado has rice mills, and manufactures textiles, bricks, tile, shoes, and pottery. Yams, cassava, corn, okra, fruits, and pumpkins are marketed locally. The city was founded in the 15th century as the capital of the Yoruba Ekiti state. It alternated between independence and occupation by Benin until the British gained control in 1894.

BENIN CITY is situated in southern Nigeria on the west delta of the Niger River, about 150 miles east of Lagos. With a population of 203,000 (1991 estimate), the city is the processing area for rubber, palm nuts, and timber produced nearby. It also manufactures furniture, soft drinks, and carpets. Benin City was the capital of a black African kingdom that probably was founded in the 13th century, and which flourished from the 14th to 17th century. Benin traded slaves, along with ivory, pepper, and cloth to Europe. The kingdom declined after 1700, but revived in the 19th century with the development of palm products and increased commercial activity with Europe. The British conquered and burned Benin City in 1898. Iron work, carved ivory, and bronze busts made as early as the 13th century rank with the finest art in Africa, and can be seen displayed in museums throughout the city. Benin City has Anglican, Roman Catholic, Muslim, government, and private secondary schools and is the site of the University of Benin, which was founded in 1970. Several hospitals serve Benin City and the surrounding area.

The city of **BONNY** is in southeastern Nigeria on the Niger River delta, just south of Port Harcourt. During the 18th and 19th centuries, it was the center of a powerful trading state and became the leading exporter of palm oil. Bonny served as the administrative center of the British Oil River Protectorate from 1885 until 1894. It declined in the 20th century, but enjoyed a revival after 1961, when the port was modernized and used as an export point for petroleum refined at Port Harcourt. The town has an Anglican cathedral and a government health center.

CALABAR is located in a beautiful hilly area near the Calabar River. It is a port city on the southeastern border of Nigeria near Cameroon. Calabar has approximately 154,000 (1991 est.) residents. Formerly called Old Calabar, it was established in the early 17th century by the Efik branch of the Ibibio people.

The city has been influenced by the Portuguese and British. Rubber, food, and palm oil processing plants are located in Calabar, along with a sawmill and cement factory. The town's artisans sculpt ebony artifacts for the tourist market in Lagos. Educational opportunities are not lacking in Calabar, where there is a university and two colleges.

Located in the southwestern part of Nigeria, 112 miles north of Lagos, **EDE** is the old town of the Yoruba people. Since a railway was built from Lagos in 1906, Ede is a major exporting center for palm oil and cacao. Local trading includes yams, okra, pumpkins, kola nuts, and corn. The population was estimated at 271,000 in 1991.

The historical and spiritual center of Yorubaland is **IFE**, located 54 miles east of Ibadan in southwestern Nigeria. Founded about 1300, Ife is the oldest Yoruba town and the most powerful tribal kingdom until the late 17th century. Sometimes called Ile-Ife, the city is an important center for marketing and shipping cacao. It is famous for its museum adjoining the palace of the *Oni of Ife* (traditional ruler). The museum houses beautiful Ife bronzes and terra-cotta treasures. These sculptures, made in the area as early as the 12th century, are considered the finest among west African art. The Oranyan Staff, about a half mile from the palace, is an important Yoruba monument. The nearby Obafemi Awolowo University (formerly University of Ife), established in 1961, has a spacious modern campus. An exhibit of African art at the Institute of African Studies, an experimental farm, and an art and cultural center (Ori Olokun) are also located here. Cocoa, cotton, palm oil and kernels, yams, cassava, and kola nuts are traded in the city. Ife has a population of about 262,000 (1991 estimate).

ILESHA, with a population of about 334,000, is located in southwestern Nigeria, 15 miles southeast of Oshogbo. It served as the capital

of the Yoruba Ilesha kingdom of Oyo until it collapsed and became part of Ibadan in the early 19th century. Ilesha was taken by the British in 1893. The city was formerly a hub for caravan trade, and is now an agricultural and commercial center. Cacao, kola nuts, and yams are shipped from Ilesha. The city has several industries, particularly nail and carpet manufacturing. Ilesha is the home of the Oyo State College of Education and numerous teaching colleges.

ILORIN, the capital of Kwara State, is about 100 miles north of Ibadan and 170 miles northeast of Lagos. It has a population of 420,000 (1991 estimate). This mud-walled city became the capital of the Yoruba kingdom about 1800. Its territory was extended through warfare against Oyo and Ibadan late in the 19th century, but it was conquered by Royal Niger Company British troops in 1897. Today, Ilorin is an industrial center, producing cigarettes, matches, soap, soft drinks, and sugar, as well as an agricultural market for cattle, poultry, palm products, and yams. It is also a center for traditional artisans who make woven and leather goods, tin products, wood carvings, and pottery. Several U.S. missionaries work in and around Ilorin. Health services in Ilorin include a number of government, private, and religious hospitals and a nursing home for the elderly.

ISEYIN is located in the southwest, near Benin. It is about 100 miles from Lagos. Traditionally, Iseyin has been a cotton marketplace known for its dyes. The dyes are exported along with teak and tobacco. Iseyin was once a mining town, but now relies on imported metals. The town has several Christian-sponsored secondary schools and a hospital. The population is over 200,000.

IWO, whose population numbers 320,000, is in southwestern Nigeria, on the rail route just northeast of Ibadan. It is a trade center for the nearby farming region which specializes in cacao. The city was

founded in the 17th century as the capital of a Yoruba kingdom, and grew during the 19th century by sheltering refugees from the Yoruba civil wars. Yams, corn, cassava, and palm kernels are grown north of town.

KATSINA is in the northern tip of Nigeria near the Niger border. The city was founded around 1100 and was named for the wife of a Durbawa king, Kacinna. Katsina was a vital center of the Hausa states from the late 16th century until the late 18th century. There is a palace in the city and its treasures include a 13th century sword called *Gajere*. Katsina is a holding place for peanuts and hides that are sent on to Kano for export. Traditional crafts of the town's predominantly Hausa population include cotton weaving and dyeing, leather and metalworking, and the designing of embroidery and pottery. Several industries were brought to Katsina in the 1970s. The most important are vegetable oil and steel processing mills. The city is an educational center for the region; it houses several colleges including the Kaduna State College of Legal Studies. Katsina's population was about 182,000 in 1991.

MAIDUGURI, in the Lake Chad region some 300 miles east of Kano, was founded in 1907 as a British military post. Its population has grown to more than 282,000 (1991 estimate). Maiduguri is the rail, road, and air transportation center for northeast Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. Leather goods made from hides of crocodiles caught in Lake Chad are the city's leading product. Cattle hides, skins, dried fish, peanuts, and gum arabic are the city's exports. The city has several important industries. These include the manufacturing of leather goods, aluminum, cement, and furniture. Maiduguri is a hub for the main railway line linking northeastern Nigeria to Port Harcourt. An international airport is located five miles west of the city. Maiduguri is situated along the historic route that Muslims traveled from Senegal to Mecca.

OGBOMOSHO, with a steadily increasing population already higher than 650,000, is one of Nigeria's many large and growing cities. It is situated in Western State, 50 miles north-northeast of Ibadan. Ogbomosho was founded in the mid-17th century as a military camp, and became the focal point of resistance to Fulani invasions in the early 19th century. The city grew by absorbing refugees from towns destroyed by the Fulani. At one time, there was a sizable American missionary settlement here, caring for victims of Hansen's disease (leprosy). Today, Ogbomosho is a trade center in a farming region, shipping foodstuffs, tobacco, and livestock. A teachers' college is located here. A prominent landmark in Ogbomosho is a large square tower on the city's central mosque. Ogbomosho has other mosques and several churches and is the headquarters of the American Baptist Church of Nigeria and its theological seminary. Several schools and a teacher's college are located in the city.

ONITSHA is a port city located on the Niger River, about 135 miles from its mouth, and 225 miles east of Lagos. With a population of more than 350,000, Onitsha is a commercial and market center whose local industries include canoe building, saw-milling, printing, fishing, and beverage manufacturing. Situated at the northern limit of year-round navigation on the river, the city is an important port linking the Niger delta with the upper Niger and Benue Rivers, as well as with a wide region of eastern Nigeria. A road bridge built across the river at Onitsha in 1965 is a principal link between east and west Nigeria. A large textile plant is located near the bridge.

OSHOGBO, situated at a road and rail junction on the Oshun River, is about 50 miles northeast of Ibadan. In 1839, the city was the site of the decisive battle in which the Yoruba city-state, Ibadan, defeated the expansionist Fulani state, Ilorin, halting the latter's southward advance. An influx of refugees helped to increase Oshogbo's popu-

lation; today it is more than 400,000. Oshogbo is a center for local artists, and interesting shrines to various Yoruba deities also can be seen here. The annual Oshogbo festival draws close to 10,000 visitors every August. Cotton ginning and weaving and tobacco growing are local occupations. Food processing and steel milling are local industries. Oshogbo is the home of a small teaching college, vocational school, and secondary schools. The city is also serviced by several hospitals.

OYO, located in southwestern Nigeria about 32 miles north of Ibadan, has a population of over 226,000. It was founded in the early 19th century as a replacement for Old Oyo, the capital of the eponymous Yoruba empire destroyed in earlier civil wars. Oyo came under British protection in 1893. Today, it is a farming town that produces tobacco, cotton, and yams. Resident artisans make leather goods and carve utensils from gourds. The town has secondary schools, a government vocational center, and several hospitals. Oyo is a hub for local roads serving the state.

PORT HARCOURT is a deep water port on the Bonny River, about 40 miles from the sea. Located in southern Nigeria the city, with a population of roughly 362,000, was first laid out in 1912, and named for Viscount Lewis Harcourt, the secretary of state for the colonies between 1910 and 1915. Port Harcourt is the operational headquarters for the Nigerian petroleum industry; it refines the oil, then pipes it to Bonny for export. Its industries include steel, aluminum products, pressed concrete, glass, tires, paint, footwear, furniture, cigarettes, plastics, paints, and enamelware. Port Harcourt is the center of the state radio and television broadcasting services.

ZARIA, population 335,000 (1991 estimate), is located in northern Nigeria on a major north-south highway about 87 miles southwest of Kano. First known as Zazzau, the city was founded about 1000 as one of the seven Hausa city-states.

Zaria was captured by the Fulani in 1805 and by the British, under Frederick Lugard, in 1901. It is the home of Ahmadu Bello University, built in 1962. The old part of the city is walled and presents an interesting contrast to the modern structures. Zaria has many inhabitants from the Hausa and Gbari tribes for whom leather tanning and cotton weaving are primary occupations. Peanuts, cotton, and shea nuts are processed in town and shipped by rail to Lagos for export. Several significant industries are located in Zaria, among them basket weaving, bicycle assembly, publishing, cigarette and cosmetic manufacturing, and furniture making. The city has several hospitals, colleges, and research institutes.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Nigeria's 356,669 square miles, roughly equal to the area of California, Nevada, and Utah combined, cover four climatic regions of West Africa: a narrow coastal belt of mangrove swamp; a somewhat wider section of rolling hills and tropical rain forest in the south; a still larger dry central plateau, with much open woodland and savanna and a strip of semi-desert on the fringes of the Sahel in the north. Nigeria is bounded by Benin on the west, by Niger on the north, by Chad at its northeast corner, by Cameroon on the east, and by the Gulf of Guinea on the south.

The country's major geographical features are the Niger and Benue Rivers. The two rivers form the upper arms of a somewhat flattened letter "Y," come together in the south-central part of the country, and from there proceed due south (as the Niger) to the Gulf of Guinea, fanning out into a large and intricate river delta as the waters reach the open sea. Most of the country's oil deposits are found in the delta

area. The highest elevations in Nigeria are in the eastern highlands along the border with Cameroon, with peaks up to 7,936 feet. The most extensive upland area is the Jos Plateau in east-central Nigeria: 2,000 to 4,000 feet above sea level, with peaks up to 5,841 feet.

The temperature is high year round. Temperatures range from the low 90's F to the mid-70's F on the coast and well over 100°F to 60°F in the north. The hottest period is February-April in the south and March-June in the north. The coolest period throughout Nigeria is July and August, though minimum night temperatures in the north are lowest in December and January when the harmattan, a dry north-easterly wind, carries fine sand from the Sahara all the way south to the coast, occasionally closing down airports with a dusty haze. Rainfall is heaviest in the south along the coast, averaging 70 inches a year in the west, increasing to 170 inches in the east. The rainfall decreases fairly sharply inland, averaging 50 inches over most of central Nigeria and 20 inches a year in the far north. The dry and rainy seasons are fairly distinct. The rainy season is May-October (June-September in the far north). In the southwest, including Lagos, there is a principal rainy season in May-July and a secondary rainy season from the second half of September through October. Near the coast, the humidity is high throughout the year, though it abates occasionally during the harmattan from mid-December to mid-February. Northward from the coast, the humidity decreases steadily and varies abruptly with the seasons. Mildew can be a problem under the more humid conditions, but it is controllable with air conditioning.

Population

Nigeria's population in 2000 was estimated at 117,170,948, approximately one-fourth of the total for all Africa. The population is distributed among more than 250 tribal or ethno-linguistic groups. The country's three major groups—Hausa-



Street in Lagos, Nigeria

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission..

Fulani in the north (29%), Yoruba in the west (21%), and Ibo in the east (18%)—constitute some two-thirds of the total population. Numerous remaining groups range in size from several million members to fewer than 50,000. English is the official language, although it is less common in the north, where Hausa is widely spoken. A pidgin English, difficult for the American ear to distinguish, is also common.

About 50 percent of the population is Muslim, and about 40 percent is Christian—Protestant, Roman

Catholic, or a variety of independent African churches. About 10 percent of the population follows some form of traditional religion. Many Christians and Muslims in Nigeria have incorporated into their faith indigenous beliefs or rituals of worship. Muslims are predominant in the north, where historically they have been less influenced by Western education and institutions. Christians are predominant in the southeast. The Ibos of this region quickly adapted to Western education and commerce. The southwest is divided between Christian and

Moslem. The Yorubas predominate in this region. Ethnic and religious diversities in Nigeria present a constant potential for antagonisms, which succeeding federal governments have sought to defuse by fostering the ideal of national unity.

Most Nigerians, from traditional farmers in the villages to business executives in the cities, observe a complex pattern of familial obligations and relationships. The term “extended family” only hints at the ties that link educated and cosmopolitan Lagos urbanites to family

members throughout the country. When a person speaks of his “brother,” for example, he may have in mind a sibling, a cousin, or a good friend from a neighboring village.

Few Nigerians can be neatly labeled “traditional” or “modern,” and the educated Nigerian of the 1990s is a vital bridge between these two ways of life. Aspects of modernity have reached the most remote village, while patterns of traditional life still exist among the most highly educated people. In addition to styles of dress and food preferences, Nigerian tradition is evident in such attitudes as a respect for elders, often to the point of semi-veneration; a hesitancy to criticize the acknowledged leader directly, even in the course of partisan politics; and a preference to seek consensus in most deliberative bodies and focus disagreements on procedural rather than substantive matters.

Public Institutions

Nigeria gained its independence from the United Kingdom on October 1, 1960, inheriting a parliamentary representative government from the British. The military came to power in a coup d'état in 1966 and suspended the constitution until civilian rule was restored in 1979. Nigeria's 1979 Constitution called for a government closely resembling that of the U.S., with a president and vice president elected every 4 years, a bicameral legislature, and an independent judiciary.

The military returned to power in 1983 and suspended all sections of the 1979 Constitution relating to electoral and legislative procedures at both the federal and state level. Ruling by decree, the military government announced in 1987 a program for Nigeria's transition back to civilian rule. The regime conducted local government, state government, and national assembly elections, and civilians took over the positions.

On June 12, 1993, Nigerians went to the polls to elect a civilian president and complete the last leg of the

military's carefully orchestrated transition program. Though most observers described the election as the fairest in Nigeria's history, the regime quickly annulled the poll, provoking a protracted political crisis that continues today. To try to address growing political turmoil, the regime stepped down and turned over power to a civilian-led Interim National Government (ING). The ING proved unable to tackle Nigeria's continuing political and economic problems, and the military took over again on November 17, 1993.

The new military regime quickly consolidated power, dissolved all democratic institutions, and replaced civilian governors with military officers. Under the military rule, the main decision making organ is the military provisional ruling council (PRC), which rules by decrees that have the force of law. The PRC oversees the 32-member Federal Executive Council composed of military officers and civilians, including several prominent politicians. After conducting an election for delegates in May 1994, the PRC convened a constitutional conference mandated to examine the best way to restore democracy and recommend a new constitution. The regime pledged to announce a more specific transition program after reviewing the conference's draft constitution. Though the conference delegates were unable to meet a January 1995 deadline, the conference completed deliberations in April 1995 and presented its report and draft Constitution to the military government.

Elections in 1999 brought Matthew Olusegun Fajinmi Aremu Obasanjo into the presidency.

Arts, Science, and Education

A new arrival in Nigeria should visit the National Museum in Lagos to see “2000 Years of Nigerian Art,” the definitive collection of Nigeria's cultural past, which toured the U.S. and Europe in the late 1970s. The

collection begins with the terracotta figures of the Nok Culture, which flourished in the Jos region before A.D. 800. The delicate lost-wax castings recovered in a chief's tomb in Igbo-Ukwu, shed a new light on the history of Eastern Nigeria a thousand years ago. Excavations at Ife and Oyo yielded busts of the Yoruba kings, who ruled in the 14th century. And finally, the Museum offers the bronze castings and ivory carvings of the Benin Kingdom, among the finest artistic achievements of African civilization.

Nigerian artistic achievement is not only in the distant past. The Igbo spirit masks and the Yoruba carved figures of twins called “ibeji” are only two examples of Nigerian art that will be familiar to anyone with even a casual knowledge of African culture, and these are still made and used today. Artisans still cast and carve in the traditional manner, and their products, readily available in markets and galleries, range from the merely decorative to striking copies of traditional masterpieces. Woven fabrics, embroidery, dyed fabrics, jewelry, decorated calabashes, leather-works, pottery, and baskets abound in markets in every Nigerian city.

Contemporary Nigerian art has been undergoing a “boom” in recent years, and openings of art exhibitions are a feature of the Lagos cultural/social landscape. The first generation of Nigerian painters and sculptors is still active—Ben Ewonwu, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Jimoh Buraimoh, Yusuf Grillo, Nike Davies, Lamidi Fakeye, and Twin Seven-Seven are among the best known. Their students—Kolade Osinowo, Obiora Udechukwu, Emmanuel Anatsui, and others—exhibit regularly in Nigeria, and a younger generation of artists is already filling galleries and museums. Among the latter are Chika Okeke, Victor Ekpuk, and Chinedu Agbodike.

Pageantry is still characteristic of Nigerian life, and towns and villages perform impressive exhibi-

tions of music and dance to welcome important visitors. Benin City is still enveloped in the Igue Festival in December and you can catch a glimpse of the traditional Egungun and Eyo masquerades even in Lagos.

Nightclubs have made a comeback in Lagos, and local jazz, "juju," and "high life" music can be heard on weekends, in clubs, and at weddings and other celebrations. Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, King Sunny Ade, Charley Boy, Aiyende Marshal (Quam I), and Ebenezer Obey are international stars. Shina Peters has captured the Nigerian market with his juju/pop fusion. Although foreign movies have been eclipsed by the video shops that proliferate in Nigeria, the local movie industry produces 10 - 15 video tape films each year for the enthusiastic domestic market, most of them in Yoruba (and few with subtitles). Nigeria's best known authors are Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe. A host of other playwrights, novelists, and poets have made their name, including Steve Rhodes, Ken Saro Wiwa, John Pepper Clarke, Ola Rotimi, Cyprian Ekwensi, Festus Iyayi, Flora Nwapa, and Chukwuemeka Ike, Ben Okri, Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande and their works can be found at university bookstores, hotels, and airports.

The Federal Government has mandated an emphasis on scientific and technical education at the tertiary level. While the country trains its own doctors, dentists, technicians, and scientific personnel, there is little in the way of a "culture of science." The country's efforts have not as yet produced much original research, although they have produced a number of first-rate scientists.

Nigerians have evinced enthusiasm for education that has far outstripped the government's resources. Primary education is free and compulsory; there is considerable debate about its quality and availability, but at present most Nigerian children receive at least

some primary education. In Lagos, it is rare to find people without some reading and writing ability in English, although in the rural areas they predominate.

There are a number of federal universities and state universities, though higher education has been paralyzed in recent years by strikes and non-payment of staff. The Federal Government also funds more than 250 teachers training colleges and 130 polytechnics. An increasing population, a growing number of secondary school graduates and the traditional enthusiasm for education have led to severe overcrowding in all of these institutions and, as with the primary schools, there is considerable concern about the quality of tertiary education. There are no private tertiary institutions in Nigeria but private technical schools abound.

Commerce and Industry

Despite the economic advantages of a low-cost labor pool, abundant natural resources and the largest domestic market in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria's economic performance remains wedded to the fortunes of its petroleum sector. In recent years, oil accounted for roughly 20 percent of Nigeria's GDP, over 95 percent of its export earnings, and over 65 percent of the Government's fiscal revenue.

Through much of Nigeria's history, misguided economic policies and political instability have held back development. The Nigerian Government used much of the revenues from the oil boom of the 1970s to finance a high level of consumption, and some ill-advised investments, leaving Nigeria's economy debt-ridden and vulnerable to the oil-market downturn that followed in the mid-1980s.

To correct these problems, Nigeria launched a IMF/IBRD Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1986, which was in place until 1992. Shortly after the military regime

took over in 1993, the economic advisors led a reversal of the SAP reforms implemented in 1986. Market mechanisms gave way to regulated exchange rates and regulated investment regimes. Income took a sharp drop in 1994 as a result of those policies which prompted the military government to take a second look. Since then, a number of SAP reforms have been reinstated. The exchange rate has been partially deregulated and the budget deficit has shrunk considerably. Regulations on foreign investment and foreign exchange transactions were eased. Decrees regarding money laundering and advance-fee fraud (known locally as "419" schemes) were promulgated to combat those crimes that badly tarnish Nigeria's image. But some distortions remain; the foreign debt remains high, currently at US\$32 billion.

Nigeria's basic infrastructure is extensive, but it is largely unmaintained and inadequate at the demands of a large country with a population of over 100 million. Deficiencies range from crumbling roads and bridges to erratic telephone service and endemic shortages of water, fuel and electricity. Political uncertainty, along with the declining economy and Nigeria's reputation for corruption and fraud, detract from the Nigerian Government's professed interest in attracting foreign investors.

About 70 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture. Before Nigeria began to export petroleum in large quantities, its chief exports were agricultural commodities such as cocoa, peanuts, palm produce, rubber, timber, cotton, and wood products. While many of these exports virtually disappeared during the oil boom years, Nigeria still depends on subsistence farmers using traditional methods on small plots for most of its food.

Over 65 percent of Nigeria's imports in recent years have been capital goods and raw materials for industry. Most of its imports are sourced from Western Europe, with the

remainder coming largely from the U.S., Japan, and other Asian countries. Locally produced consumer goods include textiles, beverages, lumber, furniture, plastics, pharmaceuticals, and food products. Other domestic manufacturers include cement, paper, and wood products. Nigeria has four oil refineries, and two fertilizer plants, with construction on a petrochemical plant underway. Other planned industrial projects in the development or planning stages involve steel, aluminum, fertilizers and liquefied natural gas.

Transportation

Local

“Go-slows” (traffic jams) are a way of life in Lagos. Most roads are in serious disrepair and are often congested. City streets are narrow and contain numerous potholes, which make them hazardous, especially during the rainy season. Floods in the rainy season cause, periodically, three to four feet of water in the streets. Also during the rainy season, “go-slows” are often worse than normal and driving even a short distance can take a long time. Violent car-jacking, especially of newer four-wheel-drive and other popular luxury vehicles, have become a major security concern during recent years.

Safe and reliable public transportation is not available. Public transportation in Lagos is primarily by large buses called “molues” or by yellow taxis. The buses are not utilized by Mission personnel as they are in disrepair, are always very overcrowded and pose serious danger to the occupants. For security reasons, the Regional Security Officer does not recommend that American employees utilize the local taxi service.

Regional

Nigeria’s transportation network consists of roads and air services. Although one or more of these links can be used to get to most areas of the country, the level of service can often be disappointing. There are

several domestic airlines but domestic air safety has been a problem. Not one domestic airline can assure safety—due to lack of proper maintenance, poor pilot and crew training, and inadequate air traffic control. Service is now available on a daily basis from Lagos to Abuja, the capital, and at least three times per week to most other major cities. The country’s two international airports in Lagos and Kano are served by several international airlines. Domestic and International flight schedules are not reliable due to maintenance problems, inclement weather and/or over scheduling of planes.

All driving within Nigeria is on the right side of the road. Major intercity roads are paved, but maintenance is poor. Some roads between cities are close to impassable in some sections. Bandits are a constant danger, so adequate preparation for security should be made before beginning any road trip. Traveling in caravans is strongly recommended by the Regional Security Officer. Roadside facilities are far from adequate and lack basic amenities. Food, water, medical kit, and some basic automobile parts should be carried in the car and caution should be used at all time. Since medical care is seldom available, attention to safety on the road is critical.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local telephone service is sporadic at best and unreliable. The service level offered in Nigeria is still inadequate for the country’s size and is troubled by frequent interruptions and breakdowns. Trunk lines connect most of Nigeria’s principal cities, but telephone service throughout Nigeria is usually unavailable. International calls may be made by direct dial, via satellite, to the U.S. and to Europe. Service is reliable, but it is sometimes difficult to get an outgoing line, especially during office hours. A great deal of patience is required.

Radio and TV

The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) oversees the operation of the Federal television network, which comprises the National Television Production Center in Lagos and NTA station in each of the 30 states and Abuja. An estimated 6.9 million TV sets are in use. Programming begins about 4 p.m. with children’s programs, including “Sesame Street,” and continues until midnight. On Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, transmission on most stations starts at 9 a.m. All broadcasts are in color. Most of the on-air programs are locally produced by Nigerians, but both American and British programming is frequently seen. Newscasts are shown several times nightly on the national networks. Television in Nigeria uses the 625-line PAL color system.

Radio is the primary source of information for most Nigerians. As of 1997, Nigerians owned an estimated 23.5 million radio receivers, mostly medium wave. Broadcasts, talk programs, and much disco music, are transmitted in English and several local languages over a national network operated by the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria and by stations owned by the 30 states. In 1994, the first private radio station, RAY POWER 100, opened in Lagos. It is affiliated with an American station located in Los Angeles.

Many radio stations outside Nigeria broadcast to West Africa, and short-wave reception is usually good, particularly at night. VOA and BBC programs can be heard on several frequencies. All radio, phonograph and other electronic equipment should be tropicalized and carefully packed. American models are difficult to repair in Nigeria. Many people use voltage regulators for TV’s, videos, and stereos because of occasional power surges.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

There are numerous local newspapers and almost all are printed in English. Although newspapers are at least partially owned by federal

or state governments, the press is lively and expressive. International coverage is minimal with major stories taken from the wire services. The *International Herald Tribune*, *USA Today* and the *London Times* as well as *Time*, *The Economist* and *Newsweek* magazines, are available.

British, French, German and other American magazines such as *Readers Digest*, *Ebony* and *Essence* are available on a regular basis at selected locations on Victoria and Ikoyi Islands. Books for all ages, especially paperbacks from the U.K. are sometimes available but are not always in good condition.

Health and Medicine

Community Health

Common diseases are frequently seen in travelers here in Nigeria, but severe trauma (auto accidents) is the greatest risk. Everyone should **WEAR THEIR SEAT BELTS AT ALL TIMES** whenever traveling in any vehicle and caution should be exercised at all times while driving on Nigerian roads. Although diseases endemic to Africa such as parasitic intestinal infections (amoeba, giardia, shigella) are common among the local population, they remain relatively rare among visitors. In any case, treatment is relatively straight forward and well tolerated. Viral "flu," colds, gastro-intestinal upsets, and common skin infections make up the majority of medical problems. Individuals, and especially small children, who suffer from asthma, allergies or skin problems such as eczema or psoriasis may find that these problems become more pronounced in Lagos.

Travelers visiting areas outside of the major cities should carry at least some fundamental first aid equipment with them during their travels. Snake bites are very rare among visitors, although quite common among the indigenous population in some parts of the country. Travelers should be aware of this risk, especially in bush areas, and

should wear protective shoes and clothing when hiking and exploring these regions.

Water shortages are quite common and general sanitation is poor throughout the entire region. As a consequence, outbreaks of water, food and mosquito-borne illnesses are often identified even within our own community. All water used for drinking and preparing ice cubes must be boiled and filtered before use. Bottled water is generally considered safe for consumption. Fruits and vegetables purchased on the local economy are often contaminated with parasites and bacterial contamination and should be cleaned by soaking with dilute cloxox or other safe decontaminants. Imported products are generally safe, but refrigeration is not always reliable. Restaurants offer foods from different countries and generally considered to serve "safe" food. However, one should avoid foods prepared by the street vendors—a reliable source of illness!

Preventive Measures

Malaria is endemic throughout Africa, similarly so in all of Nigeria. Falciparum malaria makes up 95 percent of all the malaria that are seen here. This unfortunately is the same malaria that has become resistant to many drugs and is the one that can, if not treated promptly or if treated incorrectly, can lead to cerebral malaria which has a 20 percent fatality rate despite treatment. It is absolutely imperative that **ALL MUST TAKE MALARIA PROPHYLAXIS**. Mefloquine is the drug of choice for this region, but there are other alternatives if this medication is not tolerated. Combinations of Chloroquine plus Paludrine may be used or one can use daily Doxyxycine. Neither is as effective as Mefloquine. All anti-malarials should be started 1-2 weeks before arrival at post and should be continued for 4 weeks after your permanent departure from a malarious area. The final permanent cure requires an additional medication taken daily for 2 weeks after your departure (Primaquine). In spite of good prophylaxis, breakthroughs of malaria are still possible and require prompt treatment with appropriate follow-up to exclude resistance.

laxis, breakthroughs of malaria are still possible and require prompt treatment with appropriate follow-up to exclude resistance.

Nigeria requires that all persons over the age of 1 year traveling to this country **MUST** be immunized against yellow fever. It is especially important to receive all of your immunizations before coming to post. It is of some note that we have minimized our use of Gamma Globulin to prevent hepatitis A and now use the recently released Hepatitis A vaccine.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

The U.S. Department of State warns against travel by U.S. citizens. Violent crimes can occur throughout the country, and kidnappings are common throughout the Niger Delta region.

Direct flights from the United States to Murtala Muhammed Airport were suspended in September, 1993, due to inadequate provisions for security. Direct flights to Lagos are available from several European cities. Travelers are encouraged to arrive during the day or early in the evening for security reasons.

American Visitors. Any American traveling to Nigeria should exercise caution by ensuring that they are met at the airport by persons known to them.

Airport Arrival. Air travelers arrive in Lagos at Murtala Muhammed International Airport, about 15 miles from downtown Lagos. Although only a short distance, the trip into the city can take from 45 minutes to 1-1/2 hours, depending on traffic conditions. Private vehicles en route to and from the airport are frequently subjected to armed shakedowns by persons uniformed as police officers. Violent car-jacking also occur from time to

time. Special Note: There are no public telephones at the airport.

All U.S. citizens must have a valid visa to enter Nigeria, which is issued at Nigerian embassies and consulates worldwide. Apply for visas well in advance.

Travel to neighboring West African countries invariably requires a visa. If you plan to travel out of Nigeria for business or pleasure, bring at least thirty (30) passport-sized photos. These will be needed for visa applications and other documentation.

Personnel should obtain a cholera stamp and be sure that a yellow fever shot is recorded in their immunization card in order to guarantee entry into Nigeria. All personnel should check with the State Department immunization clinic for a list of the immunizations currently recommended for official personnel.

Nigerian law provides only for the private ownership of breach loaded, non-pump shotguns and rifles, excepting rifles above the caliber of 30-06. A pump action shotgun is prohibited as this is considered to be an auto-loading device. Shotguns that are single or double-barrel are acceptable. No pistols or other handguns are legal for private possession in Nigeria.

The basic unit of Nigerian currency is the Naira, which consists of 100 kobo. Nigeria abandoned a fixed exchange rate system in September 1986. Since then, the value of the Naira has been allowed to fluctuate in accordance with market forces. In August 1996, one dollar equaled about 84 Naira. A number of well-known European and U.S. banks are established, as minority partners, in the Nigerian banking system. These include the affiliate of Citibank, the Nigerian International Bank.

Nigeria has adopted the metric system of weights and measures.

Some hotels accept American Express credit cards as well as travelers checks, which they will

exchange for Naira. The Embassy, however, advises against use of any credit card in Nigeria and other arrangements for payment should be made. No financial information should be left in the home or hotels and no account numbers should be given or available to anyone.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1 | Worker's Day |
| June 12 | Democracy Day |
| Oct. 1 | Independence Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| Dec. 26 | Boxing Day |
| | Id al-Adah* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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RWANDA

Republic of Rwanda

Major City:

Kigali

Other Cities:

Butare, Cyangugu, Gisenyi, Ruhengeri

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 1999 for Rwanda. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Rwanda, known as the "land of a thousand hills," is situated in east central Africa. Physically, it is a country of mountains, hills, lakes, and rivers. Slightly smaller than the state of Maryland, Rwanda is the most densely populated country on the continent.

The capital, Kigali, is a small city located in the heart of the country. Despite its proximity to the Equator, the altitude (approximately 4,800 feet) of Kigali provides a temperate climate throughout the year.

MAJOR CITY

Kigali

With independence in 1962, Kigali became the capital of Rwanda. Kigali is a small city perched on a series of hills and ridges at an altitude of almost 4,800 feet. Rather than having a defined city center, Kigali is a mixture of low buildings, European-style housing and mud-brick African dwellings. Kigali offers tree-lined streets and plentiful gardens. Main streets are paved.

Utilities

Water shortages lasting several days can occur at any time.

If you will be bringing electronic equipment such as a stereo, television or computer, plan on bringing a heavy duty servo-stabilizer or voltage regulator that will accommodate all of the items and UPS equipment if needed. In addition, you should bring surge protectors for each piece of electronic gear. If possible, bring appliances that are made for 220 volts. Short power outages occur fairly often. Residences are equipped with European style wall sockets of various sizes. Bring plug adapters—they are in short supply in Kigali.

Food

Locally grown fruits and vegetables are good. Many vegetables available in the U.S. are also available in Kigali, with the exception of yellow corn, lima beans, and a short season of broccoli. Mangos, pineapple, papaya, passion fruit, guava, bananas, and seasonal citrus fruits are all on the market. South African apples are found from time to time in some import stores, but are very expensive.

A German butcher has established a reliable shop offering beef, pork, chicken, fish and deli and breakfast meats. Most cuts tend to require tenderizing.

Most Americans use either imported UHT milk or powdered milk. UHT cream from Belgium is available. Imported cheeses can be found, if you don't mind paying the price! A local cheese is tasty and good for sandwiches, pizza or casseroles. A number of grocery stores offer a wide variety of imported items, but generally at great cost. Supplies fluctuate, with some products being off the shelves for months at a time.

Clothing

For men, khaki pants and sport shirts suffice in the office. Most women wear dresses or suits to the office. Cocktail clothes do not need

to be overly fancy. Depending on your personal interests, leisure time clothing should include a warm jacket, running shoes, hiking boots, rain gear, bathing suit. Shorts are worn at home, during athletic activities in town, and at safari camps. Generally speaking, dress for both men and women is conservative.

Larger sizes of shoes are difficult to find in Kigali, and variety of styles and types of shoes is limited. It is advised to purchase shoes before arrival.

It is always a good idea to include a winter coat in your shipment in case you must travel to the U.S. in the winter.

Supplies and Services

With a number of import shops available in Kigali, most household supplies and toiletries are available. Be prepared to pay much more than you would pay in Washington. If you have favorite brands of particular items, bring them with you, as many American products are absent from the shelves.

Tailoring and dressmaking services can be found; however, fabric selection is limited and/or expensive. Shoe repair is possible but the results are marginal. Washable clothing is the best bet as local dry cleaners are only adequate.

Servicing of radio, television and other electronic equipment is somewhat reliable. Unisex beauty salons operate in the major hotels.

Domestic Help

In Kigali, servants generally do not live in. A housekeeper does most of the household chores, including ironing.

Be prepared to train your servants in food preparation and personal hygiene. They should receive annual medical examinations. Some employers provide locally made uniforms. Employers should register servants with Rwandan social security and make the required payments. Severance pay is two weeks' salary.

Religious Activities

Catholic, Anglican, and other denominations have one or two services on Sundays.

Sports

Kigali has a challenging 9-hole golf course complete with club facilities. Membership is US \$500 a year. Bring equipment, including balls, tees, gloves, etc. Weekend instruction is available.

The Cercle Sportif, Kigali's sole private club, boasts of complete facilities for tennis, squash, basketball, volleyball, soccer, swimming, and riding. The Club also provides bar and restaurant service. Anyone can join the club, which offers membership at varying lengths of time and according to the facilities you want to use.

The American Club is upgrading its weight room, and also has a basketball hoop, pool table, and dart boards.

The Hash House Harriers is a popular Saturday event, with trails set for runners and walkers. Every Sunday afternoon, a number of expats play softball.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Since the war in 1994 a number of popular destinations within Rwanda are now off limits, including visiting the mountain gorillas in the northwest.

The National Museum at Butare and the handicraft shops there are a popular destination, as is Akagera National Park, a good spot to go fishing, camping, bird watching, and with any luck, spot zebra, antelopes and hippos. The border to Uganda is a two-hour drive from Kigali.

The region offers many travel adventures including white-water rafting, photographic safaris, ballooning, mountain climbing, hiking, gorilla watching in Uganda, boat trips on the Nile, a week at the

beach in Kenya or Tanzania, and much more.

Entertainment

The American Club is a lively spot attracting a very international membership representing the many NGOs and international organizations that are present in Rwanda. Happy hours, parties, movie nights, international dinners, and other special events are always on the calendar. The Club has a fairly well-stocked video lending library.

Pleasant restaurants, discos for dancing, and the occasional dinner-dance sponsored by a local organization are the alternatives to entertaining at home.

Traditional Rwandan Intore dancers and drummers often perform on Rwandan holidays and other special occasions.

Remember to join a book club or bring an ample supply as English-language books are difficult to find. Video tapes, CDS, and cassette tapes are expensive and the selection is small.

Life in Kigali is informal. Small dinners, private parties and government or diplomatic receptions round out the entertainment possibilities.

OTHER CITIES

Situated close to Burundi on the southern border of Rwanda, **BUTARE** combines traditional housing areas and a commercial section. Before 1962, Butare was called Astrida. It is the second largest city in the country, with a population of about 40,000. In 1963, the National University of Rwanda was opened in the city. A museum of anthropology also is located here. Approximately 10 percent of the inhabitants are non-Africans. Most are foreign teachers at the National University of Rwanda.

CYANGUGU is situated in southwestern Rwanda, near Burundi. It is about 100 miles west of the capi-

tal with a population of roughly 12,000. Major crops include beans, cotton, tea, bananas, cassava, sweet potatoes, and corn. Industries include tea and meat processing.

The pleasant city of **GISENYI** is situated on Lake Kivu, one of the most beautiful lakes in Africa. The city is in the northernmost corner of the country, about 50 miles west of the capital. Gisenyi boasts of flowering trees; safe, sandy beaches; beautiful scenery; and the national park of the Virunga Volcanoes. The park is the home of a rare species of mountain gorilla. The population of Gisenyi is about 22,000.

Located in northern Rwanda near the borders of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), **RUHENGERI** is situated at the foot of the Birunga volcanic chain. The roughly 33,000 inhabitants of Ruhengeri are primarily engaged in farming. Sorghum, potatoes, bananas, coffee, and tea are grown. Industrial capacity is very small and is centered on flour-milling and the processing of pyrethrum, a natural insecticide. The city has a modern hospital and small airfield.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Rwanda is located in the mountains of east central Africa and covers 10,169 square miles (4,587 sq. ft. of which is water). Slightly smaller than Maryland, it is circular in shape. The eastern boundary is shared with Tanzania; Uganda, to the north; the west borders the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) and Lake Kivu; Burundi, to the south. The western edge of the country along the Congo Nile watershed, rises steeply, formed by a chain of volcanoes called the Virunga Mountains. It is here that the country's highest point, the volcano Karisimbi



Marketplace in Cyangugu, Rwanda

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at an elevation of 14,782 feet, is found. Gisenyi, a town at the northern end of Lake Kivu, enjoys spectacular vistas of the surrounding volcanoes. Rwanda's green valleys produce beans, sorghum, corn, manioc, Irish potatoes, rice, sweet potatoes, soybeans, bananas, coffee and tea.

The low mountains and steep hills of the remainder of the country diminish in height as one travels towards the east and southeast. On the Tanzanian border, low hills, papyrus swamps, and shallow lakes are interspersed with semiarid savanna. Hardy thickets, 8 to 15 feet tall, cactus like candelabrum trees and grassy glades are found here.

Despite Rwanda's location of only two degrees below the equator, the altitude provides a mild, temperate climate for most parts of the country. The average 24-hour temperature in Kigali is 73°F The higher reaches above 14,700 feet might even experience frost and snow.

Two rainy seasons generally occur between February and May and September through December. However, changes in world climate can cause variation to these seasons. The rains can be torrential, although brief, and sometimes are

accompanied by strong winds and lightning. Although sunshine appears throughout the rainy seasons, mildew in unventilated rooms can become a problem. Annual rainfall averages 31 inches and is generally heavier in the western and northwestern mountains than in the eastern savannas.

The long dry summer season, May to September, turns the hills around Kigali a reddish ochre, fine dust is everywhere, and the grass dries up. Added to this is the smoke from fires as farmers burn away the dried brush. Dust from vehicles on unpaved roads reduces visibility, sometimes causing accidents.

Population

A July 1997 estimate puts Rwanda's population at 7,737,537, with a population growth rate at 8.24%. Despite the 1994 genocide and civil war between Hutu and Tutsi factions that killed up to 1 million Rwandans and forced more than 2 million to flee to neighboring countries, Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa. Rwanda's birth rate is estimated at 38.73 births per 1,000 population; the death rate is estimated at 21.06 deaths per 1,000 population; and the net migration rate is estimated at 64.78 migrants per 1,000 popu-

lation. According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, in 1996 and 1997 nearly 1,300,000 Hutus returned to Rwanda.

Ethnic groups within Rwanda are comprised of 75% Hutu; 24% Tutsi; 1% Twa (Pygmoid). Traditionally, the Hutu are known as cultivators, the Tutsi as cattle raisers, and the Twa as hunters, but population pressure has reduced the importance of cattle raising and hunting and now over 95% of the population depends on subsistence farming. Despite these differences, Rwanda has no tribes, as that term is usually understood, since all groups speak the same language (Kinyarwanda), inhabit the same areas, freely intermarry, and share one culture.

In contrast to many African countries, life in rural Rwanda is not centered around villages (except in recent resettlement projects), but rather around but compounds called "rugos," scattered throughout the hillsides.

The population is divided religiously as follows: 65% are Roman Catholic; 9% are Protestant; 1% Muslim; and indigenous beliefs and others make up 25%. The infant mortality rate (1997 est.) is 118.8 deaths per 1,000 live births. The life expectancy at birth for the total population is 39.11 years; for males, 38.64 years; for females, 39.6 years (1997 est.). The total fertility rate is 5.93 children born per woman.

Official languages include Kinyarwanda, a universal Bantu vernacular; English and French. Kiswahili is used in commercial centers.

Approximately 8,000 non-Africans live in Rwanda, including Belgians, French, Germans, Italians, Dutch, Swiss, British, Scandinavians, South Asians, and Americans.

History

According to folklore, Tutsi cattle breeders began arriving in the area

from somewhere in the north about 500 years ago and gradually subjugated the Hutu inhabitants. The Tutsis established a monarchy headed by a Mwami (king) and a feudal caste of nobles. The Tutsis reduced the Hutus to serfdom through a contract known as "ubuhake," whereby the Hutu farmers obligated their services to the Tutsi lords in return for cattle. Some successful Hutu and Twa were adopted into Tutsi aristocracy. Ultimately, the fortunes of some Tutsi declined until they enjoyed few advantages over the Hutu, and the boundaries of race and class became less distinct.

The first European known to have visited Rwanda was the German, Count van Goetzen, in 1894. He was followed by missionaries, notably the "white fathers." In 1899, the Mwami submitted to a German protectorate without resistance. Belgian troops from then Zaire chased the small number of Germans out of Rwanda in 1915 and took control of the country. After World War I, the League of Nations mandated Rwanda and its southern neighbor, Burundi, to Belgium as the territory known as Ruanda-Urundi. Following World War II, Ruanda-Urundi became a United Nations Trust Territory, with Belgium as the administering authority.

Reforms instituted by the Belgians in the 1950s encouraged the growth of democratic political institutions but were resisted by Tutsi traditionalists who saw in them a threat to Tutsi rule. An increasingly restive Hutu population, encouraged by the Belgian military, sparked a revolt in November 1959, resulting in the overthrow of the Tutsi monarchy. Two years later, the Party of the Hutu Emancipation Movement (Parmehutu) won an overwhelming victory in a UN-supervised referendum. During the 1959 revolt and its aftermath, more than 160,000 Tutsis fled to neighboring countries.

The Parmehutu government, formed as a result of the September 1961 election, was granted internal autonomy by Belgium on January 1,

1962. A June 1962 UN General Assembly resolution terminated the Belgian trusteeship and granted full independence to Rwanda (and Burundi) effective July 1, 1962.

Gregoire Kayibanda, leader of the Parmehutu party, became Rwanda's first elected President, leading a government chosen from the membership of the directly elected unicameral National Assembly. Inefficiency and corruption began festering in government ministries in the mid-1960s. On July 5, 1973, the military took power under the leadership of Maj. Gen. Juvenal Habyarimana, who dissolved the National Assembly and the Parmehutu party and abolished all political activity.

In 1975, the President formed the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND), whose goals were to promote peace and unity and national development. Rwandans went to the polls in December 1978, overwhelmingly endorsed a new constitution, and confirmed Habyarimana as President. President Habyarimana was reelected in 1983 and again in 1988, when he was the sole candidate. Responding to public pressure for political reform, President Habyarimana announced in July 1990 his intention to transform Rwanda's one party state into a multi-party democracy.

On October 1, 1990, Rwandan exiles banded together as the Rwanda Patriotic Force (RPF) and invaded Rwanda from their base in Uganda. The rebel force, composed primarily of ethnic Tutsis, blamed the government for failing to democratize and resolve the problem of some 500,000 Tutsi refugees living in Diaspora around the world. The war dragged on for almost two years until a ceasefire accord signed July 12, 1992 in Arusha, Tanzania, fixed a timetable for an end to the fighting and for political talks leading to a peace accord and authorized a neutral military observer group under the auspices of the United Nations. A ceasefire took effect July 31, 1992,

and political talks began August 10, 1992.

On April 6, 1994, the airplane carrying President Habyarimana and the President of Burundi, was shot down as it prepared to land at Kigali. Both Presidents were killed. As though the shooting down were a signal, military and militia groups began rounding up and killing political moderates regardless of their ethnic background and all Tutsis. The Prime Minister and her ten Belgian bodyguards were among the first victims. It soon became clear that the killing was not limited to Kigali; between April 6 and the beginning of July, a genocide of unprecedented swiftness left up to a million Tutsis killed at the hands of organized bands of militia - *Interahamwe* - and even ordinary citizens were called on by local officials and government-sponsored radio to kill their neighbors. The dead President's own MRND party was implicated in organizing many aspects of the genocide.

Immediately after the shooting down of the President's plane, the RPF battalion stationed in Kigali under the Arusha Accords came under attack. The battalion fought its way out of Kigali and joined up with RPF units in the North. The RPF resumed its invasion, and civil war raged concurrently with the genocide for two months. In July, French forces landed in Coma, Congo (then Zaire) on a peacekeeping mission. They deployed throughout western Rwanda in an area they called "Zone Turquoise." The impact of their intervention is still hotly debated and forms the basis for a still-strained French Rwandan relationship.

The Rwandan army was quickly defeated by the RPF, and fled across the border to Congo, followed by some two million refugees. The RPF took Kigali on July 4, 1994, and the war ended a few weeks later. The RPF took control of a country ravaged by war and genocide. A million or so had been murdered, another two million or so had fled, another

million or so were displaced internally.

The international community responded with one of the largest humanitarian relief efforts ever mounted. The U.S. was one of the largest contributors. The UN peacekeeping operation, UNAMIR, was drawn down during the fighting but brought back up to strength after the RPF victory. UNAMIR remained in Rwanda until March 8, 1996.

Political Institutions

After its military victory, the RPF organized a coalition government based on the terms of the Arusha accords. On May 5, 1995, the Transitional National Assembly adopted a new constitution which included elements of the constitution of June 18, 1991, as well as provisions of the 1993 Arusha Peace Accord and the November 1994 multi-party protocol of understanding. The MRND Party was outlawed. Political organizing was banned until 1999.

The biggest problem facing the government is rehabilitation of war damage, and reintegration of the one and a half million refugees who fled to Tanzania, Burundi, and Congo, returning from as long ago as 1959. One problem of particular urgency is the prison population, which has swelled to 130,000 since the war.

Rwanda has 12 administrative divisions known locally as prefectures: Butare, Byumba Cyangugu, Gikongoro, Gisenyi, Gitarama, Kibungo, Umutara, Kigali rurale, Kibuye, Kigali, and Ruhengeri.

The legal system is based on German and Belgian civil law systems and customary law. Within the Executive branch of government, the principal government officials are: President Pasteur Bizimungu; Vice President and Minister of Defense Maj. Gen. Paul Kagame; Prime Minister Celestin Rwigema; Minister of Foreign Affairs Anastase Gasana; Ambassador to the

United States Theogene Rudasmgwa; and Ambassador to the United Nations Manzi Bakuramutsa.

Arts, Science, and Education

Rwanda is especially noted for its handcrafted baskets. The baskets are made in a wide range of sizes, usually with lids and graphic patterns woven into the sides. They can be quite intricate and magnificent. Private and government-operated handicraft shops can be found in Kigali. In Butare, a city two hours to the south of Kigali, the German development agency, GTZ, coordinates a non-profit artisan coop which offers a wide variety of handicrafts, including wood carvings, basketry, reed rugs, clothing, drums, and other tourist items. The National Museum of Rwanda, also located in Butare, offers a fascinating display of Rwandan history and culture, and a small gift shop sells many interesting pieces.

Before the 1994 war, many religious missions produced artwork and handicrafts, but little if nothing has been produced since.

Butare is also the home of the National University of Rwanda. The University operates primarily with Canadian, Belgian and French technical assistance. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provides assistance to the Law School. The Institut de Recherche Scientifique et Agricole du Rwanda (ISAR) maintains an agricultural experiment station at Rubona, above Butare. Additionally, the Institut National de Recherche Scientifique (INRS) maintains an anthropological museum and arboretum at Butare and conducts studies of regional fauna and flora. The Ministry of Natural

Resources maintains a small but interesting geological museum in Kigali. Rwanda's literacy rate within the total population is 60.5% of those aged 15 and over who can read and write. Of this percentage,

69.8% are male and 51.6% are female (based on 1995 estimates).

Commerce and Industry

Rwanda, one of the poorest nations in Africa, continues to suffer bitterly as a result of the ethnic-based civil war and genocide of 1994. The economy suffers from failure to maintain the infrastructure, neglect of important cash crops, and lack of health care facilities. Data since the war suggests that the GDP dropped 50% in 1994 and came back partially, by 25%, in 1995. By 1997, the economy posted a 13% growth rate, but has not attained pre-war levels. Agriculture dominates the economy; coffee and tea provide 80% to 90% of Rwanda's exports. However, deforestation, soil erosion and the limited amount of fertile land reduces the agriculture sector's production potential.

According to 1995 estimates, of a labor force of 3.6 million, 93% work in agriculture, 5% in government and services, and 2% in industry and commerce. The agriculture sector has recovered to about 85% of its pre-war level of production.

The limited tourism potential that existed before the war has not recovered. Rebels continue to fight government forces in the northwest mountains, home to the mountain gorilla. Akagera National Park, once home to a wide variety of wild animals, has been reduced in area by two thirds to accommodate refugees.

Recovery of domestic production will proceed slowly. Light industry includes mining of tin and tungsten ore, cement, processing of agricultural products, small-scale beverage production, soap, furniture, shoes, plastic goods, textiles, and cigarettes.

Foreign aid, especially from Belgium, Canada, Great Britain the World Bank, the European Union, UNDP, France, Germany, Holland, the United States and Japan, con-

tinues to account for most new capital in recent years. The United States is a leading donor to Rwanda and channels approximately \$12 million per annum through USAID, with an additional \$200 million provided in emergency assistance since 1994.

Transportation

Automobiles

Japanese sedans and American and Japanese four-wheel-drive vehicles are driven by most Americans. Sedans are suitable for most roads in Kigali as well as major highways, but a 4x4 is essential on unpaved roads found throughout the country. Both right and left hand drive vehicles are found, while all traffic requires driving on the same side as in the U.S.

Service at garages varies from poor to acceptable; however, spare parts are very expensive and can take months to secure.

Finding a local mechanic to service an American vehicle can be a challenge. The dry season requires that air and oil filters be changed frequently. All drivers must carry third-party insurance, purchased locally. Insurance for fire, theft, and transportation should be purchased in the U.S.

U.S. drivers licenses can be used in Rwanda.

Local

Many roads between major towns are unpaved, but paved roads extend from Kigali to the Uganda border via Byumba in the north; from Kigali to Rusumu on the Tanzanian border in the southeast; between Kigali and Gisenyi and Ruhengeri in the northwest, and between Kigali and the Burundi border via Butare in the south. Traffic moves on the right in Rwanda, Burundi and Congo; on the left in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. Buses and bush taxis (vans or open pickup trucks) service all parts of the country, but are slow, overcrowded, and dangerous.

Regional

Within Rwanda there are 12,000 km of highways; as of 1997, some 1,000 km. are paved.

There is no rail system in Rwanda, so goods are either flown or trucked in. Sabena Airlines has direct service from Brussels to Kigali two times a week. Connections via Kampala or Nairobi increase the number of options for flying to and from Europe. Additionally, flights are available from Kigali to Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, and South Africa.

Communications

Telephone

Most American households in Kigali have telephones. Calls are individually charged based on duration and distance.

Long-distance service within Central and East Africa is fair in quality and charges. Satellite service to Europe and the United States is reliable but expensive. Internet service is also available and expensive.

Radio and TV

Local broadcast radio stations number one AM and two FM and several shortwave. Bringing a shortwave radio allows you to pick up programming from around the world.

There is one local television station which broadcasts in English, French and Kinyarwanda. The American Club offers a video tape (NTSCVHS) rental service.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

There is a local French-language newspaper available, and The New Times, a Rwandan paper published in English.

American news magazines are available locally, but not many paperbacks are available in English. The USIS library has a small collection of English-language books and The American Club maintains a lending library of several hundred paperbacks.

French hardbound and paperbacks can be found at Caritas, a shop in central Kigali.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Very limited medical services are available in Kigali. Serious medical or dental conditions will require evacuation.

Local pharmacies stock mostly European drugs, vitamins and over-the-counter medication, including antihistamines, cold pills, and throat lozenges. Some antibiotics are sold without a prescription.

Eyeglasses cannot be made in Kigali, so bring an extra pair.

Dental care is below U.S. standards. All preventive dental work should be done before departing for Kigali. Dental emergencies require evacuation to Nairobi or London.

Community Health

Public sanitation is reasonably good. Drains in most European-type houses are adequate; main streets are cleaned periodically, and trash and garbage are collected though irregularly.

Insects abound and learning to live with them is the best strategy. Geckos, a useful, silent, insect-eating lizard, are found in every home, usually inhabiting the upper reaches of house walls. Poisonous snakes are not a major health hazard. Rabies is prevalent; it is advised that you receive immunization against rabies.

Rwanda's temperate climate is generally healthful, but dust and pollen aggravate throat or respiratory ailments during the dry season. Allergies may be exacerbated due to mold and dampness during the rainy season.

Preventive Measures

Most hazards to your health encountered during your tour in Rwanda can be avoided by being

vigilant and by taking a few necessary precautions. Malaria, AIDS, dysentery, bilharzia, and hepatitis can be either avoided completely or your risk greatly reduced by using the appropriate method of prophylaxis. Food preparation, well-cooked meat, water purification, inoculations, repellents, mosquito nets, and appropriate behavior all reduce the risk to your health.

In addition to those mentioned above, diseases endemic to Rwanda include tuberculosis, cholera, and leprosy. Also prevalent are venereal, alimentary tract, parasitic, respiratory, and childhood infectious diseases. Outbreaks of meningitis occur in the rural areas and several cases of "sleeping sickness" are reported each year. Cantaride, known in East Africa as "Nairobi Eye," is a common seasonal skin infection caused by a thin green and orange striped insect. First and second degree burns can occur from contact with the bug.

Recommended inoculations include yellow fever, Hepatitis A & B, typhoid, MMR, tetanus, anti-rabies, and polio. Anti-malaria prophylaxis should be taken.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

A passport and evidence of yellow fever immunization are required. Visas are not required for American citizens entering Rwanda for less than 90 days. U.S. citizens planning on working in Rwanda should apply for a work permit at the Department of Immigration as soon as possible after arrival in Rwanda. Detailed entry information may be obtained from the Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda, 1714 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. 20009, telephone 202-232-2882, fax 202-232-4544, Internet site: <http://www.rwandaemb.org/rwanda/>. Overseas, inquiries may be made at the nearest Rwandan embassy or consulate.

Travelers who wish to travel to the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with visas and/or entry/exit stamps from Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda or Zimbabwe may experience difficulties at the DRC airport or other ports of entry. Some travelers with those visas or exit/entry stamps have been detained for questioning in the DRC.

Direct flights from Europe to Kigali arrive from Brussels, or via Entebbe or Nairobi. Travelers from the U.S. may take an overnight rest stop.

Make reservations well in advance and reconfirm them; check-in early since flights are frequently overbooked.

The airport embarkation fee is \$20 per person.

Airfreight from the U.S. can arrive within 3 weeks, but delays are common. Surface shipments are normally routed through Antwerp, Belgium and airlifted from there to Kigali. Transit time from the U.S. to Antwerp is 8 to 12 weeks, but may be longer.

Private vehicles driven to Rwanda must be declared at the border; importation formalities are arranged later in Kigali.

U.S. citizens who plan to travel to Rwanda are urged to register with the U.S. Embassy and to obtain updated information on travel and security in Rwanda. The U.S. Embassy is located at Boulevard de La Revolution; the mailing address is B.P. 28, Kigali, Rwanda, telephone 250-05601/05602/05603, fax 250-502128; e-mail address is amembkigali@hotmail.com. The Embassy's Internet web site is <http://www.usembkigali.net>

Pets

Pets are not quarantined, but dogs must have proof of rabies vaccinations and a veterinarian's certificate showing origin and health. The above is not required for cats, but is recommended.

At present, veterinary service is good; however, many pet supplies are not available, so bring a supply of flea and tick repellent, heartworm medicine, and pet food.

Firearms and Ammunition

Weapons imported into Rwanda must be registered and approved before they enter the country or turned over to Customs once they are brought into the country (thus requiring a separate packing crate) until they are registered and approved.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The Rwandan franc (FRW) is tied to the SDR and fluctuates as the SDR fluctuates. As of June, 1998, FRW 307=US\$1.

The two commercial banks are the Banque Commerciale du Rwanda and the Banque de Kigali. At these banks, Americans can have a personal checking account in Rwandan francs and buy U.S. dollar traveler's checks

The metric system is used throughout the country.

Disaster Preparedness

In 2002, Rwanda experienced the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo which lies across the border in the

Democratic Republic of Congo. Tremors were felt throughout Rwanda, including in the capital, Kigali. Seismic activity is unpredictable and infrequent, but American citizens should be aware of the possibility of earthquakes. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov/>.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| April 7 | National Mourning Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| July 1 | National Day |
| July 4 | Independence Day |
| July 5 | Peace & Unity Day |
| Aug. 15 | Assumption Day |
| Sept. 25 | Kamarampaka Day |
| Oct. 26 | Armed Forces Day |
| Nov. 1 | All Saints' Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | *variable |

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country.

Finlay, Hugh and Crowther, Ceoff. 1997. *Lonely Planet Guide - East Africa*. Lonely Planet Publications. ISBN 0864424493.

Courevitch, Philip. *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*.

Isaac, John and Greenberg, Keith Elliot. January 1997. *Rwanda: Fierce Clashes in Central Africa*. Blackbirch Press. ISBN 1567111858. For ages 8 and above.

Keane, Fergal. August 1997. *Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey*. Viking Pen. ISBN 0140247602.

Newbury, Catherine. February 1989. *Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Ruanda, 1860-1960*. Columbia University Press. ISBN 0231062567.

Prunier, Gerard. September 1995. *The Rwandan Crisis: History of a Genocide*. Columbia University Press. ISBN 0231104081.

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe

Major City:
São Tomé

INTRODUCTION

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE is Africa's smallest country. The first successful settlement in São Tomé dates to 1493, under the Portuguese crown. By the mid-1500s, the Portuguese settlers, with slave labor, turned the islands into Africa's largest sugar producer. The farming technology and plantation system utilized by the Portuguese in São Tomé later served as the model used in Brazil and the Caribbean. During the 1600s, São Tomé's sugar industry declined as new colonies in the Americas were developed, and the island was only used as a port. The plantation system was used later to grow coffee and cocoa, and that system led to abuses against the African farm workers. Labor unrest continued well into the 20th century. Although slavery formally ended in 1869, in the early 1900s forced labor and poor work conditions were still common. In 1953, Portuguese soldiers fired upon striking plantation workers, killing 1,032. On July 12, 1975, after a period of transitional government, São Tomé and Príncipe achieved independence from Portugal. The country allied itself with the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Cuba in the 1970s and early 1980s. In the 1990s, the government became more

politically open and conducted direct multiparty elections.

MAJOR CITY

São Tomé

São Tomé is the capital city, with a population of about 57,000. Most of the island's population lives in the capital area. In 1493, Álvaro da Caminha, a member of Portugal's royal household, was given generous privileges to help rejuvenate the ailing colony. He brought many settlers to the wide bay of Ana de Chaves where the city of São Tomé now stands. The city was founded in about 1500 and serves as the trading and shipping center for the country. São Tomé was used as a penal colony by Portugal until 1881.

Recreation and Entertainment

Two sports facilities opened in 1992. Sports have a cultural and patriotic importance to São Tomé. During the 1950s, many residents joined cultural and recreational associations such as the pro-nationalist Sporting Club do São Tomé.

São Tomé and Príncipe's scenic beauty, wildlife, and unique historic architecture have the potential to

attract tourists, but tourist facilities are restricted largely to the port areas. The first tourist hotel opened in 1986.

The town center of São Tomé dates back to the late 19th century. At that time, rich plantation owners had many fancy buildings constructed. São Tomé's historical buildings follow one of two architectural styles: colonial, with verandas, high ceilings, colonnades, and courtyard gardens; and French, with mansard roofs and shutters. The Portuguese planters had stately mansions built, many of which are still in good condition (some are still well-maintained). Vista Alegre, Boa Entrada, São Nicolau, Água-Izé, and Nova Moca all have plantation houses. The most elegant is probably the Rio d'Ouru plantation house, which is controlled by Empresa Agrícola Agostinho Neto, São Tomé's largest agricultural plantation company. The plantation houses exhibit tropical colonial, oriental, and alpine architectural styles. Although São Tomé does not have a developed tourist industry, the pruned gardens, ornate architecture, and exotic scenery of the old plantation houses could become a tourist attraction.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

São Tomé and Príncipe, the smallest country in Africa, lies in the Gulf of Guinea about 225 off the west coast of Gabon. The country's total area is 371 square miles, of which the island of São Tomé occupies 330 square miles and the island of Príncipe covers 42 square miles. The islands form part of a chain of extinct volcanos and are both very mountainous. São Tomé's highest peak is Pico de São Tomé, at 6,640 feet. Along the south coast of the island, there are dramatic geological features such as Cão Grande and Cão Pequeno, two precipitous towering spires of volcanic rock. São Tomé's rich vegetation tends to conceal some of its volcanic topography. The islands are tropical, but temperatures vary with altitude. Coastal temperatures average around 81°F, but the mountain regions average only 68°F. Seasons are distinguished more by a change in rainfall than by a change in temperature. Between May and October, the islands receive 150–200 inches of rain, most of it falling on the southern windward areas. Northern areas receive only 40–60 inches of rain.

Population

São Tomé and Príncipe has an estimated population of 160,000, with about 94% of the total residing on the island of São Tomé. Most of the islands' permanent residents are *mestiços*, descendants of the Portuguese (colonists, deported criminals, and orphans) and the African slaves who came from Gabon and the Guinea coast. Along the southeast coast of São Tomé lives a group known as the Angolares, the descendants of Angolan slaves, shipwrecked in the 16th century, who established independent fishing communities. Other ethnic groups include the *forros* (descendants of freed slaves), *servicais* (contract

laborers from Angola, Mozambique, and Cape Verde), *tongas* (children of servicais born on the islands), and Europeans (primarily Portuguese). During the persecution of Iberian Jews in 1492, 2,000 Jewish children were taken from their parents' custody and shipped off to São Tomé as settlers. By 1500, only 600 remained alive (and by 1532, only 50–60) and presumably came to form a unique element of the island's population. Today's *forros* population traces its origins to the resettled Portuguese convicts and the Jewish orphans of the 15th century. Roman Catholicism is the majority religion, with professing Catholics estimated at over 80% of the population. There are smaller numbers of Evangelical Protestants and Seventh-Day Adventists. São Tomé's population speaks a centuries-old dialect of Portuguese; the Creole dialect also reveals the heavy influence of African Bantu languages.

Government

São Tomé became a Portuguese concession in 1485, and was taken over by the Portuguese crown in 1522 (Príncipe followed in 1573). Plantation slavery was the basis of island labor for centuries, and even when slavery ended in 1869, plantations used slavlike contract laborers from other areas of Portuguese-speaking Africa. In 1953, the governor of São Tomé ordered Portuguese troops to open fire on striking plantation workers, killing over 1,000. The massacre sparked a nationalist passion that gained momentum. A liberation group for São Tomé and Príncipe went into exile to Gabon in 1960 and remained there until 1974, when Portugal recognized it as the sole representative of the people of São Tomé and Príncipe. On July 12, 1975, São Tomé and Príncipe became an independent republic. Under the constitution adopted in 1990, a president is chosen by a multiparty election for a maximum of two five-year terms. The legislative body, known as the People's Assembly, is composed of 55 members elected to four-year terms. Judges of the Supreme Court are

appointed by the People's Assembly. After a short-lived 1995 bloodless coup, in 1996 a government of national unity headed by Prime Minister Armindo Vaz d'Almeida was inaugurated. In elections in 2001, Fradique de Meneses was elected president. Manuel Pinto da Costa is the current prime minister.

The flag consists of three unequal horizontal stripes of green, yellow, and green; there is a red triangle at the hoist, and two black stars on the yellow stripe.

Arts, Science, Education

Schooling is compulsory for only four years; many children do not complete elementary school. Secondary education has two stages: the first four years are followed by three years.

Commerce and Industry

São Tomé and Príncipe has one of the poorest economies in the world. The country imports about 90% of its food, and is reliant on cocoa-producing plantations for its foreign earnings. Cocoa accounts for most of the country's foreign exchange earnings—changes in the price of cocoa on the world market can create serious economic problems. Drought and mismanagement have caused cocoa production to decline in recent years, resulting in a poor balance of trade and increased foreign debt. The government has implemented businesslike fiscal and economic policies since 1991, which have slowly started to improve the economy. In December 2000, the country received \$200 million in debt relief from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries program.

Transportation

Roads on São Tomé and Príncipe reflect the plantation economy and serve principally to bring export crops to the port towns. Schooners are the main form of transport for

people living too far from town. Although there are ports at São Tomé and Santo António, large freighters must be unloaded from their anchorage by barge because the ports are not deep enough to accommodate them. The international airport at São Tomé is serviced mainly by the Angolan airline Transportes Aéreos de Angola. Equatorial Airline of São Tomé and Príncipe flies to Príncipe and Libreville, Gabon.

National roads are limited but adequate. Public transportation and emergency road service are unavailable.

Communications

There is a national radio station that broadcasts in Portuguese, and a television station that broadcasts two days a week. Two weekly newspapers are published: *Diario da República* and *Noticias São Tomé e Príncipe*. There are over 3,000 telephones in use.

Health

Malaria and outbreaks of smallpox were major health problems in São Tomé until the early 20th century. There have been problems with malnutrition, but the government has promoted crop diversification to help alleviate the circumstances.

Outbreaks of tuberculosis and measles have occurred in the 1990s.

Medical care in São Tomé and Príncipe are extremely limited. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services. U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. The Medicare/Medicaid program does not provide for payment of medical services outside of the United States. Travelers have found that supplemental medical insurance with specific overseas and medical evacuation coverage has proven useful. For additional health information, travelers can contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's international travelers hotline, telephone (404) 332-4559. Internet address: <http://www.cdc.gov>.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Travelers should obtain latest information and details from the Permanent Mission of São Tomé and Príncipe, 122 East 42nd St., Suite 1604, New York, N.Y. 10168, telephone (212) 697-4211. Overseas, inquiries should be made to the nearest Sao Tomean diplomatic mission.

There is no U.S. Embassy in São Tomé and Príncipe. U.S. citizens in São Tomé and Príncipe needing assistance may contact the U.S. Embassy in Libreville, Gabon, located on the Boulevard de la Mer. The mailing address is b.p. 4000, Libreville, Gabon. The telephone is (241) 762003/4 or 743492.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Feb. 4 Martyrs' Day
- May 1 Labor Day
- July 12 Independence Day
- Sept. (first week) Armed Forces Day*
- Sept. 30 Farmers' Day
- Dec. 25 Christmas & Family Day

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

Hodges, Tony and Malyn Newitt. *São Tomé and Príncipe: From Plantation Colony to Microstate*. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1988.

SENEGAL

Republic of Senegal

Major Cities:

Dakar, Saint-Louis

Other Cities:

Diourbel, Kaolack, Louga, Rufisque, Tambacounda, Thiès, Ziguinchor

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated August 1996. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

For the American coming to sub-Saharan Africa for the first time, Dakar, capital of the Republic of Senegal, affords a moderate and agreeable introduction to the developing world. It is not a place of extremes—of climate, geography, culture, or political ideology. It is in many ways similar to a European city but still maintains its African atmosphere. Dakar lies midway between Arab-Mediterranean North Africa and tropical rain forest countries along the Gulf of Guinea. Senegal's main crop, peanuts, is characteristic of the sandy, dry soil and climate. Senegal is composed of various African populations. Superimposed on their black African traditions and cultures are two major

external influences: Islam, which arrived in the 11th century, and French colonial rule, which began in the 17th century and ended in 1960. Senegal is now over 94 percent Moslem. Its institutions are largely French in character. The official language is French, but Wolof is the lingua franca. Senegalese society offers unusual opportunities for friendly and enterprising French-speaking Americans. Senegalese are interested in the U.S. as the increasing number of visitors and students attests. A widespread genuine curiosity exists about America. In addition to its still close ties with France, Senegal, politically moderate and democratic, enjoys friendly relations with many other countries. Dakar offers a fascinating opportunity to gain insight into a way of life shared by millions of Africans—people with whom the U.S., as a matter of national interest, will be increasingly concerned in the future.

MAJOR CITIES

Dakar

Dakar, Senegal's capital and metropolitan center, is one of the great seaports and industrial centers of West Africa. It is the most European

city between Casablanca and Abidjan. First occupied by the French as a military post in 1857, Dakar soon developed as a seaport and administrative center to replace Saint-Louis as Senegal's principal city. When the Federation of French West Africa was formed, Dakar became the seat of federal government. Following independence from France, the city remained the cultural center of French West Africa. Dakar occupies the southern end of the Cap Vert Peninsula, the westernmost point of the continent. On a plateau about 30 meters (100 feet) above sea level on either side, are the tall, modern buildings, handsome residences, and tree-lined avenues of the business and administrative district. A crowded neighborhood, housing about 100,000-110,000 people, adjoins the business district. To the north are residential districts and suburbs including: Grand Dakar, Colobane, Baobabs, Point E, and Liberte. Although some communities are randomly developed, others are carefully planned residential areas with modern homes, surrounded by trees and gardens. Industrial areas are on the peninsula's southeastern side, along the railroad to Rufisque and the interior. On the western side, beyond Medina and facing the open sea, is the impressive University of Dakar complex and the fashionable suburb, Fann. Dakar-Yoff

International Airport is about 16 kilometers (10 miles) northwest of downtown, not far from Pointe des Almadies, the western-most point on the African continent. Dakar has most of the public utilities and services usually enjoyed by any large city. However, because of the city's growth and the vast quantities of water used by visiting ships, available water supply is sometimes insufficient for the city's needs. Diesel-generated electricity voltage fluctuates, and power failures occur but are usually short-lived. Most apartment facilities are not equipped with emergency generators. No sewers exist outside the downtown area.

Food

A wide variety of food is available locally, but prices are frequently more expensive than in the U.S. Locally produced and French-imported products are well stocked in the markets or super marchés. Beef, lamb, pork, and veal are considerably leaner than U.S. cuts. Seasonal seafood is excellent, plentiful, and inexpensive. Garden vegetables are abundant in winter but scarcer during the hot, humid, rainy summer weather. Fresh fruits are available all year. Fresh milk is available from a Danish-Senegalese enterprise and provides an alternative to the long-life (sterilized) milk products. However, both products offer many varieties. Also available are good varieties of imported dairy products such as butter, yogurt, cream, and cheese. Fresh bread specialties and delicious pastries are baked daily by numerous French, Lebanese, and Senegalese bakeries. Specialty items such as prepared baby food and pet foods are available but extremely high priced.

Clothing

Bring washable clothes since local dry-cleaning is expensive and does not match U.S. standards. Imported, expensive but fashionable, Western-style, ready-to-wear clothing and shoes are available locally in limited supplies. Dress in Dakar is informal, but not casual except at home or at the beach. Senegalese men and women are fashion conscious and

dress well. Bring sport clothing, footwear, and beach accessories to post. An umbrella is very useful during the rainy season.

Men: For the hot, humid summer (July–October) lightweight suits and slacks are worn with short-sleeved white and colored shirts. For winter, heavyweight summer suits or lightweight tropical worsted suits, long-sleeved shirts, and a few sweaters are useful.

Women: During the summer season, women dress as they would in the Mid-Atlantic, in July and August. Washable, lightweight cotton and linen fabrics are best. Cool, sleeveless dresses are worn during the day, both in the office and in public. Tailored slacks are also worn. Shorts are not appropriate in public unless engaged in athletic activities. Most entertainment is informal or casual. Dakar's winter season compares with late spring and early fall in Washington, D.C.—warm days with cool evenings. Because houses and offices are not heated, lightweight warm clothing is required for indoors. Dark cottons, knits, and light woollens are useful. Shawls are often worn since entertaining continues outdoors, even in winter. Some cold-natured individuals wear heavy knits and medium-weight woollens. Since the cool season is short, a large amount of heavy clothing is unnecessary. Light sweaters or jackets are recommended for the few cool and windy months. Many people purchase material and hire local tailors to make clothing. The quality of work is quite good but can be very expensive.

Children: During the winter months in school, most boys wear long or short washable pants or blue jeans with long-sleeved shirts or sweatshirts, whereas in the summer months shorts and T-shirts are preferred. Throughout the school year, girls wear dresses, skirts and blouses, or jeans. Bring an initial supply of tennis shoes. Local purchases are expensive and do not wear well. Several sweaters, corduroy jackets or Windbreakers are

good for winter. For infants and toddlers, bring a large selection of warmer clothing since most houses have cold, ceramic tile floors, and no heating systems. During summer, children may change underwear and playclothes often; bring an adequate supply as frequent washing can cause wear and tear. Cottons are cooler and more comfortable than polyester. Locally purchased disposable diapers are expensive when available.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: All local purchases are expensive. Lightweight cotton or wool blankets or lightweight comforters are used during winter. French personal products are available. If you prefer certain American brands, bring them. Prescription glasses are filled here, but are expensive. Sunglasses are recommended. Contact lens wearers should bring ample cleaning and disinfecting supplies. Bottled water is available. Backup glasses should be brought since dust may cause some contact lens wearers difficulty. Wide selections of imported and African material for clothing, draperies, and upholstery are available. Locally produced cottons include tie-dyes, African prints, and intricately woven "jacquards."

Basic Services: Dakar has laundries, dry-cleaners, and shoe repair shops. Service quality varies. Numerous French-operated barber-shops and hairdressers offer good quality service at moderate to expensive prices. Experienced tailors are available to help you expand your wardrobe quickly.

Religious Activities

Dakar, although predominantly Moslem, has several churches and missions. Catholic churches offer Mass, in French, regularly during the week and on Sundays. A few priests and nuns speak English. Other Sunday services in French include one by French Protestants and one by the United World Mission. The Southern Baptist Convention holds an English-language interdenominational service and

Sunday School service. Dakar does not have a synagogue; however, the small French-speaking Jewish community attends services in each other's homes.

Education

Senegal's schools, private and public, are open to Senegalese and foreign children. The public elementary school system is overcrowded and not recommended. Catholic and Protestant churches operate several private French schools. The International School of Dakar (ISD) is a nonsectarian English language school in Dakar. Supported by the Department of State's Office of Overseas Schools, ISD is an independent, coeducational day school offering an American educational program reflecting the diverse international background of the student body and faculty. Classes are currently offered in pre-kindergarten through grade 9. The pre-kindergarten class offers a morning program and is located on the campus but is self contained. The class caters to students 4 years old at the start of the school year with a few places available for 3-year-olds. The kindergarten, for 5-year-olds, offers a full-day program. ISD is accredited in the U.S. by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges. The school calendar year is from early September to mid-June. ISD follows an American curriculum including math, reading, science, social studies, and writing. At all grade levels, French, music, art, computers, and physical education are required.

Each full-time teacher at ISD is certified by a school system in his/her country of origin; several hold Master's Degrees (or equivalent) in their subject area. ISD is conveniently located in a quiet residential suburb of Dakar known as Fenetre Mermoz, overlooking the ocean. The new facility, opened in January 1989, includes 20 classrooms, a library, science and computer labs, and changing rooms. In addition to the school's playground, a regulation-size sports field, and an multipurpose gymnasium/auditorium; the student body has access to the



Courtesy of Carolyn Fischer

Beach at Dakar, Senegal

American Club pool and playing courts. The school is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors elected by the International School Association of Dakar, the sponsoring body of the school.

The ISD's mailing addresses are as follows:

International School of Dakar
 B.P. 5136
 Dakar, Senegal
 Telephone numbers:
 Tel.: (221) 23-08-71
 Fax: (221) 25-50-30

The Dakar Academy, which was founded in 1961, is sponsored by three missionary groups. Today, an open enrollment includes students of many nationalities. An American curriculum is offered for kindergarten through grade 12. Bible class and weekly chapel attendance is compulsory for all grades. French, music, art, and physical education are offered at all grades. Science and computer lab classes using state-of-the-art equipment are also offered. English-as-a-Second-Language instruction is required for all students with inadequate English comprehension skills.

The school is accredited by ACSI and the Middle States Association

of Schools and Colleges. The large campus located in Hann (near the zoo) includes surfaced sports/tennis/basketball, track and field areas, and a newly refurbished auditorium. The faculty consists of fully certified teachers holding bachelor's degrees or higher. Most have had teaching experience before coming to Dakar Academy. Children must reach the age of 6 by October 31 before entering the first grade. Sometimes exceptions are granted if the child will be 6 by December 31 and achieves a satisfactory score on a readiness test. School begins in late August and continues until early June. Progress reports with letter grades are given four times a year. Parents seeking enrollment in the academy should write the academy principal at the following address:

Dakar Academy
 Route des Maristes (HANN)
 B.P. 3189
 Dakar, Senegal
 Tel. (221) 32-06-82

Other options available to parents with older children include sending teenagers to boarding schools abroad or seeking enrollment in a French-language lycee. French schools commence in late October and continue to mid-July. Students



Courtesy of Kenneth Estell

Guards at the presidential palace in Dakar, Senegal

should not enroll in a local French-language high school without thorough French fluency. Non-French-speaking students are placed in a special class or have several months of private French tutoring.

Several good private French-language nursery schools are located in Dakar.

Special Educational Opportunities

The University of Dakar offers a French language and civilization course (20 hours a week from late October through mid-June) for serious students only. Placement tests are given the third week in October.

Sports

A variety of clubs and private facilities for athletics include: For flying enthusiasts, the Aero club de Dakar offers flying lessons and rental of private planes. The archery club uses facilities at the Cercle de l'Etrier (CED). (Bowhunting is illegal in Senegal.) A 12-hole golf course is located near Dakar at Camberene. The Meridien President Hotel has an 18-hole and 9-hole course and very good facilities. Horseback riding is popular; Dakar has six riding clubs. Membership and riding fees are comparable to U.S. costs. Boarding and lessons are

available. Dakar has 11 tennis clubs. Some are equipped with showers and a bar.

The Senegalese Tennis Federation sponsors one or two world-class exhibitions a year. Two squash clubs also exist. An active softball league includes teams of Americans, Canadians, French, Koreans, and Japanese. The season runs from October through March with a break over the Christmas holidays. Games are held on Saturday or Sunday alternating on the fields of ISD, the Ambassador's lot, and the French military base. In February each year, Dakar invites softball teams from other West African posts to come to Senegal for the annual West African Invitational Softball Tournament (W.A.I.S.T.). The Association Dakaroise de Tir offers a range for European-style competition target shooting. The club is licensed by the Senegalese Government, and membership is limited to 50 persons for the entire country. Only serious and dedicated target shooters are welcome. Classical ballet, gymnastics, aerobatics, yoga, karate, and judo instruction are available at various locations. Sports enthusiasts should bring appropriate clothing and equipment. Several local sports shops have good selections but prices are high.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The Senegalese Government actively encourages tourism. Opportunities for interesting excursions exist in Dakar and throughout the country either by car or on an accompanied bus tour. Accommodations range from Class A deluxe resort hotels to village encampments offering primitive lodging and the opportunity to experience village life up close. During the year, several traditional festivals are held throughout the country. The ocean is undoubtedly Dakar's main recreational asset. Excellent swimming, boating, fishing, skin diving and scuba diving are available. Dakar has a multitude of white, sandy beaches along both sides of the peninsula. However, not all beaches close to town are safe or clean enough for swimming. Waterskiing, wind surfing and sailing equipment rentals are available at some boating clubs and hotels in Dakar. The ocean off the coast is unpredictable with sporadic surf, undertow, currents, and storms. Prudence dictates safety first for all water activities. Boaters and deep-sea enthusiasts should be well informed on local weather reports and air-sea rescue procedures. For these activities, bring safety equipment, including lifejackets. The Cap Vert Peninsula has many beaches along its coastline. N'Gor Island, 3-4 minutes off the coast by pirogue, has an excellent beach and some cottages. Historic Goree Island, 20 minutes by ferry, has a small beach, three restaurants, and two museums. Both islands have areas suitable for skin diving.

The Meridien, Teranga, and six other hotels have swimming clubs with excellent facilities. Many have beach restaurants serving snacks and drinks. Several popular beaches and resort areas are within a 2-hour radius of Dakar. Some mission personnel rent beach houses and a few have purchased cottages. Year-round fishing is available. Although surf fishing is the most accessible, the most popular method is trolling. Several local fishermen will rent their pirogues on a half-day basis if

you supply the gas. More enjoyable but expensive are the deep-sea Air Afrique charter boats, costing 280,000 CFA per day from June through October. Many deep-sea fishing enthusiasts believe membership at the Club de Peche Sportif de Dakar is a good investment. Affiliated with the International Game Fishing Association (IGFA), the club sponsors fishing contests and various social events. Available equipment costs three or four times U.S. prices. Dakar has four well-supplied fishing shops. U.S. catalog orders can take 5 weeks to arrive, and most fishing rods are not mailable. Skin diving and spear fishing are popular. Compressed air bottles can be charged locally. Waters around Dakar are not as clear as the Mediterranean but are much warmer. Neoprene shirts are necessary only from December to April. Hunting is gaining popularity in Senegal. Imported guns must be registered with the Senegalese government. Prospective hunters are advised to join the Association de Chasse et de Tir du Senegal, licensed by the Senegalese government. The hunting season normally runs from November to May. The only big game hunting is near the national animal reserve at Niokolo-Koba, 300 miles from Dakar. Dakar has two yacht clubs with boats ranging from 20-40 foot "Requins," "Dragons," or smaller "Snipes" to hybrid sail and motorboats.

Entertainment

Dakar has several cinemas. All films are shown in French. Theaters are air-conditioned and showings are 7 days a week. The American Club shows American films during the weekend for members and guests. The Daniel Sorano National theater is open between October and June and presents well-known local and international theatrical groups and singers. The Dakar International Music Society periodically produces choral and musical productions. Interested participants are always welcome. The IFAN museum at Place Soweto has an interesting collection of West African arts and crafts. The main IFAN building on the University of Dakar

campus has an excellent, specialized library on African subjects. Another IFAN museum worth visiting is located on Goree Island. An interesting and active art community creates modern and abstract works. USIS, the French Cultural Center and private galleries occasionally schedule exhibitions. Several charity balls and numerous French presentations are held during the social season. The excellent National Troupe Folklorique performs several times a year. Local hotels schedule many performances of the African Ballet troupe which offers traditional dance exhibitions. A few people in the European community play chamber music and are always looking for new talent. Classical guitar and kora lessons are also available. Dakar has several impressive but expensive night clubs, discotheques and a casino. A combination of bands and current records are used. Also a few jazz clubs offer excellent entertainment. Good French, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Italian, and African restaurants are open 6 days a week for lunch and dinner. Numerous restaurants are located in the hotels and along the beaches. Prices range from moderate to expensive.

Social Activities

Among Americans: The American community in Dakar includes U.S. Mission personnel, missionaries, private business people, and students. Americans gather informally for social activities, including picnics, beach parties, and sports events. The Marine House is a favorite meeting place for American families to relax. The Detachment sponsors various informal parties and social events. The American Club is located next to the ISD on the Corniche about 5 miles from the Embassy. The Club is open daily from 10 am to 8 pm and later for special occasions. American direct-hire and U.S. contract employees may become full members; non-official Americans and third-country nationals are associate members through sponsorship by a full member. Facilities include a 10x25 meter swimming pool, two lighted tennis courts, one lighted all purpose (ten-

nis/volleyball/basketball) court, a party room, snack bar for light meals, snacks, and drinks, changing rooms and an outside area for showing movies. The American Club is a facility of the ECWRA whose Board of Directors is also responsible for commissary, cafeteria and video tape club operations.

English-speaking women in Dakar are invited to join two separate English-speaking women's clubs offering a variety of programs, an organization for all wives within the diplomatic community or the organization made up largely, but not exclusively, of French women. The Hash House Harriers (HHH) are universally known. An active international group of joggers and walkers gathers every Saturday night at a predetermined location announced weekly. Scouting activities are encouraged for girl and boy scouts. Troops offer a variety of activities including camp-outs, field trips and international service project participation.

International Contacts: Opportunities for establishing international contacts in Dakar are numerous. The extent of the contacts will depend on your own initiative and ability to meet others. The Senegalese are hospitable and entertain frequently. Americans often attend their social functions and reciprocate the hospitality.

Special Information

Senegal is one of the most stable countries in the region. The internal threat to Senegal is minimal. A separatist insurgency in the Casamance region of Southern Senegal posed serious threats in the late 1980s and 1990s, but fighting calmed when a cease-fire was signed in 1993 between the Government of Senegal and the Mouvement de Forces Democratiques de Casamance (MFDC). However, a resurgence of violence in this region has occurred in recent years. On the crime front, Dakar is subject to the usual problems associated with big cities. Violent crime, although relatively low, is on the rise, but is overshadowed by the frequency of petty

crimes. Pickpockets are very aggressive and very good. Bags, briefcases or satchels, left unattended, even momentarily, may be stolen; articles left in plain sight in vehicles are also at risk. Carry as little cash as possible and not all in one place. Do not show money openly on the street and do not wear expensive jewelry. Carry only photocopies of your identification documents, i.e., passport and drivers license. Beware of your surroundings at all times and do not venture into unknown areas.

Saint-Louis

Saint-Louis, at the mouth of the Senegal River, is a city of about 179,000. It has a long history as the capital of Senegal and also of Mauritania. It was the maritime outlet for waterborne commerce of the Senegal River Basin for many years but, when the Saint-Louis/Dakar railroad was completed in 1885, the city declined as a seaport and commercial center. Today, it remains fairly important as the capital of the Fleuve Region and as a gateway to Mauritania.

The main district is on a narrow, sandy island in the river estuary. On the mainland across the channel to the east is the suburb of Sor, terminus of the railroad to Dakar, and a point on the highway from Dakar to Rosso and Nouakchott in Mauritania. To the west, two bridges link the island with Languede Barbarie, where the fishing villages of N'Dar Tout and Guet N'Dar are situated. A mile or so east of Sor are the electric power plant and an airfield.

There is a beautiful national park in Saint-Louis, with an interesting wild bird sanctuary. Excursions can be booked at most of the hotels or tourist agencies in Dakar.

OTHER CITIES

DIORBEL is about 90 miles east of the capital in the western half of the country. The city, with a population over 60,000, produces perfume,



Harbor scene, Saint Louis, Senegal

David Johnson. Reproduced by permission.

beverages, and peanut oil. Diourbel is also the site of an artistic mosque.

KAOLACK, capital of the Region of Sine-Saloum, is the commercial and shipping center of the richest peanut area in Senegal. It has developed during the last 65 years into a city with over 195,000 people, second only to Dakar in size and, in importance, as a port on the Saloum River. A plant that makes salt from evaporated seawater and a peanut oil refinery are nearby.

Situated near the Atlantic Ocean, **LOUGA** is in the northwest region of the country. The inhabitants of the city are Fulani (nomads), and Wolof (farmers). Louga is a cattle market, connected to the capital and the port city of Saint-Louis by road and rail. The city is known for its sandstone plains in the interior and its dunes on the coast.

RUFISQUE, a city of over 100,000, antedates Dakar by several centuries. It was once the main commercial center and shipping point for the Cap Vert area, and regained considerable importance as an industrial and residential suburb after World War II. Well served by rail and highway, but able to accommodate only shallow-draft shipping, the city has peanut oil refineries,

textile and shoe factories, a pharmaceutical plant, and several other enterprises. Natural gas deposits are located near the city. Nearby, at Bargny, is a large Portland cement plant.

Located in the southeast, **TAMBACOUNDA** is nearly 280 miles east of Dakar. Crops grown in this tall-grass and woody area include cotton, corn, peanuts, and rice. The town is connected by rail to Dakar and the Republic of Mali. Senegal's largest national park, the Niokolo-Koba National Wildlife Park is located 45 miles southeast of Tambacounda. The population is estimated to be over 30,000.

THIÈS, a commercial, communications, and industrial center, has over 200,000 inhabitants. It is the capital of the region of the same name and an important market for peanuts, Senegal's main product. Several processing plants are located here. The railroad from Dakar branches at Thiès to form Senegal's two main lines to Saint-Louis and the Mali border. Reserves of aluminum phosphate found near Thiès are being exploited.

ZIGUINCHOR is the capital of the Casamance Region and the seaport and commercial center for a well-

populated area of farms, timberlands, and fisheries. Its 1994 population of 165,000 has grown from only 6,000 in 1937. Ziguinchor is on the south bank of the Casamance River, approximately 65 kilometers (40 miles) above its mouth, and is connected by river ferry with a road through The Gambia to Kaolack, and a secondary road to Banjul. A fairly good road runs 25 kilometers (15 miles) south to San Domingos in Guinea-Bissau. Barges and small craft ply the numerous waterways of the region. Ziguinchor has a small number of industries, including several sawmills, an ice factory, a peanut shelling plant, and a peanut or palm oil mill. It has an airfield with scheduled flights to Dakar, Bissau, Cap Skirring, and Kolda.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Senegal, located on the bulge of West Africa and covering 196,000 square kilometers (76,000 square miles), is about the size of South Dakota. It is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the west and separated from the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to the north by the Senegal River. On the east, it is bordered by the Republic of Mali, on the south by the Republics of Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. The independent, English-speaking state of The Gambia, straddling the Gambia River, penetrates fingerlike over 320 kilometers (200 miles) into Senegal. Averaging less than 220 meters (650 feet) in elevation, Senegal is mostly flat or rolling plains with savanna-type vegetation. In the southeast, however, plateaus 500 meters (1,640 feet) high form foothills of the Fouta-Djallon Mountains. Marshy swamps, interspersed with tropical rain forests, are common in the southwest.

North of Dakar on the Cap Vert Peninsula, the coast forms almost a straight line; further south it is

indented by many estuaries and is often marshy. The country is drained by four major rivers flowing almost parallel from east to west: The Senegal, Saloum, Gambia, and Casamance, each navigable for a good distance inland. Senegal has two well-defined seasons: alternative northeast (winter) and southwest (summer) winds produce the cool, dry winter season (November–June) and the hot, humid summer (July–October). During winter, Dakar days are invariably sunny with temperatures between 17°C and 27°C (63°F and 80°F). During summer, the average temperature is 30°C–35°C (86°F–96°F) with high humidity. Beginning in January, the harmattan brings dust and sand from the Sahara Desert for 2 or 3 months. Between July and October, Dakar receives 400–500 millimeters (16–20 inches) of rainfall a year. Precipitation increases further south, exceeding 1.5 meters (60 inches) a year in parts of the Casamance region in the southern part of the country. Typically, Senegal is considered a dry, almost desert country with a pleasant climate.

Population

Of Senegal's estimated 10.4 million people (2000), 60 percent live in rural areas. In Senegal, there are French and Lebanese citizens, as well as a sizable Cape Verdean community. Dakar has some 2 million inhabitants. Four other Senegalese cities surpass 100,000 in population: Kaolack, Thies, Rufisque, and Saint-Louis. By ethnic group, inhabitants are 43 percent Wolof, 24 percent Peulh or Fulani, 15 percent Serere, 4 percent Diola, and 3 percent Mandingo. Smaller ethnic groups include the Sarakole, Moor, Bassari, and Lebou. The population is young, 44 percent being under 14. Population growth is estimated at 2.9 percent a year. The birth rate is 37 per 1,000. Infant mortality is high; life expectancy is about 63 years. The Senegalese constitution provides for freedom of religion. Religious institutions are autonomous. About 92 percent of the population is Moslem, 2 percent

Christian (mostly Catholic), and about 6 percent animist.

Public Institutions

Senegal's constitution, adopted on March 3, 1963, provides for an executive-presidential system. The President (chief of state) is elected by universal adult suffrage to a 7-year term. In 2000, Abdoulaye Wade was inaugurated as president. Senegal's legislature is a 120-member National Assembly elected by universal adult suffrage concurrently with the President, and a 60 member Senate. The highest court in the independent judiciary is the Supreme Court, ruled by presidential-appointed judges. For administrative purposes, Senegal is divided into 10 regions, each headed by a Governor appointed by, and responsible to, the President.

Arts, Science, and Education

Although the literacy rate for the country as a whole is low (about 33 percent), Senegal has long been considered the intellectual and cultural center of West Africa. The University of Dakar attracts students from all of francophone Africa. The university maintains faculties in Arts and Letters, Law and Economics, Sciences, Medicine, Journalism, Technology, Library Science and Teacher Training which are all highly regarded in the region. Other university institutes sponsor scientific research in energy, applied linguistics, psychology, and pediatrics. The University's Institute of French Teaching for Foreign Students offers a 1-year course of language, literature, and civilization. The Institut Fondamental de l'Afrique Noire (IFAN) museums and ethnographic institute, a division of the University of Dakar, enjoys an international reputation; it receives scholars, researchers, and tourists from all parts of the world. A second university, smaller in scale and modeled after land grant institutes in the U.S., was opened in the city of Saint Louis in 1991.

Since the Senegalese elite are avid readers, multiple newspapers and magazines are published in Senegal. Book stores and newsstands in Dakar do a brisk business. Bookstores carry French-language publications, with Senegalese and other African writers well represented. The works of such well-known novelists as Mariama Ba, Aminata Sow Fall, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, and Sembene Ousmane are readily available. Also available are the works of younger writers in affordable paperback editions published by the Nouvelles Editions Africaines. Newsstands and supermarkets offer a variety of magazines and newspapers, published in Senegal and abroad. Available international publications include *Time*, *Newsweek*, *International Herald Tribune*, and *The Economist*. Senegal's film industry, active and widely admired during the 1960s and 1970s, has suffered in recent years from a scarcity of government funding. Only a few filmmakers are able to obtain resources in France or Germany, and the number of films made by Senegalese each year has fallen to a very low level. However, the industry is being privatized with a new organization (SIMPEC), which is taking charge of film distribution. Although most commercial cinemas offer first-run films from France, the U.S. (dubbed in French), Italy, and India are also represented. The works of Senegalese filmmakers Sembene Ousmane, Mahama Johnson Traore, Momar Thiam, and Moussa Bathily are occasionally shown on the commercial circuit.

Films from other parts of Africa can sometimes be seen as well. Under the leadership of former President Senghor, the arts received an especially strong impetus which, in the face of the current economic situation, could not be sustained. Nonetheless, as a consequence of the efforts of the Senghor period, the country now boasts a reservoir of trained artistic talent. For example, individuals who studied at the Dakar School of Fine Arts and abroad are now mature practitioners of painting, sculpture, and tap-

stry weaving. The National Tapestry Works at Thies produces monumental tapestries designed by Diatta Seck, Theodore Diouf, Mamadou Wade, Khalifa Gueye, and Bocar Diong. Their brilliantly colored tapestries reflect African themes, traditions, and folklore in modern Western technique. Senegalese musicians and singers in the traditional "guot" style, Youssou N'Dour, Baba Mal, Ismail Lo, and others have emerged as exciting and popular international artists. Another increasingly popular art form is the glass painting of Gora Mbengue and others, depicting customs and habits of ordinary people in urban areas. In the field of performing arts, the Daniel Sorano Theatre offers a varied program each year. Plays by local dramatists (e.g., Sembene), concerts by local choral groups, and performances by visiting musical and dance troupes constitute typical selections. French, Italian, British, German, and U.S. Embassy cultural centers sponsor quality film shows, art exhibitions, and cultural performances. These centers also operate libraries and language classes.

Commerce and Industry

Since 1980, Senegal, with the help of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the U.S., and various other donors, has engaged in an economic restructuring program. The goal of the program is for Senegal to generate and maintain a positive per capita economic growth rate. One objective of this structural adjustment program is to increase private sector activity. To achieve this objective, the Government of Senegal has substantially reduced its role in the economy and created an environment providing impetus for private enterprises. The Senegalese Government is attempting to sell or liquidate many state-owned businesses to reduce and redefine the size and role of the remaining parastatals; return economic incentives to the rural sector by eliminating fixed prices from major food crops; give farmers a freer hand in

production and marketing; and to demand improved industrial efficiency by lowering tariffs and trade barriers and exposing local business to healthy competition. This economic program is revolutionary in a country that has for decades shared many of the statist approaches of its former colonial power, France.

In January 1994, Senegal and the 13 other members of the CFA franc zone devalued their common currency by 50 percent. The CFA franc's value had been fixed relative to the French franc since 1948. During restructuring, new opportunities have been created but some economic power centers have had to face competition for the first time. Urban real incomes are down as the government cuts spending and subsidies. Urban unemployment is up as government employment is reduced and inefficient businesses are closed. Senegal's major foreign exchange earners are fish, phosphates, peanut oil and tourism. A precarious agricultural resource endowment and a relatively limited manufacturing base make trading and commerce a way of life in Senegal. Senegal is a nation of traders, and France is its leading trading partner. A common language, a currency tied to the French franc, a substantial French commercial presence, and large flows of French financial aid have enhanced the bond. Senegal's trade with the U.S. is limited; but has begun to increase. Senegal imports food, capital equipment, and used clothing from the U.S., and exports to the U.S. live birds, seafood, and artisanal products. Senegal is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union which along with its central African counterpart and the Comoros islands forms the CFA franc zone, (the 3-country Senegal River Basin Development Organization, the 4-country Gambia River Basin Development Organization, and the 16-country Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS). Senegal participates actively and effectively in international affairs as a member of the United Nations Committee on Trade and Development

(UNCTAD), in negotiations on the General Agreement of Tariff and Trade (GATT), and as a member of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). Sonatel, Senegal's telephone company, is extending and improving telephone service in the Dakar region as well as in the eastern part of the country. Water and waste disposal systems have improved in Dakar. Many residential and commercial areas now receive daily trash pickup. Following is a brief listing of the major commercial and economic centers outside of Dakar: Kaolack, 192 kilometers south of Dakar, economic capital of the Sine-Saloum River basin, is the commercial and shipping center of the richest peanut area in Senegal. It has developed since the 1920s into a city second only to Dakar in size and importance. A plant that makes salt from evaporated seawater and a peanut oil refinery are nearby.

Rufisque, only 28 kilometers south of Dakar, a city of over 100,000 people, antedates Dakar by several centuries. It was once the main commercial center and shipping point for the Cap Vert area, regaining considerable importance as an industrial and residential suburb after World War II. Well served by rail and highway, the city has textile factories, a pharmaceutical plant, and other enterprises. Nearby, in Bargny, a large Portland cement plant is operational. Rufisque is now administratively a part of the Dakar metropolitan area.

Thiès, 70 kilometers east of Dakar is a commercial, communications, and industrial center with over 176,000 residents. This regional capital is an important market for peanuts, Senegal's principal agricultural export. The railroad from Dakar branches at Thiès, forming Senegal's two main lines north to Saint-Louis and east to the Mali border. Saint-Louis, 264 kilometers north of Dakar, at the mouth of the Senegal River, has a population of 115,372 people. First settled by the French in 1659, the city was the colonial capital of Senegal and Mauritania. For many years it was the



Courtesy of Carolyn Fischer

Local fishermen display their catch in Dakar, Senegal

maritime outlet for waterborne commerce of the Senegal River Basin. In 1885, when the Saint-Louis/Dakar Railroad was completed, the city declined as a seaport and commercial center. Today, it remains important as the capital of the Fleuve Region. Ziguinchor, 454 kilometers south of Dakar, is the economic capital of the Casamance Region with a seaport and commercial center for a well-populated area of farms, timberlands, and fisheries. It has over 125,000 people, compared to some 6,000 in 1937. Located on the south bank of the Casamance River, 65 kilometers above its mouth, the city is 260 kilometers by road (through The Gambia) from Kaolack. A fairly good road runs 24 kilometers south to San Domingos, Guinea-Bissau. Ziguinchor has a small number of industries, including several sawmills, an ice factory, and a peanut processing plant. The airfield serves scheduled flights to Dakar, Bissau, and Cap Skirring, an important seaside resort which boasts a Club Med and Savannah Hotel as well as locally run hotels and pensions.

Transportation

Good roads make a variety of excellent resorts around the perimeter of the city easily accessible by car.

Driving is on the right side of the road and international road symbols are used. Priority to the right is the rule governing most intersections not controlled by traffic lights or police.

Dakar has an extensive public transportation system, but buses are often overcrowded and off schedule. Most American personnel prefer to use their own cars or to take taxis. Taxi fares are not set; metered taxis are rarely available throughout the city. Passengers usually must negotiate fares before taking a taxi. However, fares are reasonable.

Dakar has excellent and frequent worldwide airline connections. Air Afrique has two flights per week to and from New York. European airlines servicing Dakar provide excellent connections to other areas of Africa and Europe. Dakar's international airport is usually busy since it is the connecting point for many flights terminating elsewhere in Africa. Make reservations as far in advance as possible for travel to Dakar or cities requiring onward air travel from Dakar. Trains are available from Dakar to some major cities in Senegal as well as to Bamako, Mali at very reasonable prices.

Accommodations are very simple and delays often occur.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Direct-dial telephone service between Dakar and the U.S. is available via satellite. Fax service is also available. Direct-dial rates from the U.S. to Dakar are significantly lower than those originating from Dakar. Some localities do not have lines available. Telegrams and Telefax are sent from Sonatel, Senegal's telephone company. Costs depend on destination. Service is generally reliable; however, telegrams occasionally fail to reach their destination.

Radio and TV

A good shortwave radio is useful for intercepting Voice of America (VOA) and British Broadcasting Company (BBC) programs. The international network, Radio Senegal, broadcasts mainly in French, and the national network transmits more than 40 hours weekly in the five national languages. Excellent music is often played on French broadcasts with some tapes furnished by the U.S. Information Service (USIS). A state-owned TV station broadcasts 3–4 hours per evening, including a 30-minute news program. Up to 13 other stations can be received if a locally purchased antenna is obtained. Only multi-system TVs (SECAM) can be used for reception of these channels.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

Some English-language newspapers, including the *International Herald Tribune*, are available a day late from local newsstands. International editions of *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *People* are sold weekly. Regular delivery of papers and magazines must be arranged with local vendors or via subscriptions from Europe. Readily available are French newspapers including *Le Monde* and other popular periodicals. Dakar has three daily newspapers, published in French, and several weekly papers. When sub-

scribing to periodicals from the U.S., consider the 3- to-4 week transit time to Dakar. Dakar's good bookstores stock mostly French books, at double French or U.S. prices.

Health and Medicine

The community in Dakar relies upon a few small multispecialist clinics and a large French military-administered general hospital (Hospital Principal).

Medical Facilities

Several local dentists do satisfactory work, but their services are expensive. Therefore, it is best to have all dental work done before arrival.

Community Health

Maintaining good health in Dakar means taking appropriate preventive measures. Anywhere in Senegal, amoebic dysentery, giardiasis, hepatitis, typhoid fever, and many worm infestations may be acquired from food or water. Therefore, all water for drinking and making ice cubes should be boiled and filtered. Cook all meat until well done and avoid raw seafood. Wash all raw, unpeeled fruit and vegetables in an iodine solution before cooking. Proper food handling is an essential measure of preventive medicine.

Malaria is endemic in Senegal, and all Americans should take malaria suppressants. Hepatitis is prevalent, and Americans should receive gamma globulin shots every 4 months. Tuberculosis, leprosy, meningitis, polio, influenza, and measles are also found in Senegal. All Americans must possess a current medical clearance, and a valid yellow fever immunization, and should have completed all required and recommended immunizations. Rodent and insect control is satisfactory.

Preventive Measures

The likelihood of contracting tropical diseases or infections is minimal if normal precautions are taken. Persons in good physical condition and adaptable by nature suffer no serious problems in Dakar. The dan-

ger of infections is minimal if small cuts and wounds are treated properly. The possibility of schistosomiasis should deter wading and swimming in all freshwater areas. Swimming is safe at designated beaches and swimming pools. For protection from Acquired Immune Deficiency (AIDS), avoid contaminated blood products, unsterilized needles, and take recommended precautions for avoiding sexual transmission.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

American citizens entering Senegal must possess a valid passport, a Senegalese visa and an international inoculation certificate bearing evidence of inoculation against yellow fever.

Rabies is endemic in Senegal. Rabies shots should be renewed annually. Although no quarantine period is required, dogs and cats must have a valid health certificate and rabies certification before entering the country. Contact airlines for shipping details and secure reservations well in advance. Several veterinarians practice in Dakar, including an English-speaking doctor who makes house calls.

Exchange rates fluctuate based on the dollar exchange rate to the French franc. CFA and French francs are readily interchangeable in Dakar. CFA cannot be obtained or exchanged outside of CFA countries, except in France. The rate of exchange as of January 2001 was \$1=699 CFA francs. Travelers checks are available at local banks. The metric system of weights and measures is used in Senegal.

Several commercial banks offer banking and exchange facilities. Major credit cards are accepted by most major hotels, restaurants, airlines, and some shops.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| April 4 | Independence Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| May/June | Ascension* |
| May/June | Whitsunday (Pentecost)* |
| May/June | Whitmonday* |
| Aug. 15 | Assumption Day |
| Nov. 1 | All Saints' Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| | Hijra New Year* |
| | Id al-Adah* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |

*variable

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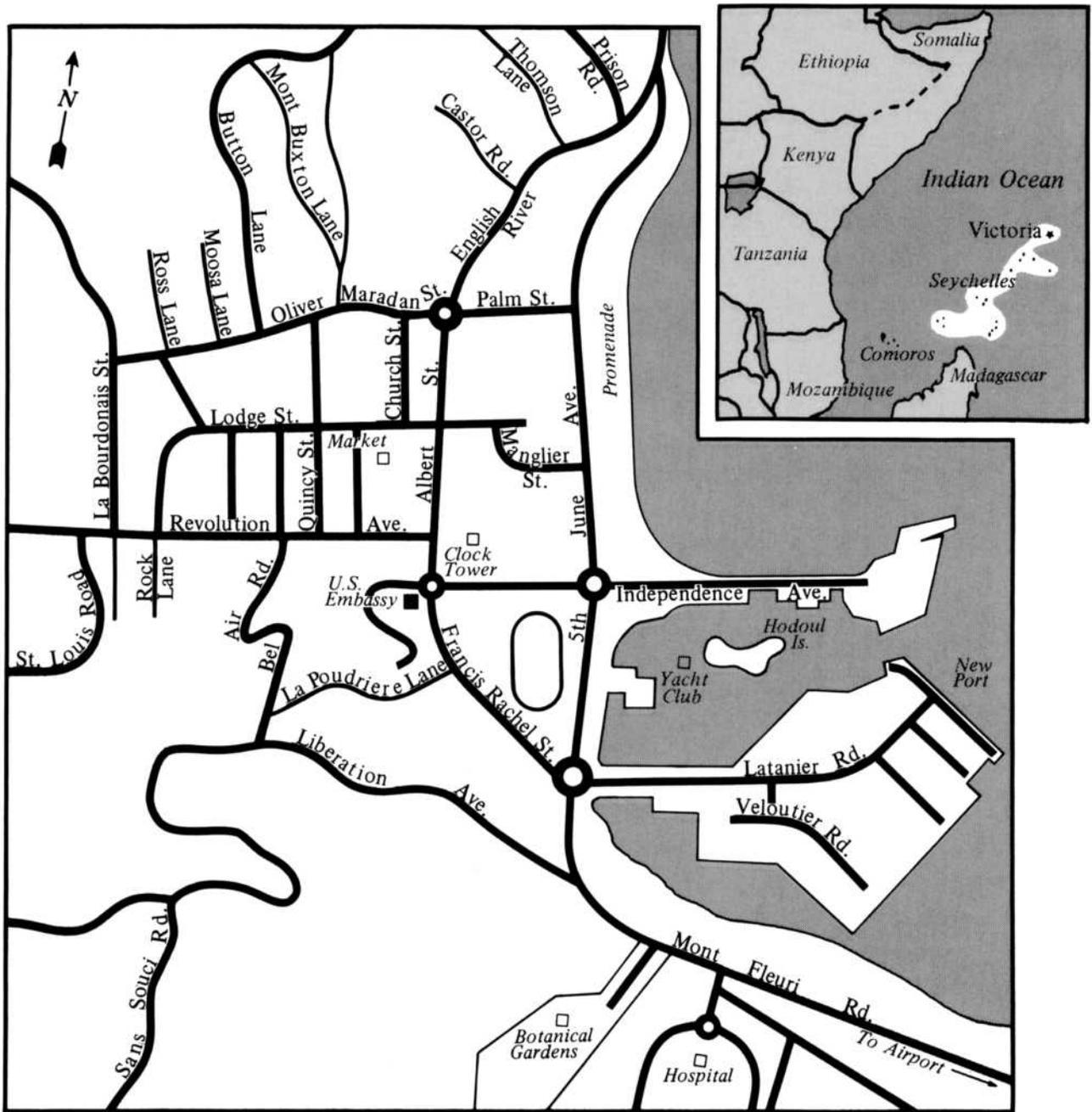
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Victoria, Seychelles

SEYCHELLES

Republic of Seychelles

Major City:
Victoria

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated May 1993. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The 115 lush, tropical islands which comprise the Republic of **SEYCHELLES** are considered the jewels of the Indian Ocean. Untouched for centuries, and settled only in 1744, the archipelago rises from the sea in colorful, majestic panoramas. It is so unique in its beauty, "a thousand miles from the rest of the world," that romanticists have suggested that it may have been the original Garden of Eden.

In Seychelles, people of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds have come together to forge their future. The Seychellois are united by their Roman Catholic religion and Creole language, with few of the animosi-

ties which have divided other nations.

MAJOR CITY

Victoria

Victoria, the capital and principal town, is the seat of government. It is situated on Mahé Island. For many years, it was only a small village but, today, it is becoming an attractive city with privately owned buildings, a new town area, a harbor, and banking facilities. Its area population is about 23,000—a number swelled considerably each year by throngs of tourists. The international airport, served by carriers from Europe, Africa, and Asia, is located eight miles from the center of the city.

Victoria has several banks, supermarkets, a cinema, a number of shops, several excellent restaurants, a service station, and an open-air market. Hotels (seven of international standard) and numerous guest houses are situated around the island.

Mahé is the largest of the islands in the Seychelles. Its beaches are famous for their water-sports facilities and resort comforts. Beau Val-

lon, on the western coast, is the most famous.

Schools for Foreigners

The International School of Victoria, based on the British system, provides an education for non-Seychelles students up to grade five. French is taught as a foreign language. In addition to a standard curriculum, students can participate in extracurricular activities. These include drama, gymnastics, field trips, squash, basketball, sailing and canoeing.

Recreation

Because of the pleasant climate, Seychelles offers a wide assortment of outdoor sports. Victoria has one nine-hole golf course, a tennis club, a yacht club, several squash courts, and a flying club with its own light aircraft and instructor. Golf and tennis competitions are organized frequently. Scuba diving, wind-surfing, snorkeling, water-skiing, and sailing are all offered at the bigger hotels.

Soccer is the national sport, but basketball, track and field, volleyball, boxing, and weight lifting are increasing in popularity. A small but active rugby club is composed mostly of expatriates.



Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

Cityscape of Victoria, Seychelles

Entertainment

Movies, cocktail and dinner parties, and hotel and club dancing provide most of Victoria's opportunities for entertainment. The civil and social organizations consist of Rotary Club, Round Table, and youth groups who meet in town centers. The American community has no organized activities as such, but the Satellite Club at the tracking station on Mahé frequently hosts dances or picnics on American holidays. Considerable informal entertaining is done at home.

Personal relations with host country nationals are excellent, and it is relatively easy to develop associations and friendships. The diplomatic missions in Victoria, other than that of the U.S., are the British, French, Chinese, Russian, and Indian. The largest component of the 2,000 foreign residents is comprised of South Asian expatriates employed by the Seychelles Government, parastatals, and multinational corporations.

It should be noted that, for all its charm, Seychelles is small and isolated. Since the distance to the mainland is about 1,000 miles, it is prohibitively expensive to leave the island periodically. The result is that some people suffer from "island fever," although it is usually only an

especially long stay that produces such an effect.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Situated in the western Indian Ocean, just south of the equator, The Republic of Seychelles consists of a nucleus of several granitic islands, with a large number of outlying coralline islands. It is an aggregate of more than 171 square miles of land, and about 600,000 square miles of territorial sea and exclusive economic zone. The 115 islands in the archipelago are divided into two distinct groups: the Mahé, 40 granite islands with high hills and mountains; and the coralline group, which are, for the most part, only a few feet above sea level, and generally uninhabited except for plantation workers collecting coconuts for copra. The main group of islands is of rugged formation and lies on the center of a bank which covers about 16,000 square miles.

The granitic group is fairly compact, with no island being more than 35 miles from Mahé. Its total land area is 87 square miles, of which Mahé

(the largest and most important island) claims 55.6 miles. These islands are rocky in formation, with an extremely narrow littoral, from which a central range of hills and mountains rises steeply to almost 3,000 feet. The vegetation is lush and tropical, and the sea gentle and beautiful, owing to the surrounding coral reefs.

Mahé lies between 4° and 5° south latitude. It is 17 miles long and four to seven miles wide, rising abruptly from the sea to a maximum altitude of 2,969 feet at the top of Morne Seychellois National Park. The only other islands of importance in terms of size and permanent population are Praslin, 21 miles from Mahé, and La Digue, 30 miles away.

The coralline islands lie between 60 and 612 miles from Mahé. No permanent population resides on most of them; indeed, some are waterless and uninhabitable.

The daily temperature is about 80°F, and varies little throughout the year. The hot, humid season runs from December to May. March and April are the hottest, but temperatures seldom exceed 88°F. During the coolest months, July and August, temperatures drop as low as 70°F. Southeast trade winds blow regularly from May to November and this period, corresponding to winter elsewhere in southern latitudes, is the coolest, driest, and most pleasant part of the year. At higher altitude levels, on the inhabited part of the rocky hills, temperatures are cooler and the air fresher.

Rainfall varies considerably from island to island and from year to year. The rainfall recorded at Victoria, the capital, has averaged 94 inches for the past 25 years. The greater part falls in the hot months when the northwest trade winds blow. During the rainy months, the climate is enervating because of high humidity and constant heat. The islands are outside the hurricane zone, and thunderstorms are rare and mild when they do occur. By contrast, rainfall in the outlying coralline group is far less, ranging

from 50 inches in the more easterly islands to 20 inches on southernmost Aldabra, which is considered the world's largest atoll.

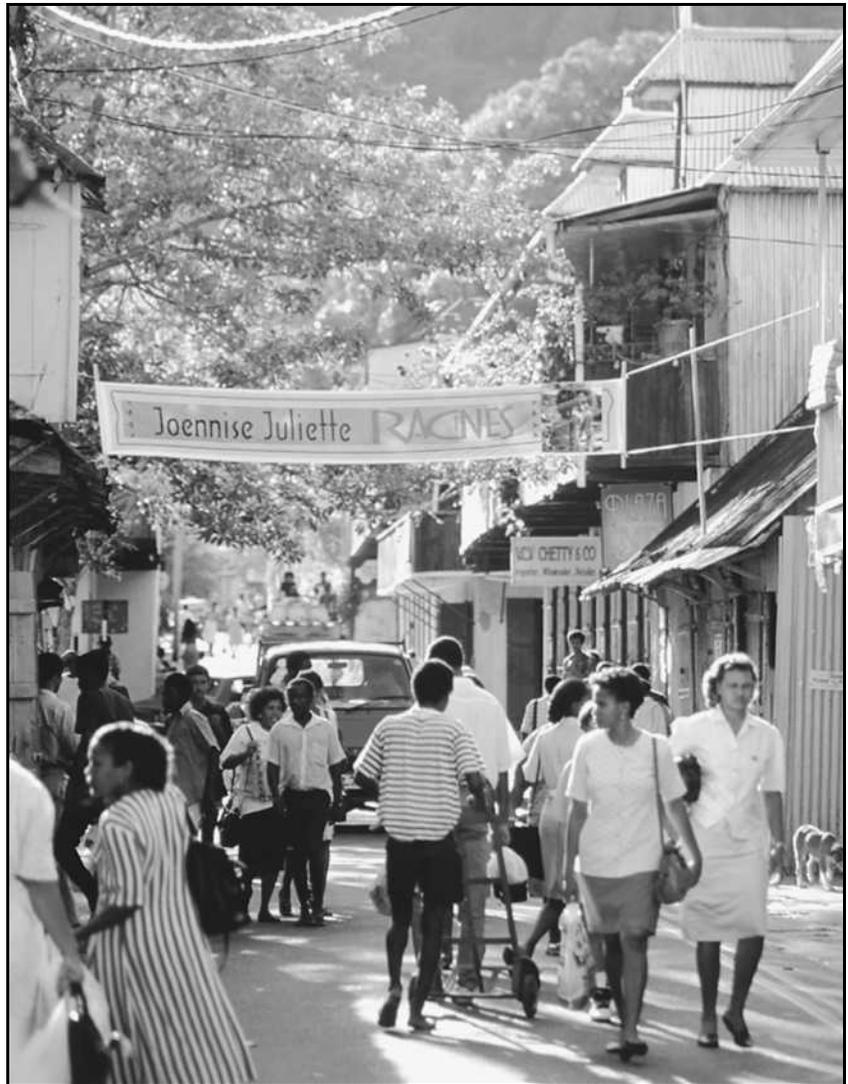
Population

The people of the Seychelles are non-indigenous. The islands were completely uninhabited until the middle of the 18th century when French settlers arrived, bringing with them African slaves. Since then, an influx of Chinese and Indian traders has formed today's main mercantile class. Intermarriage has been widespread, resulting in a great diversity of people. It is difficult to delineate ethnic groups accurately.

The total population of Seychelles is about 80,000, with nearly 90 percent living on Mahé. Victoria's population is approximately 40,000; some of these are expatriates, including French, British, Italians, and other continental Europeans. The predominant group remains the British, and includes business representatives, technical assistance workers, and many retirees. Since 1963, when the U.S. Air Force satellite tracking station was constructed on the Mahé mountain range of La Misere, the expatriate population has included many Americans.

Seychelles' islanders are charming and hospitable. Their official language is now Creole, but English is a second official tongue, and the study of French is compulsory in schools. Some 90 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, and the remainder Anglican, Seventh-Day Adventist, Baha'i, Hindu, and Muslim. About 58 percent of the adult population is literate.

Civic and social groups consist of the Rotary Club, the Round Table, and youth groups which meet in social centers. Neighborhood athletic leagues participate in soccer, boxing, field hockey, basketball, and volleyball.



Street in Victoria, Seychelles

© Nik Wheeler/Corbis. Reproduced by permission.

Government

Seychelles achieved independence from Great Britain on June 29, 1976. Following a coup on June 5, 1977, the existing constitution was suspended, and the legislature dismissed. A new constitution took effect on the same date two years later.

The 1993 constitution permits multiparty elections. The Seychelles had been governed as a one-party state since 1978, controlled by the Seychelles People's Progressive Front. Provision is for a National Assembly to be comprised of 34 members (25 directly elected and 9 assigned on a proportional basis). Under current terms, the president

(who serves as both chief of state and head of government) is elected for a five-year term. France Albert René, who assumed power in the 1977 coup, was elected to the presidency two years later, and reelected in 1984, 1989, 1993, and 1998. After the multiparty elections in 1998, there were four opposition members in the National Assembly.

The civil service is based on the British system. Principal secretaries are charged with day-to-day operation of the ministries, under the guidance of presidentially appointed ministers.

Seychelles follows a policy of non-alignment in international affairs,

and (in theory) requires a guarantee that all naval warships docking in the islands are without nuclear weapons.

Since 1996, the flag of Seychelles has consisted of five oblique bands of blue, yellow, red, white and green.

Arts, Science, Education

In 1981, a structured educational system was implemented, requiring attendance in grades one through ten. After completing the tenth grade, students who wish to continue their education may attend a one-year National Youth Service (NYS) Program. While living at the NYS village, students receive academic instruction as well as training in gardening, cooking, housekeeping, the care of livestock, etc. Those finishing NYS are then eligible to attend Seychelles Polytechnic (not a university-level institution) for pre-university training, or go to one of the technical training schools.

The initial language of instruction is Creole. English is introduced as a teaching language for certain subjects, beginning in grade three, and French in grade six.

No institutions of higher education operate in the islands. University entrance and higher professional training are available through the United Kingdom's technical assistance program, Commonwealth scholarships, U.S. African Manpower Development Program, French Government scholarships, and other programs.

The main library is the National Library in Victoria, with a branch on Praslin. The Seychelles National Archives and Museum are located just outside of Victoria at "La Bastille."

The handicrafts industry consists of tortoise shells and seashell items and basketry.

Commerce and Industry

Seychelles' primary problems are demographic and economic. The birth rate is still high, and poverty exists, although it is reduced in severity by the benign climate. Efficient production of plantation crops has required less labor in recent years. Increasing population, however, creates considerable development expenditures. Although government policies emphasize increased food production by small holders, agricultural production for export is still mainly based on the plantation system. Copra and cinnamon production is predominantly for export, and many foodstuffs are imported despite soil and climatic conditions that could produce a wide variety of agricultural products.

Vegetables are grown on the island along with many tropical fruits; however, importation is necessary. The land, though fertile, is limited in quantity and additional room is not available to expand production. Agricultural production has not kept up with the increased demand for food. Modern methods have not taken hold because of the high cost of imported materials.

The two most important crops are copra and cinnamon. Pakistan receives virtually all copra exports. Other important exports are canned tuna, fresh and frozen fish, oil (used in the manufacture of soap and perfume), fresh coconut, and guano.

The main industries prepare copra and vanilla pods and extract essential oils for export. Coconut oil for cooking, coconut for stock feed, soap, *coir* (coconut fiber) rope, mattress fiber, beer, soft drinks, tobacco, and cement are produced in small quantities for local consumption.

Seychelles has a small handicrafts industry. Locally made handicrafts include tortoise shell, coral jewelry, black coral, sea shells, batik, shark spine walking sticks, baskets, dolls, and the famous coco-de-mer or sea coconut, found only in the Sey-

chelles. Ceramics and pottery are available at a local Potters Cooperative and a variety of African jewels and curios are on the local market.

Tourism provides more than 70 percent of foreign exchange earnings, over 20 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), and 30 percent of formal employment. This growth was made possible by the opening of the islands' first commercial airport on Mahé in December 1971.

A hotel building boom began in the 1970s. The number of tourists steadily increased. As a result, employment in tourism escalated rapidly, and foreign exchange earnings from this source rose to record levels. However, stiff international competition for tourist dollars and a dramatic drop in tourist receipts because of the 1991 Persian Gulf War caused the government to take steps to broaden its economic base. Over 120,000 tourists visit the Seychelles annually, generating over \$100 million in revenue.

During the 1970s, considerable effort and money was devoted to improving infrastructure, primarily on Mahé, but also on the nearby islands of Praslin and La Digue. Roads, water and electricity supplies, a new deep water pier, urban land reclamation from the sea, improvement in telecommunications, education, and health projects are capital developments carried out during the past few years.

The main objectives of the Seychelles government are: diversification of the economy, particularly in agriculture and fisheries; expansion of home ownership; steady, controlled growth which can be sustained; increased employment; greater Seychellois participation in the economy; inclusion of the outer islands in economic development; more equitable distribution of the benefits of economic development; and a slower population growth rate.

Seychelles has traditionally incurred a trade deficit, offset by

aid, private capital investment, and tourism earnings.

Seychelles is a member of the U.N. and several of its specialized agencies, the Organization of African Unity, the Commonwealth of Nations, and the International Monetary Fund.

There is no official Chamber of Commerce in the Republic of Seychelles.

Transportation

Mahé is served by several international air carriers. Flights operate most days a week to Africa, Europe, and Asia. A few cruise ships call at Port Victoria each year.

Interisland travel is provided by Air Seychelles, ferryboat service, and private launches.

Mahé's public transportation is sporadic. Small buses operate to all parts of the island during the day. Taxis are in service on Mahé and Praslin. Rates are high and service after midnight is limited. Car rentals are readily available.

Roads are steep and narrow with dangerous hairpin turns and few guardrails. A single traffic lane moves on the left, and maximum speed is 65 kilometers (40 miles) per hour. There are few traffic signals, and no traffic signs posted.

For any extended stay in Seychelles, a personal car is a necessity. Only compacts or subcompacts are advisable; the steep, narrow roads have no shoulders or sidewalks, and cars often are parked on the sides. Good brakes are essential.

Spare parts for American cars are unavailable, and U.S.-manufactured automobiles are difficult to repair, especially those with automatic transmissions. The types of cars available locally are Toyota, Mazda, Honda, Nissan, Suzuki, Peugeot, and English Ford; all can be easily serviced and repaired. Wear and tear on vehicles, particularly on tires and brakes, is pro-



Independence monument in the Seychelles

Courtesy of Barbara Beach

nounced because of driving and road conditions.

Vehicle insurance rates are comparable to those in the U.S., but include full comprehensive, collision, and third-party coverage in the initial protection purchase.

Communications

Telephone and telegraph service is excellent. International calls and cables are carried by satellite, with a call to the U.S. rarely requiring more than three minutes for contact. Airmail arrives from the U.S. in approximately 10 days; surface mail is en route from three to six months.

Radio Seychelles broadcasts in French, English, and Creole. Television broadcasting is in the PAL-B format. Programming is limited to two or three programs per week of general interest, including feature films, sitcoms, and newscasts.

A wide range of magazines and newspapers is available in Seychelles. It is possible to obtain the *International Herald Tribune*, weekly editions of *Time* and *Newsweek*, and a variety of other publications in French and German, as well as in English. The American Cultural Center displays more than 25 different periodicals. Bookstores carry a good selection of fiction and nonfiction paperbacks. Some home

and fashion books or magazines are available.

Health

Local facilities on Mahé are adequate for most routine medical needs, and the major hospital on the island is suitable for emergency medical and surgical care. The hospital is staffed by expatriate doctors, a few of whom have received their training in the U.K.

Although there is a dental clinic, most specialized medical care is unobtainable. For example, no optometrist or optician practices in the country, and U.S. residents find it necessary to travel to Nairobi (Kenya) for routine eye examinations.

Health problems on Mahé include intestinal parasites (hookworm, amebiasis, whipworm, and tapeworm). Venereal diseases are widespread, with no active health programs for their control. However, infectious hepatitis is uncommon, and tropical diseases such as malaria and yellow fever are unknown. Dengue fever epidemics occurred in 1976, 1978, and 1986; some cases were also reported in 1992. While it is not fatal, this disease causes high fever and severe discomfort for up to a week, followed by unpleasant aftereffects. Government-supplied water is potable.

All raw fruits and vegetables should be washed before eating. Most meats come from abroad and can be eaten rare. Persons assigned to Seychelles (or visiting) are advised to receive, as well as thorough medical and dental checkups, inoculations against typhoid, measles, and DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus), and gamma globulin shots.

Most drugs, including antibiotics, can be obtained either locally or at the tracking station, but an adequate supply of nonprescription medicines (including vitamins), insect repellent, familiar brands of cosmetics, and other drugstore items should be kept on hand. Wash

raw vegetables and fruits before eating.

Clothing and Services

American-style summer clothing is both appropriate and comfortable in Seychelles. Men find that safari suits, casual slacks, and short-sleeved shirts are acceptable everywhere. Women wear either cotton or cotton-blend fabrics (synthetics are too warm) in long and short styles. Sundresses are most comfortable during the day; pantsuits are rarely worn. Shorts are suitable only at home or at the beach. Coats and ties (for men) and formal or expensive clothing (women) are needed only for such occasions as weddings or funerals. Simple, lightweight fabrics are best for children.

Because of the humidity, mold, and mildew, clothes and shoes do not last as long as in the U.S. Shoes are of good quality in Seychelles, but tend to be overpriced.

Umbrellas, light raincoats, sunglasses, lightweight sweaters, and shawls are needed. Winter clothing is inappropriate for island living, but one should keep in mind the possibility of travel to cooler climates.

Adequate shoe-repair service can be found in Victoria. No dry cleaners are available on the island. Major hotels have beauty/barber salons, and hairdressers are located in various places throughout the city. Good dressmakers and tailors are also available. Radio and appliance repair is virtually nonexistent. Hardware stores carry a good supply of tools and repair materials. Auto repairs (for standard-transmission vehicles) are excellent when spare parts are available. Film developing is available but expensive.

A good selection of toiletries and cosmetics is easily obtained at local shops, but at prices higher than in the U.S. Stores carry brands from

South Africa and Europe. A family planning an extended stay in Seychelles should have a supply of paper products, candles, art materials, sports equipment, sewing needs (including fabrics), toys, and craft/hobby items. All manufactured goods are more expensive in Victoria than in the U.S.

Most foodstuffs are imported from New Zealand, India, Kenya, France, South Africa, Singapore, and Australia. Because of the uncertainty of shipping schedules, Victoria experiences occasional shortages of particular items.

Beef, lamb, and shellfish are imported. Pork, chicken, duck, and various fish can be purchased locally and are of excellent quality. Canned meats and luncheon meats are not always available. Local bacon and sausage have a high fat content. Frozen vegetables are limited and expensive. Some seasonal fresh tropical fruit and vegetables are available locally; quality varies from good to excellent. The following vegetables and fruits are imported periodically and are expensive; celery, oranges, strawberries, apples, cauliflower, potatoes, grapes, pears, cabbage, and squash.

Canned, powdered, reconstituted, and sterilized milk are available, as are eggs and butter. Cheese is imported and when available the selection is good. A modest selection of cooking spices is always available.

Domestic Help

Domestic help is available, and most domestics have some experience and speak English. Salaries are somewhat high. Local government regulations strictly enforce minimum wages and social security benefits. While all salaries are negotiable above the minimum, the Seychelles Labor Board sets recommended wages for domestic workers, based on each person's requirement.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Jan.1 | New Year's Day |
| Jan. 2 & 3 | Bank Holiday |
| Mar. (2nd Mon) | Commonwealth Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1. | Labor Day |
| May/June | Corpus Christi* |
| June 5 | Liberation Day |
| June 29 | Independence Day |
| Aug. 15 | Assumption |
| Nov. 1. | All Saints' Day |
| Dec. 8. | Immaculate Conception |
| Dec. 25. | Christmas Day |

*Variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

The most direct route from the U.S. to the Seychelles is from New York to Nairobi (Kenya), and from there to Victoria via Kenya Airways. Some people prefer to travel to Europe (London, Frankfurt, Paris), and then to Seychelles on a direct flight.

No special problems should be encountered for entry into Seychelles. Americans do not need visas (only passports), but should have a transit visa for Kenya.

Travelers arriving from the U.S. or Europe are not required to have immunizations; those arriving from endemic areas must show evidence of current cholera and yellow fever inoculations. Cars entering Seychelles must have third-party liability coverage, and drivers are required to have valid U.S. or international licenses.

Pets must be quarantined in the United Kingdom for six months before entering Seychelles. No exceptions are considered.

No firearms or ammunition may be brought into the country.

The Anglicans and Roman Catholics each maintain a cathedral in Victoria, and the Seventh-Day Adventists have a church. A Sunday interdenominational service is conducted each week by the Far East Broadcasting Agency (FEBA), a Christian missionary group. A non-sectarian mosque opened in Victoria in 1982. No facilities exist here for most other Protestant denominations or for the Jewish faith.

The time in Seychelles is Greenwich Mean Time plus four hours.

Local currency is the Seychelles rupee (SR). Amendments to foreign exchange laws require that visitors pay for their hotel stays via a credit card. If they wish to make payment in Seychelles rupees, they are required to show proof of acquisition. If the rupees were won at a casino, a casino receipt should be shown as proof.

In 1981, Seychelles converted to metric weights and measures. However, many commodities entering the country are marked in accordance with British or American standards.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Camerapix. *Seychelles*. New York: Hunter Publishing, 1991.

Fodor's Kenya, Tanzania, Seychelles. 3d ed. New York: Fodor's Travel Publications, 1990.

Hassall, S. *Let's Visit the Seychelles*. London: Macmillan Publications, 1988.

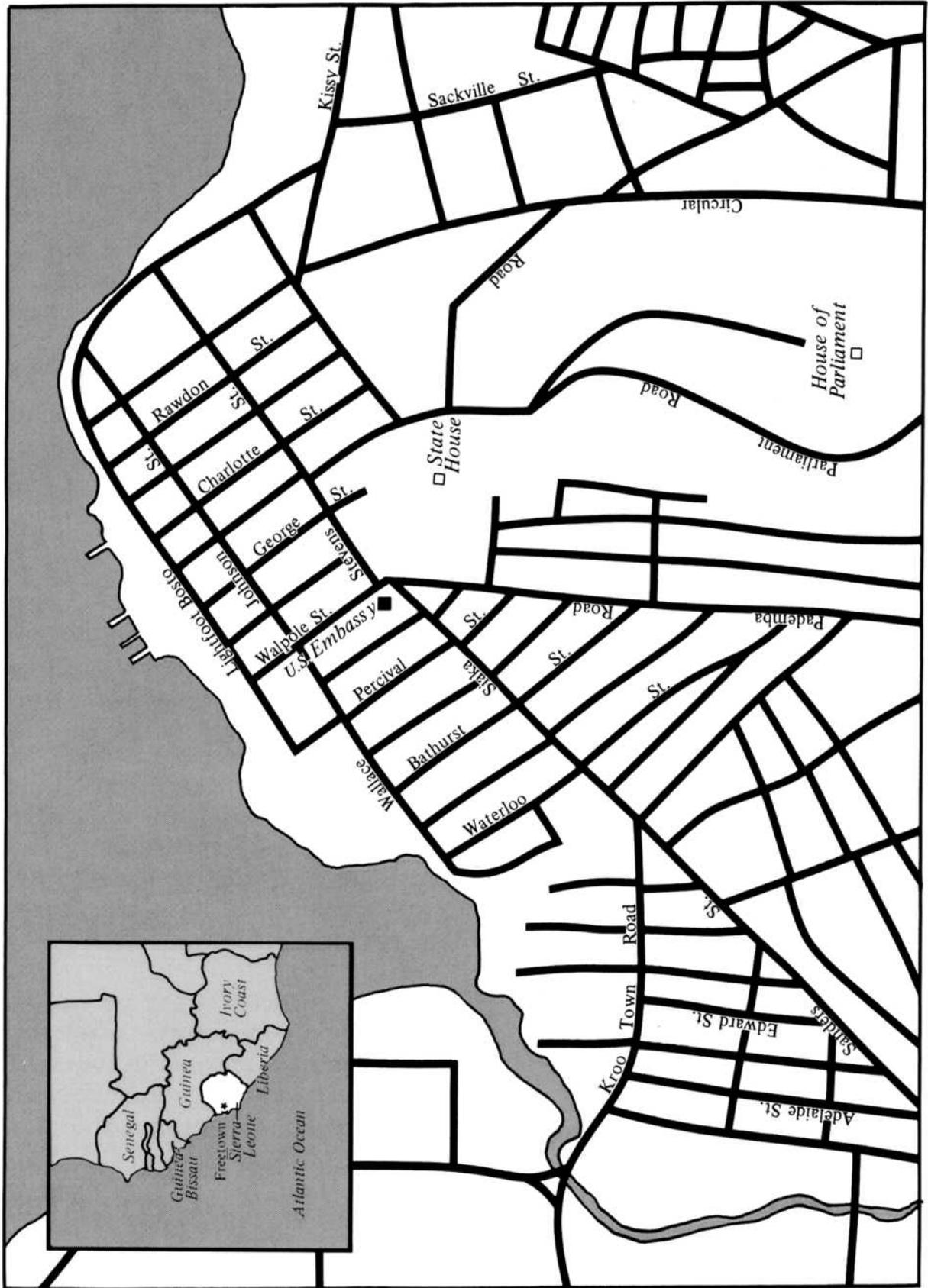
Hassall, S., and P.J. Hassall. *Seychelles*. Let's Visit Places and Peoples of the World Series. New York: Chelsea House, 1988.

Hildebrand Travel Guides. *Seychelles*. Rev. ed. New York: Hunter Publishing, 1990.

Kenya, Tanzania, Seychelles: With Ratings of Major Safaris. 3d ed. New York: McKay, 1990.

McAteer, W. *Rivals in Eden*. London: Book Guild, 1991.

Willox, Robert. *Mauritius, Reunion & the Seychelles: A Travel Survival Kit*. Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet, 1989.



Freetown, Sierra Leone

SIERRA LEONE

Republic of Sierra Leone

Major City:

Freetown

Other Cities:

Bo, Kenema, Makeni

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report for Sierra Leone. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

SIERRA LEONE means "The Lion Mountains," translated from the Portuguese. The name was given by Portuguese navigator Pedro da Cintra in 1462 to describe the spectacular mountain crests rising 3,000 feet from the sea on the peninsula where Freetown was later established.

The colony at Freetown was founded in 1787 by British philanthropists as a haven for about 400 freed slaves. These settlers were later joined by blacks from the New World; many were American slaves who fought with the British during the Revolutionary War. Other settlers were Africans freed by the British Navy from slave ships captured on the open seas. These

"recaptives" came from nearly every ethnic group on or near the Atlantic coast of the African continent, and occasionally from beyond. Thus, the colony was a major melting pot in which European, North American, and West Indian influences mixed with those of various African cultures. This mixture eventually amalgamated into a single society collectively known as Creole.

The settlement became a British crown colony in 1808. Four years before the turn of the 20th century, the British Government declared a protectorate over the hinterland area, and defined the frontiers with Guinea and Liberia. During the 1950s people from all over the country rushed to diamond-producing areas to look for wealth. These efforts helped to spread the wealth throughout the country as never before.

Sierra Leone became independent in 1961, and a republic in 1971. Today it is a nation where modern Western features blend with historic Creole and tribal cultures. This aggregation of Western, African and Victorian English cultures results in a society that is comfortably familiar yet delightfully foreign to the Westerner, while the vibrancy and conviviality of the people make a stay here stimulating and enjoyable.

MAJOR CITY

Freetown

Historic Freetown, with its busy port and unspoiled beaches, is a picturesque city. It is situated on the slopes of wooded hills—unusual on the west coast of Africa—and overlooks one of the world's most magnificent harbors. From 1808 to 1874, Freetown was the capital of British West Africa.

The city's architecture is a combination of modern buildings and those of 19th-century style, typified in small, wood-gabled and latticed houses. At the hub of the city is the great Cotton Tree, already a landmark when the first Creole settlers arrived in 1787. Freetown is located at the northern tip of the country's Western Province, four miles from the mouth of the Sierra Leone River. It has a population of approximately 1 million.

For a city of its size in Africa, Freetown is unexpectedly Western in character. There are several good hotels, an international airport offering a variety of services, a university, a sports stadium, churches, six large grocery stores, car-rental facilities, several banks, and 15 foreign embassies.

Education

An American school was opened in September 1986 to serve the needs of Freetown's international community. The American International School of Freetown (AISF) is a private, coeducational, day school offering an educational program from pre-kindergarten through grade eight to students of all nationalities. It is housed in a modern, air conditioned building of eight classrooms, a 6,000-volume library, and two administrative offices.

A.I.S.F. follows a modified American curriculum stressing the mastery of basic skills, art and science, and the fostering of basic creativity. Critical thinking is emphasized, and the small classroom size allows the school to respond flexibly to individual needs. Although the school serves a diverse international student body, the curriculum is essentially U.S. based, and most of the texts and materials are published in the U.S. Extracurricular activities include gymnastics, swimming, school newspaper, and various field trips. The school year is divided into two semesters. It begins in early September and ends in mid-June. Holidays are scheduled at Christmas and Easter. Space is limited, particularly in the two nursery classes, which accept students once they have reached their third birthday. Prospective parents are advised to contact the school in advance. The mailing address of the American International School is c/o U.S. Embassy, Walpole Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone. U.S. mail may be addressed in care of U.S. Embassy—Freetown, Sierra Leone, Department of State, Washington, DC 20521-2160.

There is no adequate provision for education of children beyond grade eight. Expatriates generally send their children to boarding schools for secondary education, either in Europe or the U.S. No schools are equipped to meet special educational needs. Tutors have been found in the past among the missionary of American community to assist children with reading prob-

lems or to give limited outside instruction.

Several American families send their children to the French School, which has grades kindergarten through six. This small school, run by a local board of parents and teachers, follows the French national curriculum. Children under the age of seven may enter the school with no French language ability; older children are required to have some prior knowledge of the language.

Additionally, there is the small primary school located at the Fourah Bay College, offering somewhat comparable standards of education to those of the British primary system, and the large Lebanese-supported school which, while primarily focused on the Lebanese community's educational requirements, maintains a curriculum which follows the U.K. standard of primary and secondary education. Both schools are multinational in character, with the Lebanese school more formally structured.

These schools often have waiting lists. Tentative reservations can be made for incoming children, but it is usually more satisfactory to wait until after arrival to make final placement decisions. The caliber of schools fluctuates with staff changes, and the "best" school varies according to the individual child and family.

Few foreign children attend Freetown secondary (high) schools. Those who do find the experience more valid cross-culturally than academically. Admission to secondary school (usually at age 11, but sometimes as early as 10) is based on results of the Selective Entrance Examination given every March to all students in primary classes six and seven. However, foreign students who have not taken the exam can apply for direct admission. Most secondary schools have five forms (through the British Ordinary Level Examination), although a few offer

the sixth form (Advanced Level Examination).

Some junior and senior high school expatriates have used correspondence work from the Calvert School (grades seven and eight) and the University of Nebraska (grades nine and above). This has been satisfactory academically, but of mixed benefit socially. The expatriate peer group is always small, and sometimes nonexistent, and it is difficult to make friends with local teenagers outside of a classroom situation. Boarding schools are strongly advised for this age group.

Piano teachers are available in Freetown although pianos are scarce. Because of the climate, it is best not to bring a piano or string instrument to Sierra Leone; if shipped, it should be tropicalized beforehand. Ballet lessons for young girls are given at the International School, and karate lessons are given for boys. French lessons are offered at the Alliance Française; adults can also take courses at Fourah Bay College, either on a special or full-time basis.

The Kabala Rupp Memorial School, a coeducational, boarding, church-related institution, is located in the northern town of Kabala. Founded in 1957, the school is sponsored by the American Wesleyan Mission, the Missionary Church, Inc., and United Brethren in Christ. The U.S. curriculum for grades one through nine is taught by a staff of American teachers to a student body comprised mostly of Americans. Facilities include four buildings, three classrooms, an auditorium, covered play area, playing field, cafeteria, dormitory, and a 3,000-volume library. The mailing address of the Kabala Rupp Memorial School is Box 28, Kabala, Sierra Leone, West Africa. U.S. mail may be addressed in care of The Missionary Church, 3901 South Wayne Avenue, Fort Wayne, IN, 46807, U.S.A.

Recreation

Freetown offers increasingly better recreational opportunities as new

facilities are added. The Siaka Stevens Stadium, named for the country's former president, is one of Africa's largest sports complexes, and is a center for a variety of activities. Tennis, squash, and golf all are popular in the area. The Freetown Golf Club has a 12-hole course with sand greens (playable most of the year), squash and tennis courts, and a modest clubhouse. The Hill Station Club has tennis courts, and an active social program. At the Aqua Sports Club, there is a marina, a saltwater pool, squash courts, and a clubhouse and bar. Membership is required at these clubs, but fees are reasonable.

Some hunting is done in Sierra Leone. Bush fowl and guinea fowl, plentiful within 30 miles of Freetown, are usually hunted during the rainy season. Duck and geese are abundant in swamps about 80 miles from the city, and are usually taken by jump shooting from dugouts. Very little big game is found in the immediate Freetown area, but 150 or 200 miles up-country several varieties of African antelope, wild pig, bush cows (West African water buffalo) and, occasionally, hippos and elephants can be found. However, most big game is protected by law. Field clothing in camouflage patterns is prohibited by regulation. Bird hunters should bring briar-resistant clothing and snake-proof boots.

Fishing is available in and near Freetown. Saltwater species include barracuda, cobia, red snapper, Atlantic jack, Spanish mackerel, and grouper. The freshwater angler may find tigerfish, catfish, and several subspecies of tilapia. Most saltwater fish are taken by trolling lures. This necessitates the use of a boat; however, no charter boat facilities are offered in Sierra Leone. The experienced surf-caster should do well on the coast. Catches, however, have declined somewhat in recent years because of heavy fishing of coastal waters by international groups.

The Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary, developed with the assistance of Peace Corps volunteers, offers an opportunity to view a wide variety of primates and other tropical rain-forest wildlife in their native habitat. Located seven hours from Freetown, it provides accommodations and an educational and relaxing break. The Outamba Kilimi National Park at Koto, far in the northern part of Sierra Leone, has hippos, numerous tropical birds, elephant sightings, and monkeys. It is a one-day trip from Freetown and has tent accommodations for visitors.

Sierra Leone's picturesque and uncrowded beaches offer the greatest recreational diversion. Many are within easy driving distance of Freetown. Since occasional strong currents and undertow occur, precautions should be taken while swimming. Sharks and barracuda are seldom seen. The rivers in Sierra Leone are unsafe for swimming because of parasitic organisms. A few sites exist for interested deep-sea divers and snorklers. Waterskiing is also popular.

The beaches, tropical vegetation, and varied tribal groupings provide an unending supply of colorful subjects for those interested in photography, painting, or sketching. Discretion should be used, however, since some tribes still maintain taboos against being photographed. Both color and black-and-white film, although expensive, are available for most cameras, including Polaroid. Black-and-white film is developed locally, but color film must be sent to the U.S. or England.

A number of places of interest outside Freetown are accessible by car. The 60-mile trip around the peninsula is a pleasant drive, fringed by some of the world's most picturesque and unspoiled beaches. The drive passes through several colorful Creole villages with British names, as well as typical fishing villages at Baw Baw and Tokeh. Two tourist resorts, catering primarily to European tourists are located

within an hour's drive from Freetown and provide a relaxing change of pace for a weekend stay or Sunday luncheon.

Bunce Island, an 18th century English slave fort with remarkably intact ruins, is located 20 miles from Freetown, a 90-minute boat trip up the Sierra Leone River. This fort, is gaining interest in the U.S. since researchers have discovered that many Americans along the South Carolina and Georgia coasts had origins in Sierra Leone. Other boat trips of longer duration, to the Bananas Islands and Turtle Islands, are available through local travel agencies.

Roads from Freetown to the up-country towns of Makeni, Yengema, Bo, and Kenema are generally good, although not always properly maintained. The Port Loko district, about 80 miles northeast, is a scenic, forested area, higher in elevation than Freetown, and affords a refreshing change in climate. Woodworking is done in the Kenema district, another heavily forested area about 200 miles from Freetown. Makeni, in the northern district, is a center for crafts.

The diamond mines at Yengema in the Eastern Province may be visited by invitation of the National Diamond Mining Company; a government permit is needed. Most of the alluvial mines are located along small streams in the scrub forest.

Although none of these areas provide a radical scenic or climatic change, they are interesting and readily accessible. Other inviting sights, such as the Bintumani Mountains, the Bumbuna and Bikongo Falls, and the Kabala area, are not comfortably reached by car. Travel on unpaved roads is easier at the beginning of the rainy season, when the dust has settled; it is most difficult at the height of the rainy season. Government-operated ferries, not always in service, transport vehicles across up-country rivers.

Adequate hotel accommodations are practically nonexistent, so upcountry travelers should arrange to stay with government officers, missionaries, or Peace Corps volunteers. At Sierra Leone government rest camps, such as the one at Shenge, an old port and pirate hideaway about a six-hour drive from Freetown, one must be completely self-sufficient. This includes carrying boiled, filtered water, food, a kerosene lamp and stove, mosquito nets, a cot, bedding, dishes, and utensils.

Driving time from Freetown to Monrovia, Liberia, is about 10 hours in the dry season. Flying time to Monrovia is only 45 minutes, but transport to and from the airports at either end increases the total travel time to six hours. It is possible to drive to Conakry, Guinea, in six hours during the dry season.

Entertainment

Air-conditioned movie theaters in Freetown feature some American films, although they may be three or more years old. Videocassette recorders are popular in the foreign community. There are several video clubs in Freetown that rent tapes in both VHS and Beta formats. Many Americans receive tapes from family and friends in the U.S. Spectator events are limited to soccer games and native dancing fests. The Sierra Leone Military Forces also occasionally present colorful ceremonies.

The Paramount, Cape Sierra, Bintumani, and Mammy Yoko hotel restaurants are regularly patronized by Americans. Three other restaurants at Lumley Beach—the Atlantic, the Lighthouse, and the Palm Beach—offer good food and dancing to live or recorded music. Two casinos at Lumley feature roulette, blackjack, and slot machines. A small Chinese restaurant, located between the city and Lumley Beach, is popular, as is the Provilac Restaurant which has weekly buffets featuring Sierra Leonean dishes.

Social life in Freetown is generally relaxed and informal, and usually centers on home entertainment.

Newcomers quickly meet the community through business contacts, membership in clubs, and social functions in homes. Protocol is taken seriously by some diplomats or older Creoles, whose social framework is traditional British, and it is advisable to familiarize oneself with patterns of handshaking, verbal greeting, and deference. Americans are often seen as too abrupt by Sierra Leoneans. Business is conducted only after a short exchange of greetings and talk of a more relaxed nature has preceded it.

Freetown has branches of the International Rotary and Lions Clubs.

OTHER CITIES

BO, just over 100 miles southeast of the capital, is the commercial center of the interior, with a population of about 81,000. The trading of ginger, palm oil and kernels, coffee, cocoa, and rice is important to the economy; goods are transported to Freetown mostly by road. The city has a number of educational centers, including teacher-training colleges, as well as the largest hospital outside of Freetown.

Located in southeastern Sierra Leone, **KENEMA** is home to the country's timber industry and an important market town for the Mende people. Alluvial diamond mining is an important industry. Kenema produce coffee, cocoa, and palm kernels and oil. Kenema is the site of a government library, schools, and several private hospitals. The city's estimated population is 71,000.

MAKENI is situated in central Sierra Leone, less than 100 miles north of the capital. It is a trade center for the Temne people. The main crops sent to Freetown are rice, palm oil, and kernels. Known for its Gara tie-dyeing, Makeni has a church, government schools, a teacher's college, and a hospital. The population is about 106,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Sierra Leone is nearly circular in shape, and has an area of 27,925 square miles (about the size of South Carolina). It is located on the southwestern part of the great bulge of West Africa, between the seventh and 10th parallels north of the equator. It is bordered on the north and east by the Republic of Guinea, on the south by the Republic of Liberia, and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean.

Three main topographical regions run northwest to southeast, roughly parallel with the coast: a belt of mangrove swamps and beaches; an area of low plains covered with secondary forest and cultivated crops; and an easternmost region of high plateaus and mountains, some rising as high as 6,000 feet. The mountainous peninsula on which Freetown, the capital, is located comprises a fourth, distinct geographical region. It is the only place on the West African coast where mountains rise near the sea and where the beaches are both exceptionally beautiful and generally safe for swimming.

The climate is tropical, with both rainy and dry seasons, constantly high temperatures, and almost constant high humidity. The rainy season extends from May to November, but is heaviest between July and September, when over half of the annual rainfall occurs. In Freetown, rainfall is as much as 150 inches; inland areas receive less. The beginning and end of the rainy season is marked by frequent strong electrical storms, similar to those occurring during the hot summer months of the eastern United States. Coastal temperatures during the rainy season range from a daily high of about 80°F to a nightly low of about 76°F. Most Westerners reside in the hills above the city, where a constant breeze makes for

comfortable living and encourages outdoor entertaining.

Relative humidity in Freetown rarely falls below 80 percent, except when the *harmattan* reaches the coast. This current of dry, dusty air flows from the Sahara Desert toward the south and west, usually reaching Sierra Leone in December. The *harmattan* brings Freetown its best weather; during this season, temperatures reach about 90°F during the day and fall to about 74°F at night.

Because of the climate, insects abound and mildew can be a problem. Flies, ants, and cockroaches are occasional nuisances, but lizards are also plentiful and help to keep the others in check. Numerous snakes exist, some of them poisonous. Precautions must be taken against mildew and corrosion and, during the dry season, against the bothersome red laterite dust.

Population

Sierra Leone's population is estimated at 5.4 million, with an increase of 3.6 percent per annum. Density averages about 121 per square mile; the highest densities of several hundred per square mile are in the western area of the country; the lowest, of about 25 per square mile, are in the remote northern and eastern sections. Life expectancy in Sierra Leone in 2001 was 43 years for males, 49 years for females. Freetown, with 1 million people, is the capital, the commercial and educational center, and the only large city.

The African population consists of 20 ethnic groups, each with its own language and customs. The two largest groups (the Mende in the south and the Temne in the north) are about equal in number and make up approximately 60 percent of the country's population. The 54,000 descendants of the original settlers make up the Creole society, mostly settled in the Freetown area. Their language, Krio, is the lingua franca of Sierra Leone, although the Mende and Temne tongues are also

widely spoken. English is the official language.

Followed by 60 percent of the population, Islam is the predominant religion of the country, with animism and Christianity (both Protestant and Roman Catholic) following. Both Islam and Christianity retain perceptible overtones of indigenous animist beliefs. Islam is strongest in the Northern Province; Christianity, even though numerically small, is influential in southern regions and the Freetown area, where missions have been active for over 100 years.

Many Creole customs, which derive from Victorian England, are easily identifiable with those of Western cultures. Tribal customs, however, differ greatly from cultural patterns encountered in the U.S. Secret organizations, such as the women's Bundu or Sande and the men's Poro societies, still play a dominant role in tribal life.

Women in rural areas often wear only a cloth or *lappa* tied around their waists; children are commonly scantily clothed and occasionally naked. Strong extended family structures are frequently comprised of several wives and their relations.

The Lebanese and the Indian communities are mainly merchants. European and American residents are scattered throughout the country.

Government

After World War II, self-government was gradually established in Sierra Leone, leading to complete independence on April 27, 1961. The following September, Sierra Leone became the 100th member of the United Nations. The first general elections with universal franchise were held in May 1962.

Under the constitution brought into effect on Independence Day, Sierra Leone adopted a parliamentary form of government. Executive authority was vested in Her Britannic Majesty, Elizabeth II, who was

queen of Sierra Leone and represented by a governor-general.

In April 1971, the country adopted a republican constitution with an executive president, but retained membership in the British Commonwealth. Executive authority is exercised by the president. The unicameral parliament consists of 127 authorized seats, 105 of which are filled by elected representatives of constituencies and 22 by paramount chiefs elected by fellow paramount chiefs in each district. The president is authorized to appoint up to seven members.

A separate judiciary system includes a Court of Appeals, Supreme Court, High Court, magistrates' courts, and local courts having jurisdiction in certain customary (tribal) law cases.

The Freetown peninsula, which together with Sherbro Island comprised the former colony, is now called the Western Province. Freetown has one of the oldest civic governments in Western form in all of Africa south of the Sahara. The rest of the country, formerly known as the Protectorate, is divided into three provinces, the Northern, Southern, and Eastern. These provinces are made up of 12 districts comprising 146 chiefdoms, where paramount chiefs and a council of elders constitute the basic unit of government.

Major Gen. Joseph Saidu Momoh was elected president in January 1986. In May 1992, mutinous army troops staged a military coup. Momoh was overthrown and fled to neighboring Guinea. Captain Valentine Strasser took control of the government, promising a return to civilian rule.

In 1996 Strasser was overthrown by Julius Maada Brio. Elections in February 1996 resulted in the installation of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah as president following a runoff vote. However, his government was overthrown in a coup led by Major Johnny Paul Koromah in May 1997.

The president was reinstated in 1998 and was reelected in 2002.

The flag of Sierra Leone is made up of green, white, and blue horizontal bands.

Arts, Science, Education

The country's intellectual life centers around the University of Sierra Leone. The university's Fourah Bay College, founded in 1827 by Anglican missionaries and situated on Mount Aureol high above Freetown, is the oldest English-language college in West Africa, and still attracts students from Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and other countries to study alongside students from the growing number of Sierra Leonean secondary schools. The curriculum includes liberal arts, education, theology, law, economics, engineering, and pure and applied sciences. The university includes three institutes—the Institute of African Studies, the Institute of Public Administration and Management, and the Institute of Library Science.

Njala University College is the second part of the University of Sierra Leone. It is an agricultural and educational institution formed on the U.S. land-grant college principle, and is located 130 miles from Freetown at Njala. In addition, Sierra Leone has several teacher training colleges, the most notable of which is Milton Margai Teachers College, just outside of Freetown.

Choral, drama, and music groups in Freetown produce occasional plays (both in English and in Krio) and give recitals. A National Dance Troupe presents high-quality traditional dancing performances. The small National Museum displays local artifacts, and the Sierra Leone Artists Association promotes the sale and exhibition of local art work. Weaving, carving, and *gara* cloth (tie-dyed fabric) are the principal artistic media of the people.

Commerce and Industry

Sierra Leone's economic and social infrastructure is not well developed. The economy remains primarily agricultural although minerals, particularly diamonds, account for roughly 70 percent of all exports. In recent years, serious balance-of-payments and budget deficits have stifled economic growth. The Sierra Leonean economy has been saddled with high unemployment, large trade deficits, and a growing dependence on foreign aid. The value of the national currency has declined and wages are extremely low.

Agriculture accounts for over 40 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs over 70 percent of the labor force. Most agricultural production is of a subsistence nature. Rice is the staple food crop, but a significant percentage is imported. Other important food crops are cassava, bananas, sweet potatoes, sorghum, and corn. Palm kernels and oil, coffee, and cocoa are Sierra Leone's primary cash crops and major sources of export earnings.

Because of the value and quality of Sierra Leone's diamond resources, the mining sector has traditionally played a central role in the economy. The profitability of the country's diamond resources is hampered by the depletion of reserves and illegal smuggling. Sierra Leone also has the world's largest deposits of rutile, a mineral used to manufacture paints and alloys. Most reserves of rutile are located in the southwestern part of the country. Large bauxite reserves are also known to exist in the northeast.

Sierra Leone's industrial sector is small and underdeveloped. Industrial capacity is limited mainly to the manufacturing of cigarettes, paint, beverages, plastic footwear, and textiles.

Minerals, such as diamonds, rutile, and bauxite, make up the bulk of Sierra Leone's exports. Coffee and cocoa are also valuable export com-

modities. The Netherlands, Great Britain, the United States, Germany, and other European Community (EC) countries are the primary recipients of Sierra Leone's exports. Sierra Leone imports capital goods, foodstuffs, petroleum and related products, transport equipment, machinery, and light industrial goods. These imports are provided by the United States, EC countries, Japan, China, and Nigeria.

Sierra Leone is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The country receives foreign financial assistance from China, Germany, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Community, the United States, and Great Britain.

The Chamber of Commerce of Sierra Leone is located in Freetown; the address is P.O. Box 502.

Transportation

International air service to Europe is provided by British Airways, KLM, and UTA. As of May 1990, British Airways flew to London twice a week, KLM to Amsterdam once a week, and UTA to Paris twice a week. Provincial Air Services provide charter helicopter services to many parts of the country, but rates are high. In-country travel is by road, as railroad and airline carrier service is no longer available.

The Road Transport Corporation operates bus service within the capital city, although it is not often used by official Americans or U.S. visitors because of overcrowding. Many taxis also operate in Freetown, but they are hard to get since they cannot be summoned by telephone; because cabs are unmetered, fares should be agreed upon beforehand. Fares outside the city are high. Taxis invariably pick up several passengers on any given trip and are, therefore, always crowded. Taxis are seldom used at night by expatriates (for safety reasons).

A car is a necessity for those living in Freetown, but American-made

vehicles are not recommended. Acceptable servicing exists for most British cars and some other makes, such as Peugeot, Renault, Fiat, Volkswagen, Mercedes, Honda, and Nissan. Spare parts, however, are often scarce and always expensive. Mobil, Texaco, Shell, and British Petroleum gasolines are sold at American-style stations.

In the capital, the streets are narrow and congested with pedestrians; there are no sidewalks. Driving is on the right.

Communications

Facilities for telephone communications in Sierra Leone are adequate. A computerized central system has been installed which should improve telecommunications considerably. International calls to the U.S. can be made at the Sierra Leone External

Telecommunications but take time, since the number of overseas lines is limited.

Local liability insurance can be arranged and is required for personally owned vehicles. It is not expensive, but coverage is very limited. Comprehensive insurance is also available but costly. Telegraphic communications are usually reliable, although the delivery of telegrams is sometimes delayed. Airmail from the U.S. takes from five days to two weeks to reach Freetown, and occasional delays are experienced.

Sierra Leone has the oldest radio broadcasting service in English-speaking West Africa. The government-owned Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service operates a number of radio stations broadcasting in English, Krio, Limba, Mende, and Tenme. However, these stations are on the air infrequently due to power failures and the lack of spare parts for broadcasting equipment. A shortwave radio is necessary to receive international broadcasts. Radio reception in Freetown is generally good.

Commercial television service is limited. Sierra Leone uses the European system for its television broadcasts. American television sets receive the visual, but not the audio portion of the signal. However, with a small radio having a TV audio band, the voice signal comes in. This is cheaper than conversion in the European system. Many American expatriates bring a VCR and a supply of videotapes with them to Sierra Leone.

The government-owned *Daily Mail* is the main newspaper. It is published daily, but gives very little coverage to international news events. The Paris edition of the *International Herald Tribune* is available by subscription and usually arrives a month late. Current copies of the international edition of *Newsweek* are sold locally.

Books, especially paperbacks, the majority of which are published in the U.K., are available in quantity from a number of sources. Several libraries (USIS, British Council, and the Freetown city libraries) have reasonable collections.

Health

Freetown's four large hospitals—Connaught General, Princess Christian Maternity, Children's, and Hill Station—as well as several small private hospitals and nursing homes, offer minimum facilities. None is satisfactory in size, equipment, hygienic standards, or staff. The level of nursing care is below that of institutions in the U.S. Many medical problems require evacuation to Europe or the U.S. for treatment. Several well-qualified physicians and dentists practice in Freetown, although the absence of basic diagnostic and treatment facilities presents a considerable handicap for them.

Water shortages sometimes occur in Freetown. During the dry season, water supply and pressure may be irregular if the level in local reservoirs drops below normal. Although the water is treated with chlorine, it should be boiled about 20 minutes

before using; all drinking water must also be filtered.

For most of Freetown, the sewage disposal system is below standard. Open drainage ditches running throughout town are breeding places for insects, and cause unsightly flooding when outlets are plugged or covered by debris. Many residences have septic tanks, but most of the population use pit latrines.

Irregular garbage collection and disposal; inadequate laws governing inspection, storage, and sale of food; and the lack of health and sanitation consciousness by most cooks and stewards are health hazards to Westerners. Vigilance and constant attention to good hygiene practices are strongly advised.

Major communicable diseases are malaria, measles, typhoid, hepatitis, intestinal diseases, influenza, pneumonia, tuberculosis, meningitis, cholera, and lassa fever. During the rainy season, children may be particularly susceptible to fungus or other skin disorders. Intestinal upsets are common.

Those moving to Sierra Leone should begin taking malaria suppressants three weeks prior to arrival, and continue taking them weekly for the duration of the stay. One should also obtain a gamma globulin injection against hepatitis as well as inoculations against cholera, yellow fever, typhoid fever, tetanus, polio, and rabies. Because rabies is prevalent in Sierra Leone, pets should also be vaccinated against the disease.

All locally purchased vegetables should be either cooked or disinfected, if they cannot be peeled. Taking vitamin tablets as a daily supplement is a common practice. All clothes, bedding, and towels must be machine dried or ironed to avoid tumba-fly infestation. Mosquito netting for homes, especially where young children reside. Not only is malaria a concern, but bites that are scratched become infected easily in the tropical climate.

Clothing and Services

Being neatly, smartly, and appropriately dressed is important to Sierra Leoneans, and they expect it of others. Ready-made clothing sold locally is European in style; limited in selection, size, and quality; and also very expensive. Local tailoring is good and generally moderate in cost. Shoe repair is crude but functional.

In selecting a wardrobe, one should remember that the temperature range is narrow, and seasonal change minimal. Offices, however, are air-conditioned and can be cool. Clothing appropriate for Washington, DC summers is generally right for Freetown. Washable fabrics are preferable. Local dry-cleaning is not recommended. Garments that cannot be washed or that require special handling should be kept to a minimum. Laundry is done at home. Cotton or predominantly cotton blends are more absorbent and not as hot as synthetics. Knits are good for traveling and office wear, but are generally too warm for regular street wear.

The hot weather requires frequent changes and consequent laundering of clothes. This, plus the lack of seasonal variation and a fairly limited social orbit, makes a variety of clothes important. Some warm clothing will be needed for travel out of the area in cold months. A light sweater or shawl is handy for cool evenings, and some rain gear is also useful. Umbrellas can be bought locally.

Men wear wash-and-wear clothing throughout the year. Short-sleeved shirts are generally worn in the office. Social life is informal (often no coat or tie is necessary), but official affairs require a dark suit and long-sleeved shirt.

Women need a variety of cotton dresses for daytime, and washable long dresses for the numerous social activities in Freetown. Because evenings can be cool, and home and res-

taurants air-conditioned, some dresses should have sleeves, jackets, or stoles. Shorts and slacks are worn for sports activities and at home, but less often downtown or in the office. Gala African dresses are purchased locally and are popular for evening wear, but should only be relied on to augment an evening wardrobe. Sierra Leonean women wear hats and hosiery for formal daytime occasions, including church, but Western women normally do not wear hats. Hosiery is a matter of personal choice. Maternity clothes are not available in Freetown.

Children usually wear shorts or jeans, but party clothes are sometimes needed. School uniforms are made locally. Clothing for babies and young children is extremely limited here, and the items are more expensive than in the U.S. Shoes must be worn at all times when outdoors to protect feet from worms and bacteria that can enter the body through small cuts or abrasions. Children generally wear tennis shoes and sandals.

Tomatoes, sweet peppers, green beans, cabbages, green squash, pumpkins, radishes, parsley, cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, potatoes, and onions are seasonally available. A variety of greens (spinach substitutes), okra, sweet potatoes, and small tomatoes are sold year round in outdoor markets. Imported vegetables are available, but at very high prices. Good local tropical fruits such as bananas, oranges, pineapples, limes, grapefruit, avocados, mangoes, and papaya are seasonally available in abundance. Purchasing fruits and vegetables from street vendors involves considerable bargaining.

Local beef, lamb, and pork are sometimes used by Americans. Beef is not aged and most of it is tough, but the fillet is tender and reasonably priced. Lamb is both expensive and fatty. Pork is better tasting than in the U.S. and trichinosis is not known in Sierra Leone. However, pork should be cooked well as a pre-

caution. Local poultry is acceptable, but expensive. Fresh and locally frozen fish are perhaps the best bargains in Freetown. Fresh and frozen shrimp and lobster are also good. Lobster, squid, barracuda, sole, and snapper are among the local favorites. Eggs, although more expensive than in the U.S., can be bought most of the year. Fresh milk or cream is not available, but good powdered or canned milk is. Imported sterilized milk sealed in cartons (three-month shelf life without refrigeration) is also available.

Freetown's supermarkets stock a surprising variety of canned goods, cereals, nuts, and pastas, all of which are imported. However, these products are several times the U.S. price, availability is never certain, and the length of time that they have been sitting on grocers shelves in tropical heat is unknown.

Tailoring, shoe repair, and dry cleaning are below American standards, although of acceptable quality. Freetown has a few barbers and beauty salons that give acceptable haircuts, permanents, manicures, and facials. Some local electricians work on radios and stereos, but spare parts for American-made items are not readily obtainable.

Domestic Help

As in most places in Africa, household servants are usually male. Most families hire one person to serve as a steward, with responsibility to clean and perhaps help with cooking. Families with small children may hire a nanny. Generally, household help do not live in the home, but live-in nannies can be found.

Most domestics require close supervision. Uniforms are provided by the employer. Each servant should have a physical examination and X-ray when hired; periodic checkups are advisable. Salaries are generally low.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| January 1 | New Year's Day |
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Mar. (2nd Mon) | Commonwealth Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| Apr. 19 | Republic Day |
| Apr. 27 | Independence Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| Dec. 26 | Boxing Day |
| | Hijra New Year* |
| | Id al-Adah* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |

*variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

The Department of State warns against travel to Sierra Leone and advises all U.S. citizens to exercise caution when traveling to Sierra Leone, particularly in the areas south and east of Bo and Kenema, and to defer all travel to the area along the border between Sierra Leone and Liberia. There are reports in these areas of banditry and incursions by rebels from Liberia, and there have been clashes between these rebels and the Sierra Leonean military. Travel at night should be avoided, and travelers to the affected areas can expect to encounter road-blocks and vehicle searches by Sierra Leonean security forces. Travel outside the capital is dangerous because of armed military groups.

Several African and international airlines provide service to and from Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

Persons arriving in Sierra Leone must have valid passports, visas, and current health certificates with records of inoculations against yellow fever and cholera. Injections to prevent hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus, and polio also are strongly recommended, as are malaria suppressants.

Pets may be brought into the country with an international certificate of good health, obtained from a veterinarian. Proof of rabies vaccination and proper health certificates are required. There is no quarantine period.

The Government of Sierra Leone will permit importation of 50 rounds of ammunition for each registered firearm, with no limitation on the number of firearms. More than what is considered a reasonable quantity, however (one pistol, one rifle, one shotgun), must be approved. Only guns designated as suitable for sporting purposes are allowed; no military or police models can be imported.

The following denominations have places of worship in Sierra Leone: Anglican, Church of Christ, Evangelical United Brethren, Pentecostal, Bahai Faith, Methodist, Muslim, Roman Catholic, Samaria West African Methodist, and Seventh-Day Adventist. Non-denominational Protestant services are held weekly at St. Augustine's Anglican Chapel, Hill Station. Freetown has no synagogue. Most services are conducted in English.

The time in Sierra Leone is Greenwich Mean Time.

The monetary unit is the *Leone*, which is divided into 100 cents. The symbols used are "Le" for *Leone*, and "c" for cents. The Bank of Sierra Leone, a central bank with no commercial facilities, manages the currency. There are several commercial institutions, including the Standard

Bank of Sierra Leone, Ltd; Barclay's Bank Sierra Leone, Ltd; and the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank, Ltd.

All weights and measures conform to British standards.

The U.S. Embassy in Sierra Leone is located at the corner of Siaka Stevens and Walpole Streets, Freetown (across from the city's historic Cotton Tree); telephone: 232 (22) 226-481; FAX: 232 (22) 225-471.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Alie, Joe A.D. *A New History of Sierra Leone*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.

Bell, L.V. *Mental and Social Disorder in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991.

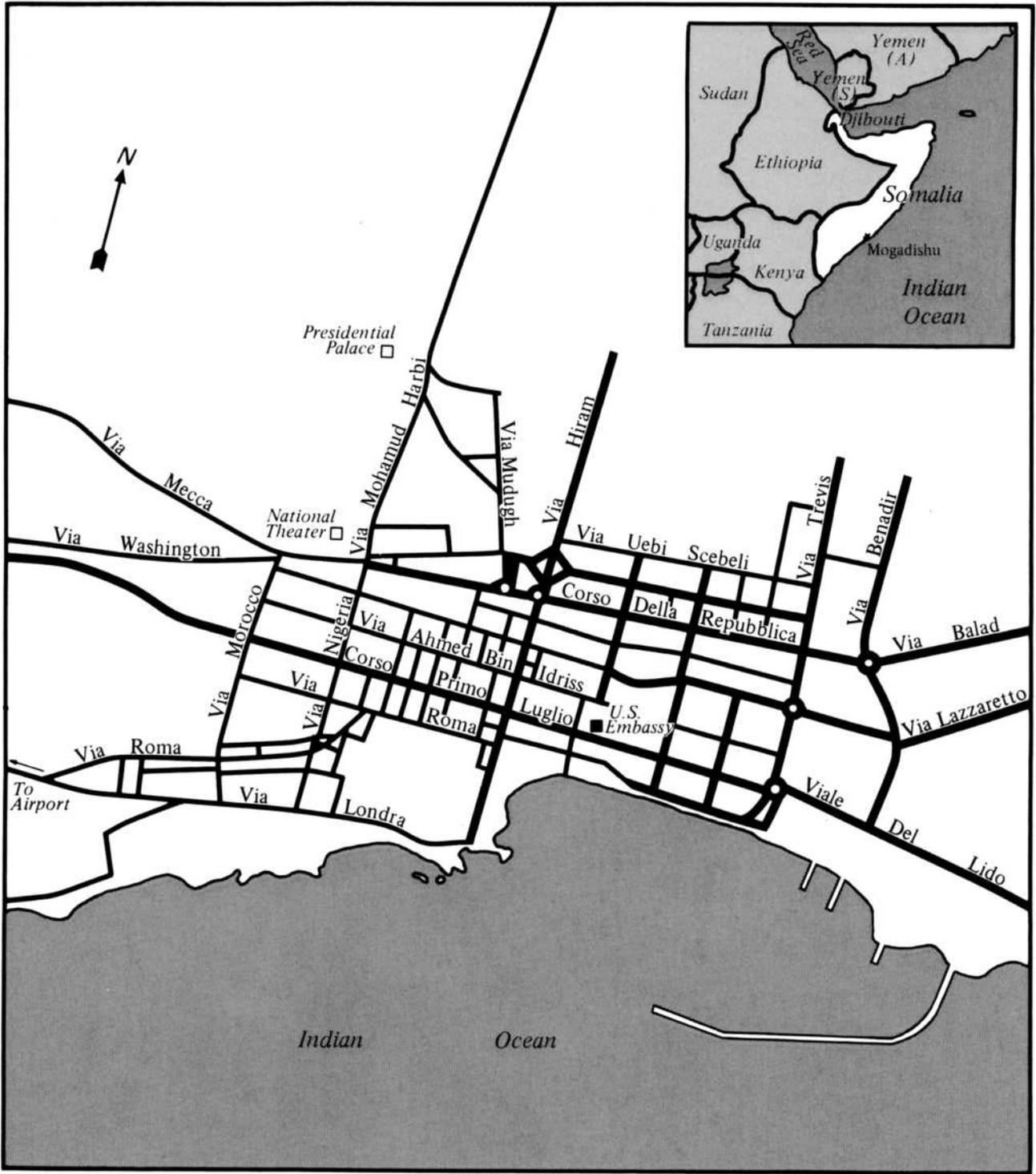
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Milsome, John. *Sierra Leone. Let's Visit Places & Peoples of the World Series*. New York: Chelsea House, 1988.

Weeks, John. *Development Strategy & the Economy of Sierra Leone*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

Wyse, Akintola J.G. *H.C. Bankole-Bright and Politics in Colonial Sierra Leone, 1919-1958*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

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Mogadishu, Somalia

SOMALIA

Republic of Somalia

Major City:

Mogadishu

Other Cities:

Berbera, Hargeisa, Kismayu, Marka

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report for Somalia. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Editors Note: From 1989 to press time a brutal civil war rages in Somalia leaving the country with no national government. The capital city of Mogadishu is badly damaged. Since 1992, the U.S. State Department has considered the situation in Somalia to be extremely dangerous. Rival factions continue to fight for control of the country, causing widespread destruction, famine, and death. On December 9, 1992, former President George Bush announced that U.S. troops would be sent to Somalia as part of Operation Restore Hope, an international effort designed to insure that food supplies would be able to reach Somalia's starving population. US forces were reduced in May 1993

and reconstruction work was assumed by the United Nations. UN-sponsored peace talks failed to stop the warring factions. In 1994 the UN redefined its role in Somalia to be less assertive. The United Nations completed its troop withdrawal in March 1995. With the departure of the UN, the country split into zones controlled by the various warlord factions. Most sections of this entry reflect the conditions in Somalia prior to the outbreak of hostilities.

Once known as the Land of Punt, **SOMALIA** has a rich and ancient history. Famed for its frankincense and myrrh (which it still exports), Somalia today is better known for its pastoral economy, its nomadic population, and its important place in the strategic Horn of Africa.

Somalia possesses beautiful white sand beaches bathed by the waters of the Indian Ocean. Traveling along the coast, one is struck by the stark beauty of the countryside, and the harsh but picturesque desert landscapes.

The coastal cities, in particular, reveal a long contact with foreign influences. Travelers from the Arabian Peninsula, Pakistan, India, and even China, called at the capital city hundreds of years before the Portuguese arrived early in the 16th

century. Many old mosques, houses, and intricately carved doors and windows reflect the various cultures which have touched this country.

Before the outbreak of hostilities a favorable social climate existed toward Americans. It was possible to meet and socialize with Somalis and to travel, within limits, within the country.

MAJOR CITY

Mogadishu

Mogadishu is Somalia's capital and largest city. It lies on the Indian Ocean about two degrees north of the equator. It extends approximately four miles along the sea and a mile inland on a line of dunes 100 to 200 feet high. Beyond the city limits, the countryside is flat and barren, with vegetation consisting of bushes and thorn trees, and occasional seasonal grassy areas. The prevailing tone of the countryside is a desert gray much of the year, but it turns green during the two to five months of the rainy season.

Mogadishu's rapidly expanding population is estimated to be about 1.2 million. This figure includes a large



Street in Mogadishu, Somalia

AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

Yemeni community, and smaller groups of Italians, Indians, and Pakistanis. The largest diplomatic missions in the city are those of Italy, the U.S., and the People's Republic of China. There is also a large United Nations Development Program (UNDP) mission in the city, in addition to several volunteer agencies working under the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Among other foreign agencies engaged in developmental work or assistance in Mogadishu are Africare, OXFAM (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief), Finnish Medical Aid, and the University of Saskatchewan.

New visitors to the city can visit a camel's milk market or the Lido Market where meerscham craftsmen and straw weavers ply their trades. Hamarweyn is the core of the old city and the location of the Bendair weavers. The National Museum displays past and present items of Somali folk culture.

From the time of its founding by Arab colonists in the eighth century, Mogadishu was an independent town until its occupation in 1871 by the Sultan of Zanzibar. Italy leased its port late in that century, and in 1905, purchased the town and made it the capital of what was then Ital-

ian Somaliland. The influence of the Italians remains to this day, and is noticed especially in the use of that language in all walks of official, business, and domestic life.

Education

The American School of Mogadishu was organized as a cooperative venture in 1959, and has a student body in kindergarten through grade eight. The campus is located on the western edge of the city on Afgoi Road, and the buildings include classroom wings, a gymnasium, a 6,000-volume library, and offices. Extensive playing fields surround the school and often are used by community organizations as well as by the students. The present building was started in 1965, and was completed with the help of Agency for International Development (AID) and U.S. State Department grants.

American School offers a fine opportunity to study with an international student body in small and personalized classes; average class size is 20 for grades one through four, and 15 for grades five through eight. Subjects are departmentalized in grades seven and eight. American textbooks and materials are used, and the curriculum is comparable to that offered by schools in

the U.S. The school's sports program includes swimming instruction for about eight weeks a year at the nearby International Golf and Tennis Club. Information on the academic program can be obtained by writing to the American Embassy in Mogadishu.

The director and deputy director, both with teaching spouses, are recruited from the U.S., as are two other teaching couples. Other teachers are recruited locally. Most of the present staff is American. The school has been able to provide qualified teachers in every grade and academic standards are high. Students with special learning needs are not accepted due to the lack of trained staff. Accreditation was granted by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools in March 1985.

Emphasis is placed on training the staff in U.S. educational methods and practices. Grades one through eight meet from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., five days a week, Sunday through Thursday. Kindergarten and preschool hours are 7:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Kindergarten pupils must be four years and nine months old by September, while preschoolers must be three years and nine months old by September of the year of admission. A record of immunization and a birth certificate are required for admission to all grades.

There is no provision for students at the secondary level, and they must attend boarding schools in Europe or the U.S., although limited possibilities for high school exist in Kenya.

Recreation

The principal outdoor activities in Somalia are swimming, sunbathing, snorkeling, jogging, fishing, tennis, golf, volleyball, badminton, softball, boating, and camping. Spectator sports include soccer and basketball. The Mogadishu Hash House Harriers hold a cross-country run every Sunday afternoon. The Golf and Tennis Club, located in the American Embassy compound and

managed by the Recreation and Welfare Association, has a nine-hole sand golf course, four cement-surface tennis courts, a large swimming pool with adjacent children's wading pool, and a snack bar.

Mogadishu has good beaches and an abundance of sunshine. Lido, the main city beach, is not used by Americans for swimming because of the shark hazard; The beaches south of town are used mainly for picnics and camping. During much of the year, snorkeling and spearfishing are popular activities. The best snorkeling is at Gezira, a beach area about 10 miles southwest of Mogadishu. A few small sailboats and windsurfers are seen there inside the reef during the quiet season.

The Anglo-American Beach Club and the U.N. Beach Club at Lido Beach are open to the international community. Each clubhouse contains a social room, bar, restaurant, changing and shower rooms, and a sun deck. Circolo Italiano, also at Lido, is a private club offering recreational and cultural activities to its members, mainly from the Italian community.

Besides Lido and Gezira beaches, many other beaches and coves are found up and down the coast. These areas are pleasant for picnicking and camping, but are accessible only by four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Although an environmental or climatic change in or near Mogadishu is impossible, short and interesting side trips may be taken to the sugar plantation and refinery at Johar; the ancient port of Marka; the nearby beaches at Gezira, Warsheikh, and Shark's Bay; the birding area beyond Balad; and the hippo pools between Shalambod and Janale. The nearest place offering a change is Nairobi (Kenya) and its surrounding countryside. There, all the amenities of a modern city can be found, and the environs offer a lush countryside and exciting game reserves.

Outside of Mogadishu, Kismayu, Shalambod, and Hargeisa, few hotels and restaurants exist. When traveling to outlying towns and villages, it is necessary to take food, water, and camping equipment, unless arrangements can be made to stay with someone. Travel overland is restricted during the rainy season, as roads become impassable even for four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Somalia has a wealth of big game and smaller wild animals, although numbers and ranges have been greatly reduced in the last 50 years. Monkeys, hippopotami, elephants, giraffes, rhinoceri, buffaloes, and zebras are found in the southwestern part of the country. Hippos and crocodiles can be found along the Juba and Shabelli Rivers. Antelope, gazelle, kudu, and oryx range throughout the country. Dik-dik and waterbuck are limited to the southwest, and the hartebeest inhabits the Haud in the northeast. Warthogs, dik-dik, monkeys, hippos, and Speakes gazelles (limited to Somalia) can be seen near Mogadishu.

Bird life is profuse and spectacular throughout the country. Waterbirds, including ducks, geese, pelicans, flamingos, cormorants, storks, and osprey, are particularly numerous. Migratory birds from Asia Minor, Europe, and the eastern Mediterranean have winter quarters in Somalia. The ostrich is common in the open plain.

Entertainment

Theater, concerts, opera, and television are not a part of life in Mogadishu. Several local outdoor movie houses show dated films in Italian, Hindi, or Arabic, but most Americans do not frequent these theaters. The French and Italian cultural centers offer regular programs of their films, often with English subtitles.

Social activities among Americans and other expatriates in Mogadishu are relaxed and informal. The American School, its Parent-Teacher Association, the Recreation and Welfare Club, and various

other clubs make important contributions to the community's social life. Governed by elected boards, each of these organizations welcomes willing workers and leadership. An amateur dramatics society meets regularly to read plays and give productions. Opportunities for volunteer work are few, but do exist. A sewing group meets weekly to make clothing for a local orphanage. Girl Guide and Boy Scout troops have been formed.

OTHER CITIES

Rich in history, **BERBERA** was once the Muslim settlement of the state of Adal. Later it was ruled by the Portuguese in 1518, the sharifs of Mocha in the 17th century, and the Egyptians from 1875 until the British took control in 1884. It was the British Somaliland capital until 1941. Due to improved ports, Berbera now exports sheep, hides and skins, gum arabic, myrrh, and frankincense. Some of its 213,000 residents migrate during the hot season to the Ogo Highlands. Berbera is the site of a naval and missile base that was built by the former Soviet Union. The city is situated in northwestern Somalia on the Gulf of Aden.

HARGEISA, with a population of about 231,000 (2002 est.), is a major watering and trading center for nomadic stock herders. The city exports skins, meat, and livestock via Berbera. There is an international airport and a public library in Hargeisa. Hargeisa sustained heavy damage during the civil war. Most of the town was reduced to rubble, and most of the population fled.

Located in southern Somalia near the mouth of the Juba River, **KISMAYU** is an important seaport. The city was founded in 1872 by the sultan of Zanzibar and taken over by the British in 1887. The city has a large meat-processing plant. Kismayu's estimated population in 2002 was 201,000.

MARKA (also spelled Merca and Merka) is located in southern Somalia on the Indian Ocean. It is nearly 50 miles southwest of Mogadishu. The city was founded by either Arab or Persian traders in the 10th century. The major export is bananas; during the 17th century, trade included slaves, cattle, and ivory. The population is estimated at 173,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Somalia comprises the perimeter of the Horn of Africa, the easternmost point of the continent. It is bounded on the north by the Republic of Djibouti and the Gulf of Aden; on the east and southeast by the Indian Ocean; on the south and southwest by Kenya; and on the west by Ethiopia. The country extends about 1,000 miles along the Indian Ocean, 600 miles along the Gulf of Aden, and about 200 miles inland. The total area is about 246,300 square miles—roughly the size of Texas. It is generally flat country in the south, with few areas rising over 1,000 feet. Much of the northern region is plateau, with altitudes reaching 3,000 to 4,000 feet, and occasionally rising to peaks of almost 8,000 feet. Southern Somalia is traversed by two rivers which flow toward the sea from Ethiopia. The Juba flows into the Indian Ocean near the port of Kismayu, and the Shebelli disappears into a marshland near the sea about 200 miles southwest of Mogadishu.

Located two degrees north of the equator, Somalia's climate is tropical, but arid. The year is divided into four seasons: two wet and two dry. The major rainy season, called the *Gu*, is from late April to late June. It is followed by a dry season, the *Haggai*, which lasts until late August or early September. The minor rainy season, the *Der*, generally begins at that time and contin-

ues until early December. It is followed by the major dry season, the *Jilal*, which lasts until the onset of the major rains. Annual rainfall in Mogadishu averages 15 inches. Shade temperatures in Mogadishu seldom exceed 90°F, and generally drop to the mid-70s at night throughout the year. Alternating northwest and southwest monsoon winds blow for most of the year, creating a moderating effect. From mid-December to mid-February, strong wind blows the fine sands about freely. Humidity in Mogadishu averages 80 percent year round. In the interior, the winds are warmer, temperatures higher, and humidity lower. Daylight is usually from about 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. throughout the year.

Population

Somalia's population was estimated at 7.5 million (2001). In addition, hundreds of thousands of ethnic Somalis live outside the country, mainly in the Ogaden and Hararghe areas of Ethiopia, but also in the Republic of Djibouti, and in northeastern Kenya. Somalia's annual growth rate is 3.48 percent (2001 est.).

The origin of the Somalis is unknown, but some ethnologists have speculated that they are a mixture of Arabic and African peoples. Their language, which is Cushitic, belongs to the large African-Asian group which includes the Hamitic and Semitic languages. The Somalis settled in what is now Somalia in the relatively recent past, having replaced the Oromo, who had driven out the Bantu peoples. Vestiges of the Oromo and Bantu can still be found in the country. Somalia is a rarity in the African continent, with its common ethnic heritage, culture, religion, and language.

The Somali are generally classified in six major-clan families: the Dir, Hawiya, Darod, Digil, Issak, and Rahanwein. The Digil and Rahanwein are usually found only between the Juba and Shebelli Rivers; those of the other major groups

live throughout the country, and in Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya.

Somalis are generally tall and slender, with fine features. They are known for their intense pride, quick minds, and good sense of humor. The men usually wear either Western dress or the colorful sarong-type garment called a *ma'awis*. The women, who have considerably more freedom than those in many other Muslim countries, wear long, colorful dresses; sometimes young teenagers in town wear slacks. The nomadic Somali wears a two-piece cloth garment that resembles a toga.

The Muslim faith is the state religion, and most Somalis (99 percent) are members of the Sunni sect of Islam.

Traditionally, the majority of Somalis (70 percent or higher) are nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists. About 30 percent are settled agriculturalists. There are very few skilled laborers in a work force that numbers nearly 3.7 million.

Government

Until January 1991, Somalia was ruled by Mohammed Siad Barre. Barre, who seized control of Somalia after a 1969 military coup, ruled the country as a dictator. All political parties, except Barre's Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) were banned, political opponents was arrested, and the press tightly controlled. According to several international human-rights organizations, the Barre dictatorship was one of the cruelest regimes on the African continent.

In 1989, a rebel group known as the Somali National Movement (SNM) launched an offensive against government forces in northwestern areas of the country. At roughly the same time two other rebel groups, the United Somali Congress (USC) and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) launched attacks against Barre's troops in central and southern parts of the country respectively. Fighting between the rebel

groups and government forces continued throughout Somalia, with the rebels steadily gaining the upper hand. By late December 1990, the rebel groups had completely surrounded Mogadishu. Barre, however, refused to give up his hold on power. In early January 1991, the rebel groups entered Mogadishu. For nearly four weeks, the rebel forces and troops loyal to Barre waged a vicious battle for control of the capital. Much of the city sustained very heavy damage and thousands of civilians were killed. On January 27, Barre fled the city in a tank convoy. The next day a member of the United Somali Congress (USC), Ali Mahdi Mohammed, was named interim president. Mahdi quickly promised that a democratic system of government would be formed and multi-party elections held at a later date.

Despite the removal of Siad Barre, peace did not return to Somalia. The two rebel groups who had fought alongside the USC, the Somali National Movement and Somali Patriotic Movement, refused to accept Mahdi's authority. Both groups were angry that the USC would form an interim government without first consulting them. Bloody battles quickly erupted between the three rebel groups in Mogadishu. The violence between these rival factions soon spread to other parts of Somalia.

Somalia has virtually no working government, police force, or army that can restore order and control the countries warring factions. Mogadishu, the scene of bloody clan fighting, was divided between two rival warlords. Northern portions of Mogadishu were controlled by force loyal to Ali Mahdi. Mogadishu's southern regions were in the hands of supporters of Gen. Mohammed Aidid. Several United Nations-brokered cease-fire attempts in 1992 failed to hold. The break down in law and order and the wealth of available weapons led to a proliferation of heavily armed groups of bandits. These gangs roamed Mogadishu and the country at will, robbing and killing innocent people



Jason Laure. Reproduced by permission.

Three men sitting near the seashore in Brava, Somalia

and ambushing convoys of international food relief destined for Somalia's starving people. As a result, the number of Somalis dying from hunger and disease increased dramatically.

On December 9, 1992, former President George Bush announced that American troops would join an international relief effort to feed Somalia's people. The American troops arrived in Somalia and were warmly received by the Somalis. The troops provided protection for convoys of food and medical relief and established law and order in Mogadishu and several other cities. Food relief convoys were soon able to reach famine relief centers set up by international relief organizations. The number of Somalis dying from hunger and disease decreased after the arrival of American and international troops. American and international troops also captured large amounts of weaponry and disarmed many bandits.

In early 1993, representatives from all of Somalia's warring factions met in Ethiopia. After much discussion, a cease-fire agreement was signed. However, 23 Pakistani soldiers were killed in an ambush in June 1993 and 18 US Army Rangers were killed in October 1993. Subsequent UN-sponsored peace talks

failed. In 1994 the UN redefined its role in Somalia to be less assertive. The United Nations completed its troop withdrawal in March 1995. With the departure of the UN, the country split into zones controlled by the various warlord factions.

A transitional government was established in October 2000. Abdiqasim Salad Hassan was appointed president by the interim parliament. A new constitution is to be created and elections are to be held before 2004.

The Somali flag is light blue, with a five-pointed white star in the center.

Arts, Science, Education

A rich oral literature and poetry has traditionally been the most important means of artistic expression among the Somalis. A Latin script adopted for the language in 1972 has made it possible for much of this literature to be preserved, and has encouraged new forms of literary expression. Unfortunately, few new literary works are being published in Somalia.

All private schools were nationalized in 1972 and education is now tuition-free. Formal education is

being geared to the country's technical and economic needs. Plans are underway to create comprehensive training centers in 10 regions for nomads. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is assisting with the development of a national library system.

Local handicrafts are limited, although wood, ivory, and meerscham carvings, attractive basketry, and a great variety of beautiful shells are available. Tie-dyed cotton cloth is locally made, inexpensive, and useful. Handmade gold and silver jewelry is also for sale, but is not the bargain it once was.

Somalia has an ancient weaving tradition. Some 450 weavers in five major communities along the Benadir coast from Hamarweyn to Brava still produce intricate patterns in narrow cotton fabric. At one time, the coast supported as many as 2,000 weavers who carried on a lively barter trade up and down the east coast of Africa and inland as far as Sudan. The industry was dealt a severe blow in the mid-1800s by the arrival of cheaply produced cloth from America.

In 1972, Somali became the country's sole official language. Nevertheless, English is used predominantly in diplomatic circles and, in Mogadishu, Italian is still the second language. Often, the Italian spelling of the city's name, Mogadiscio, is seen. Arabic, the second official language, is spoken by many Somalis and is taught in the schools from early grades through high school.

In 1990, an estimated 24 percent (male 36%, female 14%) of Somalis age 15 and over could read and write.

Commerce and Industry

Somalia is one of the world's poorest and least-developed countries. Since 1990, the economy has been in

shambles, the consequence of drought and protracted civil war. Continued fighting and lack of central authority prevent significant improvements in economic conditions. The country's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which accounts for roughly 65 percent of export earnings. Subsistence agriculture predominates in Somalia, with corn, sorghum, and sugarcane grown for domestic consumption. Bananas are the primary export crop. Livestock such as camels, cattle, sheep, and goats are an important economic commodity. Most of the livestock is raised by nomads or semi-nomads, which comprise more than half of the population. The major agricultural region is in the south, particularly in the area between the Juba and Shebelli Rivers. A considerable amount of irrigation occurs along the two rivers, although the Shebelli dries up during the longer of two dry seasons.

Somalia's industrial sector is extremely small and contributes less than 10 percent of GDP. Most industries are involved in meat and fish processing, sugar refining, textiles and leather goods, and fruit and vegetable canning. Many factories have closed down due to the ongoing civil strife.

Gypsum, feldspar, columbite, iron, sepiolite, and salt deposits exist. Except for salt and gypsum, much of Somalia's mineral resources remain unexploited. Potential oil and gas reserves have been located in northern parts of the country and near Mogadishu. However, these sources are currently untapped.

Livestock, hides and skins, bananas, and fish are Somalia's primary export products. Most of these products are imported by Saudi Arabia, Italy, and Yemen. Somalia imports large quantities of textiles, petroleum products, foodstuffs, transport equipment, and construction materials. Major suppliers of these products are Saudi Arabia, Italy, the United States, Germany, France, and Great Britain.

Somalia's economy is devastated as a result of the 1991 civil war. As of July 1992, the situation in the country was extremely bleak. Because of drought and widespread destruction in agricultural areas, millions of Somalis face starvation. International relief efforts have been severely hampered by continued fighting among various armed factions and banditry.

The Chamber of Commerce in Somalia is at P.O. Box 27, Mogadishu.

Transportation

All travelers to Somalia arrive by air; the most commonly used routes are the two flights a week via Frankfurt and two via Nairobi. Somali Airlines flies to Rome, Frankfurt, Nairobi, Cairo, Jeddah, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Djibouti, and Moroni. Saudi Airlines flies to Jeddah; Kenya flies to Nairobi; Djibouti Airlines flies to Djibouti. The most reliable connecting flights to major European cities are available through Nairobi or Frankfurt. Flight schedules are subject to immediate changes.

No regularly scheduled passenger ship service is available to Mogadishu. Hard-surfaced roads within the country are limited to a major north-south system, and a few others to larger towns.

The capital city swarms with red and yellow Fiat taxis, which have neither meters nor fixed rates. Bargaining for a rate must be done at the outset. Mogadishu's public bus system is unsatisfactory for regular use.

Most persons find a car essential. Only occasionally can a good used car be found for purchase from another American, or from a member of the international community. A small European vehicle is the most practical for city use, but for driving outside of Mogadishu other than on main roads or to the beaches south and north of town, a four-wheel-drive is preferable. Service is spotty, and parts are in short

supply for almost any vehicle, American or foreign, so it is necessary to assemble a supply of spare parts before moving to Somalia.

No unleaded gasoline is available and the overall quality of gasoline is poor. Due to the poor condition of roads and the presence of potholes, a car with a heavy duty suspension system is essential. The main streets in Mogadishu itself are paved, but side streets are a combination of loose sand and rock.

A valid U.S. or international driver's license is needed to obtain a Somali license. Only those 18 and older are eligible under Somali law.

Communications

Mogadishu has an automatic, but capricious, telephone system. Service is generally limited to the city proper. Long-distance calls may be placed at any time to Europe or the U.S. by booking them at the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs. These calls are much more expensive than if booked in the reverse direction. Since all existing internal lines are in use, obtaining a residential telephone is nearly impossible.

The Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs also provides a wireless telegraph service daily to Europe and the U.S., via Rome, from 7 p.m. to 11 a.m. Telex service is available in Mogadishu at the Croce del Sud Hotel and at the American Embassy.

International postal service is limited. Airmail to or from the U.S. takes a minimum of 10 days to two weeks.

Somalia has two radio stations, Radio Mogadishu and Radio Hargeisa, both run by the Ministry of Information and National Guidance. Radio Mogadishu broadcasts 18 hours daily in Somali and Arabic. Thirty-minute foreign-language broadcasts, on the 49 SW band, include English, French, Swahili, Italian, Amharic, Afar, and Oromo. English broadcasts can be heard from 3 to 3:30 p.m. Somali TV, inau-

gured in 1983, transmits daily in Somali and Arabic from 8 to 10 p.m., using the European PAL signal. Shortwave radio reception ranges from poor to good. Voice of America (VOA) and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) are usually strong during early morning and evening. A good shortwave radio is the best source of current news.

The principal locally printed news source for expatriates is the Somali National News Agency (SONNA) bulletin, which offers local and international news summaries in English. *Time* and *Newsweek*, a few other English-language periodicals, and a variety of Italian publications are usually available about five to seven days late. Newsstand prices are high, however. Several expatriates subscribe to the *International Herald Tribune*, which arrives anywhere from two to 20 days late. Only a few local bookstores, which sell mostly used books, operate in Mogadishu.

Health

For illnesses requiring hospitalization, surgery, complicated diagnostic facilities, or drugs, most Westerners go to Nairobi; serious cases are sent to Europe.

Dental care is virtually nonexistent. All dental programs should be taken care of before leaving home.

As a general rule, local pharmacies cannot be depended on to provide adequate service. Patent medicines and current prescriptions should be kept in three-month supply. A copy of one's eyeglass prescription is a must, since replacing glasses in Somalia is difficult, expensive, and time-consuming. Glasses can be made in Nairobi at a price and quality comparable to those in the U.S.

Generally, most Westerners staying in Mogadishu enjoy good health. However, many diseases affect the local population, and the incidence of tuberculosis, syphilis, bilharzia, dengue fever, measles, polio, and malaria is high. With proper health precautions, few resident foreigners

are affected by serious diseases; intestinal upsets (diarrhea, amoebic dysentery, or other parasitic infections) are the greatest risk. Fungus and skin infections, including boils and prickly heat, are quite common, particularly during the hot seasons. High humidity also can cause discomfort to those susceptible to sinus ailments or to neuromuscular complaints, such as rheumatism and neuralgia.

Public sanitation practices are not up to U.S. standards, but the hazards are lessened to some degree by the hot African sun and the porous desert sand. Since no sewage disposal system exists, septic tanks are used in most Western-style homes. Flies, ants, mosquitoes, and cockroaches are numerous, especially during the rainy season. While the great numbers of lizards in all households may help to reduce the insect population, householders still need an ample supply of bug sprays in Somalia. In public eating places, food handling and serving standards are poor, and dishes and utensils are usually washed in cold water.

The required immunizations for Americans are those for yellow fever and cholera. Tetanus, polio, and typhoid immunizations should be up-to-date; gamma globulin is recommended every four months. Although Mogadishu is generally malaria free, some nearby areas have malaria cases. Therefore, it is necessary to take suppressants at least one to two weeks before arriving in Mogadishu, during the entire stay, and for at least six weeks after leaving.

Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is an endemic disease contracted from fresh water where disease-carrying snails breed. Swimming in rivers or lakes is not safe.

The almost constant wind and fine-blowing sand may cause some difficulty for contact lens wearers.

Clothing and Services

Wash-and-wear fabrics are popular among Westerners because of the ease of care, but many are now finding that pure cotton is more comfortable in the heat and humidity. A good supply of all clothing should be included in one's initial wardrobe, since frequent laundering and drying in the sun causes garments to wear out quickly. Sandals are practical for everyday wear, and thong-type sandals manufactured locally are attractive and inexpensive. Some warmer clothing may be needed for trips to Kenya, northern Somalia, or (in the case of a long business assignment in the country) to Europe.

Summer clothing is suitable year round. Standard dress for the office (for men) is lightweight slacks with open-neck, short-sleeved shirts or bush shirts. Sport shirts are worn for most informal evening gatherings; lightweight suits are needed occasionally for special functions. Dinner jackets or tuxedos are never required. Shorts are not worn as street attire, but may be worn jogging, on the beach or tennis courts, or at home.

Women wear dresses of lightweight fabrics, either sleeveless or with short sleeves, for business or other daytime activities. In the evening, either long or short dresses are acceptable. Shorts are not worn as street attire, but are suitable for the beach or tennis courts. Bare sundresses often are worn to functions where Somalis are not present. A hat is never needed, except for protection from the sun; scarves are useful in the strong wind. Sometimes the evenings are cool enough for a sweater or a stole. Most women find slacks and hosiery too warm for the climate.

Children spend much of their time outdoors. Their play clothes should be of lightweight material, and they will need several extra bathing suits and beach towels. Sneakers or sandals are usually worn. Jeans, of

course, are a favorite with older children.

A variety of local food is available, although with seasonal limitations. Local meats include fair-to-good quality beef, camel, goat, and lamb. Local chickens and small birds are little and tough, but, properly cooked, can be tasty. Pork products are unavailable locally. A variety of fish is sold throughout the year at reasonable prices. Many local species are delicious. Lobster is a seasonal delicacy, obtainable according to biological cycles and the weather, but it can be frozen and is one of the pleasures of life in Mogadishu. Good smoked fish is also available seasonally.

Bananas, limes, grapefruit, and papayas are excellent and sold year round. Good mangos and watermelon are available seasonally. Locally grown vegetables include tomatoes, spinach, lettuce, radishes, potatoes, green beans, peppers, eggplant, zucchini, and parsley. Some are seasonal.

Some pasta is produced locally, but most other foods on the local market, including rice, cheese, processed meats, and canned foods, are imported at high prices from Italy, Kenya, China, and Eastern Europe. Mogadishu has a local dairy, but health standards are questionable, and all fresh milk must be boiled. Powdered whole milk for infants is sold in local shops, but is expensive and may have spent considerable time on the shelf.

Mogadishu has shoe repair shops, a dry cleaner/laundry, and radio and auto repair shops. The quality of dry cleaning is mediocre and prices are high. Washable clothing is more practical, since laundry usually is done by household servants. Appliance repairs and service on American cars are often unsatisfactory. Adequate automobile service facilities (and authorized dealers for American vehicle parts) do not exist. Fiat, Toyota, and Land Rover parts are sometimes available, and always expensive.

Tailoring services are mediocre because tailors lack quality material; most men use tailors only for alterations, but one or two tailors in Mogadishu do adequate work on women's clothing. Some can make copies of dresses in simple patterns. Fabrics, designs, and cuts do not compare with American ready-to-wear clothing. Tailors can also make simple drapes and slipcovers, but notions (drapery hooks, curtain rings, and bindings) are usually not available and, if available, are expensive.

Beauty and barber services are found in town.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

As of January 1991, the Department of State was advising all U.S. citizens to avoid all travel to Somalia indefinitely. Hostilities can break out at any time. All U.S. government employees and dependents were evacuated from Somalia and our Embassy there was closed on January 5, 1991. Under the circumstances, the United States Government is unable to offer American citizens in Somalia any type of assistance and protection.

Authorized air routes from the U.S. are London/Nairobi/Mogadishu, Frankfurt/Mogadishu, Rome/Mogadishu, and Frankfurt/Nairobi/Mogadishu. Somali and Kenya Airways each fly from Nairobi to Mogadishu once a week.

A visa, valid passport, and a record of inoculations against cholera and yellow fever are required to enter Somalia. If a visa has not been obtained beforehand in the U.S., it can be applied for at the Somali Embassy either in Rome or Nairobi. The Kenyans also issue visas at Nairobi Airport for incoming tourists. At least 24 photos are needed for the various local forms and visa applications.

Household pets may be imported to Somalia but, because of cargo limitations, it is better to take the animal as accompanied baggage. Dogs and cats must have rabies inoculation certificates signed by a licensed veterinarian, and stamped by the municipality or state, confirming that the animal is free from infectious disease, and that the area of origin has been rabies-free for at least six months. Satisfactory kenneling is available at Nairobi for transiting animals. Mogadishu is a reasonably healthy place for pets; however, during certain seasons, ticks and fleas are endemic. Owners are advised to have an ample supply of appropriate medications, as veterinary service and supplies are limited.

Special note: Muslim doctrine prohibits contact with dogs, and Somalis are generally unfriendly to them. Dogs must be restrained in public places, or when Somali guests are present. Servants working in the American community usually tolerate dogs, although they do not particularly like them.

As a general rule, no weapons should be taken to Somalia. Rare exceptions are made.

Mogadishu has Roman Catholic churches but, except for two English-language masses a week, all masses are in Italian. A service is held on Saturday at 6:15 p.m. at the Sacred Heart Church (at Fiat Circle) and on Sunday at 5:15 p.m. at the Cathedral. An interdenominational Protestant service is held once a week on Saturday evening in one of the Catholic churches.

The time in Somalia is Greenwich Mean Time plus three.

The currency is the Somali *shilling*, written So.Shs. The units are *shillings* and *centesimi*: 100 *centesimi* equal one *shilling*. All banks in the country are nationalized. The Somali Commercial and Savings Bank currently has five branches in Mogadishu, one in Hargeisa, and others in smaller cities; these branches, however, do not accept personal dollar checks unless an account is maintained with the bank.

Somalia uses the metric system of weights and measures.

The U.S. Embassy in Somalia is located on Corso Primo Luglio, Mogadishu. **Note: The American Embassy in Somalia was closed on January 5, 1991, due to deteriorating conditions in the country. The embassy has not been reopened.**

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| June 26 | Independence Day (Northern Region) |
| July 1 | Independence Day (Southern Region) |
| Oct. 21 | Revolution Day |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Id al-Adah* |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

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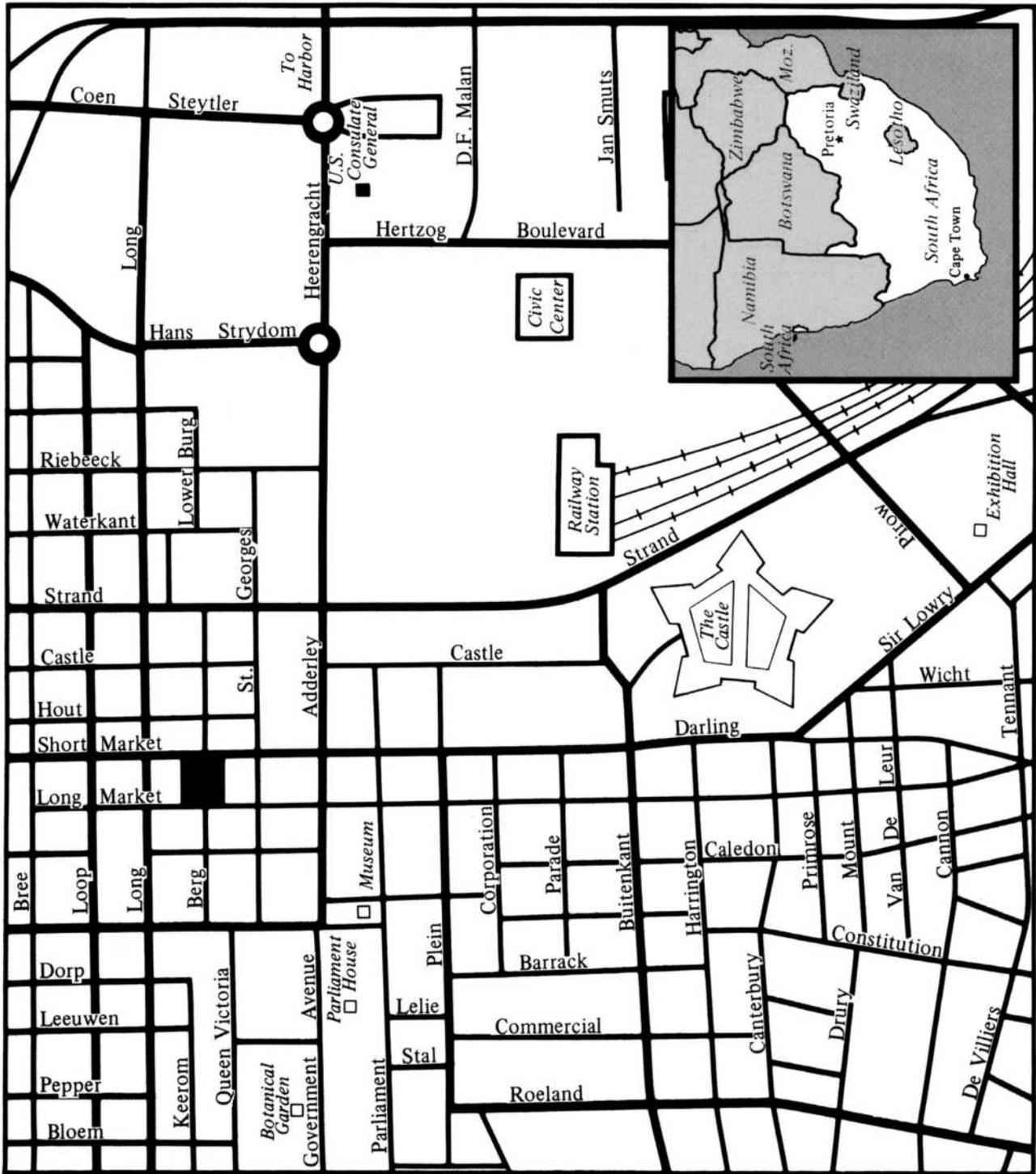
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Cape Town, South Africa

SOUTH AFRICA

Republic of South Africa

Major Cities:

Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein

Other Cities:

Benoni, Boksburg, Germiston, Kimberley, Krugersdorp, Ladysmith, Paarl, Pietermaritzburg, Port Elizabeth, Roodepoort, Soweto, Springs, Vereeniging, Welkom

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 1999 for South Africa. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

South Africa, a country of stark beauty and diverse cultures, provides an exciting and dynamic work environment. With the end of apartheid, South Africa's new government has embarked on a historic effort to build a multi-racial, sustainable, market-oriented democracy. The success or failure of this effort will have enormous implications for the rest of Africa and for the world. Our official objectives are concentrated on support for a successful South African transition.

South Africa is a large country, about twice the size of Texas, and consists of an extensive interior plateau (altitudes range from 3,000 to 6,000 feet) with a narrow coastal

plain. The climate is moderate with sunny days and cool nights. Latest estimates put South Africa's population at 44.6 million, including non-documented immigrants. The country has eleven official languages, including English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, and Tswana. English is widely understood even by those who do not speak it as a native language.

With the most sophisticated economy on the continent, South Africa has a highly developed financial and physical infrastructure. Much of the country's wealth originally came from gold and diamond mines, but today South Africa exports a wide variety of manufactured products. Despite South Africa's impressive economic achievement, gross inequities exist along racial lines in the distribution of wealth and job opportunities. These disparities reflect the South African government's previous policy of apartheid - a system of legally mandated racial segregation favoring the white community. Although the present government has dismantled the legal basis for such racial discrimination, apartheid's legacy of widespread black poverty will take years to eliminate completely.

Besides a challenging work environment, South Africa offers a host of unique vacation experiences. The

vineyards of the Cape, wildlife of Kruger National Park, and beaches of Durban are just some of the country's tourist attractions. Travel is easy, and people are helpful wherever you go. South Africa's combination of physical beauty and a changing society will make your stay rewarding.

MAJOR CITIES

Pretoria

Pretoria is the administrative capital of South Africa. Greater Pretoria has about 1,081,187 people (Source: Central Statistical Service, 1991 Census). It is located in Gauteng Province, 35 miles Northeast of Johannesburg, 30 miles from Johannesburg International Airport, and 437 miles from Durban, the nearest port city in South Africa.

Founded in 1855, Pretoria is the seat of executive government for South Africa. It lies in a long valley edged by several ridges. The rural surrounding area consists of undulating veld with low trees scattered over the landscape. Aside from the Iscor Steelworks and automobile assembly plants located outside the city, and a few small industrial establishments, Pretoria is mainly a

government town with enough shops and department stores to cater to its population. Schools, hospitals, doctors and dentists are in adequate supply.

Pretoria is a quiet, modern city offering current movies, plays, operas, ballets, and concerts. Two universities, the Transvaal Museum and the Transvaal Province Library, an excellent zoo, sports grounds, including several golf courses, and many beautiful parks provide cultural enjoyment and relaxation. Those seeking a brighter nightlife generally go to Johannesburg, though Pretoria has many good restaurants, some with dancing and/or live entertainment. Sundays in Pretoria are spent visiting friends, participating in sports, or indulging in the national pastime of the "braai vleis" (barbecue). In the city, flea markets and open-air art and craft markets are often held as well. Aside from the U.S. Embassy staff and their families, 250 other Americans live in Pretoria, including church and missionary representatives and American spouses of South Africans. Most American business representatives live in the Johannesburg suburbs. Diplomatic representatives of the U.S. and other countries form the nucleus of the growing foreign community.

Atteridgeville, Mamelodi, Soshanguve are the historically black townships surrounding Pretoria where the majority of the black citizens of the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan area still live. Atteridgeville is 7 miles, Mamelodi is 15 miles, Soshanguve, Ga-Rankuwa, Winterveldt and Temba are all about 25 miles away. Nearly all residents work in Pretoria, traveling by bus, train, or taxi. A few drive personal vehicles. Lenasia, about 10 miles south of Pretoria, is home to many of the area's citizens of Asian descent. Each of these communities has its own town council and civic association and participates in the regional "super government," the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council. Unemployment is high in the townships and standards of living significantly lower than in Pre-

toria proper. There is also a serious shortage of housing in the townships, which has given rise to large informal settlements or "squatter camps" on the periphery of established areas. Township councils resisted squatting initially, but because they did not have houses for the squatters, they began to provide water and toilets for them.

Food

Basic foods, locally produced baby foods and infant formulas are all available. Baby food is widely available, however all dried cereals contain sugars. Fresh fruit and vegetables of all kinds are available most of the year. Dairy products, including butter, cheeses, eggs and whole, low fat and skim milk are all readily available. Several good quality South African and British brands are available in the major metropolitan cities. South African, as well as imported, coffees and teas are excellent and comparable in price to those sold in the U.S. Iced teas and ice tea mixes are rarely available.

Soft drinks (Coca-Cola, Sprite, Fanta and other Coke products) are widely available.

Ice cream lovers will satisfy their taste buds with higher quality brands, however, sorbets and sherbets are seldom available.

Most spices are available, however, the gourmet chef may wish to bring familiar brands and varieties with them. Extracts are not available.

White and brown sugars are both coarse, with the exception of powdered sugar, which is equivalent to that sold in the States.

Pancake syrups are limited in variety, and the quality is not the same as that available in the States. Corn syrup is not available.

Chocolate and other baking chips are either not available or of a lesser quality than that available in the States. Other baking items (cake mixes, bread mixes, pancake mixes,

pie crusts and crumbs) are not available.

Graham crackers are not available, but saltines are available from local grocery stores.

Meats (beef, pork, lamb, chicken) are plentiful and reasonably priced. Seafood is widely available in coastal cities and is shipped (fresh or frozen) into inland areas. Turkeys (small fresh or frozen medium or large) are available primarily in November and December.

Solid shortening (Crisco), stuffing mixes, pumpkin pie filling, and certain ethnic foods are not available on the open market.

Breakfast cereal varieties are very limited, and many of the brands sold in the States are not available.

Liquors, beers, and wines, (domestic and international brands) are widely available and reasonably priced. South Africa is increasingly becoming known for its wide variety of great wines.

For those U.S. products you must have, several on-line shopping services will ship most items via diplomatic pouch, provided they are not prohibited.

Clothing

South African men and women dress similarly to Americans and Europeans. Imported stylish European shoes are available although at a much higher cost. American shoe widths, especially narrow, are limited. Persons with small or very large feet may have difficulty finding shoes that fit. Although a winter coat is usually not necessary, some southern areas are colder in winter, often having frost and snow. Jackets, all-weather coats or wraps would be a good investment for use in winter months in any area of South Africa. Shoe and clothing sizes differ from those in the States.

Men's styles follow current trends. Wool and lightweight business suits are common. Winter wear is needed about four months a year, except for

the southernmost and eastern area of the country, where the weather is colder for about three months a year. For business, most men wear suits or sports jackets and slacks. Dress shirts are available, however, better short sleeved shirts are seldom sold. Although you may purchase or rent tuxedos and dinner jackets, it is recommended that you bring your own formal wear.

Generally, women's clothing is similar to that worn in western U.S. cities. Hosiery is of a lesser quality than that available in the States. The sizes are different and much more costly. It is advisable for ladies to bring an ample supply of hosiery. There are few occasions when evening gowns are needed; cocktail dresses and/or pantsuits are more commonly worn. Accessories and undergarments are available at a higher price, but may vary in sizes and the quality may not compare to that of the States.

Children's clothing is available, however it is expensive. It is suggested that you bring needed clothing items with you or purchase them through U.S. catalogues.

Supplies and Services

Toiletries, household supplies, medicines, prescription drugs, etc. are in good supply, however some familiar U.S. brands may not be available. Cosmetics and perfumes (mostly imported) are expensive. It is recommended that you bring a supply of your favorite brands. Paper and plastic products (tissue, napkins, foil, freezer bags, etc.) are of a lower quality than that sold in the U.S. Many brands of disposable diapers are available, with quality comparable to those sold in the U.S. Disposable baby bottle liners are not available. Locally made toys are expensive. However, many Americans shop through catalogues. For on-time delivery, it is recommended that you shop early, especially during the busy holiday season. There is a "Toys 'R.' Us" store in the suburbs of Pretoria.

Many American and British brands of cigarettes are manufactured and

sold in South Africa. Tobacco is readily available at a cheaper price than in the U.S.

It is recommended that you purchase a supply of postage stamps prior to arrival or order them from the U.S. Postal Service's 1-800-STAMPS Service Center.

Domestic Help

Many domestics are experienced and proficient. Some speak limited English and require specific instructions and directions. The best well-trained cooks command good wages and are rarely available. Less experienced cooks require considerable instruction and demonstration in preparing and serving food.

Some domestics are accustomed to performing only the tasks for which they are hired. A cook would not be expected to perform cleaning and laundry tasks. Most people employ domestics who are not specialists, but workers who can perform various chores.

Religious Activities

Various religious denominations are represented in South Africa. The Dutch Reformed Church, whose members include most of the Afrikaans-speaking white population, conducts services in Afrikaans. Catholic churches offer Mass in English, Afrikaans, and many African languages. Protestant churches other than the Dutch Reformed include Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational. The Zion Christian Church, Christian Science, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Seventh-day Adventist, Greek Orthodox, and Jewish synagogues also conduct services. There are also Hindu temples and Muslim mosques.

Education

The American International School of Johannesburg (AISJ) is located midway between Johannesburg and Pretoria. It is situated on 67 acres of rolling hills. The school was established in 1982 and is a non-profit institution. It is the only school in this area, which offers a U.S. curricu-

ulum and school calendar (school year from August to June) for kindergarten through 12th grade. AISJ has an outstanding student-teacher ratio of one teacher to ten students. A limited program of physical education and sports activities is offered.

The South African school system follows the United Kingdom Standard form of schooling. Some are co-educational, most are single sex. The South African school year begins in mid-January and ends in early December. Students transferring from a U.S. curriculum based school need to be cognizant of the difference in school year start times.

There are several universities in the Pretoria-Johannesburg area for adult family members interested in pursuing studies while in South Africa.

Special Educational Opportunities

The Pretoria Preparatory School for children (ages 5-13), UNICA, Prins-hof School for the Blind, Sonitus, and The New Hope School are among the schools available for children with special needs in Pretoria. Bellavista, Casa Do Sol, Cedarwood, Crosswoods, and Delta Park are among schools in the Johannesburg area serving children with special needs. Within Cape Town, Bel Porto, The Glendale School and Tafelberg are schools available to serve special needs students. The Browne School, The Golden Hours School and The Kenmont School are Durban area schools serving special needs children.

Sports

South Africa is one of the finest areas of the world for participant sports. Golf and tennis are played year round.

Weekend hunting, fishing, mountain climbing and water-rafting trips are available seasonally. Along the coastal areas, you may surf, scuba dive and sail. Many mineral baths are located in the surrounding areas, offering families a nice retreat with various pools. A popu-

lar participant sport, particularly with senior members of the local community, is lawn bowling. Ten pin bowling is available (limited) in the larger metropolitan areas. The most popular spectator sports are soccer, cricket, rugby and horse racing.

Excellent country clubs are within short drives of the city centers. Each has golf courses varying from good to excellent. Golfers may want to bring golf clubs from the U.S. although clubs and equipment are available locally at competitive prices. Golf clothing is more conservative than that worn in the U.S. Squash facilities are available at several country clubs and other local clubs. There are also many health clubs in the metropolitan areas with reasonable priced individual and family membership available.

Public tennis courts do not exist. Many tennis clubs are available in and around the metropolitan cities and have no or minimal membership fees. Standard tennis clothing is worn; colored attire is acceptable. Tennis rackets and balls are available at higher than U.S. prices. Restringing services are also available. Because of its inexpensive cost, many take private lessons. Once a year, there is a diplomatic tennis tournament in Pretoria.

Several horseback riding facilities are located in the area. Lessons are available for all ages, and costs are considerably lower than the U.S.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

South Africa has many national parks, including the famous Kruger National Park. Several game reserves, including Pilanesberg National Park which is the third largest in South Africa, are close to the city and can be enjoyed as day tours. Short holidays to the game reserves are a favorite form of entertainment for South Africans as well as visitors to the country. Additionally, Pretoria and Johannesburg both have excellent zoos.

South Africa has many hunting farms. Hunting in the national parks is forbidden, but private hunting safaris will be able to help the serious hunter, offering a wide variety of game. Hunting migratory waterfowl is prohibited. Permits are necessary to hunt in South Africa, and can most times be arranged through the hunting safaris. Rifle and shotgun ammunition is available at prices similar to those in the U.S.

Camping (Carlovingian, as it is known in South Africa) is a popular activity with many South Africans, and equipment is readily available everywhere. Excellent terrain for hiking and mountain climbing is found in parks throughout the country; both are extremely popular sports. Almost all resorts offer walking and hiking trails. The Mpumalanga and Kwa-Zulu Natal areas of the country have excellent freshwater fishing in the numerous streams and reservoirs scattered throughout the areas. Trout fishing farms are abundant. Saltwater fishing is also popular and available at various points along South Africa's eastern and southern coasts. Many spots provide surf or rock fishing, and charter trips may be arranged for big game fishing. Fishing equipment is available locally and is priced comparably to similar equipment in the U.S.

Scuba diving is also very popular in South Africa, with diving shops available everywhere. This sport is increasingly popular with expatriates wishing to take advantage of the reasonably priced lessons offered by most shops, and the wide variety of diving sites available along South Africa's coastline.

Golf and tennis are, by far, the most enjoyed sports, with exceptional facilities for tennis and championship golf courses available throughout the country. Top quality equipment is readily available but somewhat more expensive than in the U.S. You should include an ample supply of golf balls in your shipment since these are about 3

times the price you normally pay in the U.S.

Only a very limited opportunity exists for snow skiing. Skiing is offered in the southern Drakensberg Mountains. The slopes are not challenging for those beyond the beginner, low intermediate stages. A rope tow and a poma lift are used. The terrain leading to the area is extremely difficult and can only be traversed with 4-wheel drive vehicles.

Entertainment

Professional theater, ballet, concerts and opera are all available at prices much cheaper than the U.S. Art exhibits and craft shows are held almost each weekend in various venues throughout the major metropolitan areas. Movie theaters and several drive-ins show first run American movies.

South African television is government owned and offers three channels. CNN World News and BBC News are broadcast at various times throughout the day. Some American produced syndicated series are shown. Met Cable System offers four additional channels showing movies, sports and sitcoms. Investing in a satellite television system is another option if you desire a larger selection of news, entertainment and sports programming. Digital Satellite TV (MultiChoice) offers 44 channels featuring the entire range of programs as well as 40 music stations. This is very good value and relatively inexpensive to install, with a monthly fee similar to what you will pay for a cable subscription in the U.S.

In order to view American videos, you must have an NTSC VCR or a multi-system VCR. The local TV system is PAL-I. If you have a European PAL (CCIR) system television, a qualified TV repair shop can convert your set to PAL-I. American TV sets (NTSC) cannot receive South African television broadcasts. Video rental stores are located in most major metropolitan areas and are well stocked. VHS is the standard tape format in South Africa; how-



View of Cape Town, South Africa

Courtesy of Edmund Decker

ever, rental videos are recorded on the PAL system and will not operate in an American VCR.

Radio in the area is varied, with many stations playing American music. The Voice of America (VOA) and BBC Radio are easily heard at night on an AM station and several short-wave bands.

Social Activities

Social activities are primarily family oriented with outings, braais (barbecues), and informal dinner parties being preferred. Children's birthday parties are festive occasions among the South Africans, with swimming parties, jumping castles, and visits to children's playlands as favorite forms of celebration. Adults usually enjoy casual, at-home entertainment or dining out with friends. There are numerous fine restaurants in the area.

Three active American-oriented social clubs exist in the area-The American International Women's Club of Pretoria, the American International Women's Club of Johannesburg, and the American Society of South Africa. The latter is open to both men and women. All three enjoy a large membership and offer many activities for their members.

Cape Town

Cape Town easily qualifies as one of the most beautifully situated cities in the world. The sea and the mountains come together to create "The Fairest Cape in the Whole Circumference of the Earth," as Sir Francis Drake described it in the 16th century. Today Cape Town is a busy city with many of the advantages of a first-world infrastructure and economy. The outskirts of Cape Town, however, include many typical aspects of a large developing city.

Cape Town has a Mediterranean climate with warm, dry summers (December, January and February) and cool, wet winters (June, July and August). The weather is seldom extreme, except for frequent very strong winds. Sweaters and jackets are needed in the winter when temperatures can fall to the 40s. The lack of central heating in most homes intensifies the effects of the damp winters. Snow occasionally falls on the mountain peaks just north of Cape Town. Spring brings a riot of wild flowers to the area, while in autumn the numerous orchards and vineyards in the region turn red-orange.

Khoi-Khoi and San peoples ("Hot-tentots" and Bushmen in colonial-

era parlance) lived in the Cape Town area for millennia prior to the arrival of Dutch settlers in 1652. The Dutch East Indies Company developed Cape Town as a "seaward looking caravansary on the periphery of the global spice trade." Many old buildings and farmhouses, built in the Cape Dutch style of architecture, link modern Cape Town with its historic past. The British controlled the Cape off and on from 1795 until 1910, when Cape Town became seat of parliament for the Union of South Africa. From colonial times through the 1948-94 apartheid era, Robben Island, located in Cape Town's Table Bay, was an infamous penal colony housing many political prisoners, including President Nelson Mandela.

Some three million people live in Cape Town, which serves as South Africa's parliamentary capital as well as the capital of the Western Cape Province. About half of the city's population is "colored," about a quarter is black, and a quarter is white. English predominates, but Afrikaans and Xhosa are also widely spoken. Approximately 1,900 Americans live in the consular district, with some 1,000 in the greater Cape Town area. Cape Town's economy is based on financial services such as banking and insurance, light industry (textiles, food processing), the harbor, fisheries, and tourism.

Cape Town is fast becoming a major tourist destination. Opportunities for active visitors include mountain climbing, hiking, fishing, golf, bird- and whale watching, horseback riding, bicycling, surfing and swimming (although the ocean is quite cold). Cape Town offers a wide variety of cultural events, including theater, concerts, art exhibitions, and first-run movies. World-class botanical gardens and national parks complement the scenic wine country near the city. The Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, somewhat akin to Baltimore's Inner Harbor, boasts more than 200 upscale retail outlets and restaurants.

Education

Nursery school, kindergarten, elementary school, preparatory, and university education are available in Cape Town. Unless otherwise desired, instruction is in English. Anglican, Roman Catholic, and other religious denominations sponsor many private schools in Cape Town. Public schools are available. The educational system approximates that in Great Britain. Vacancies in most schools are very limited.

The school year is divided into 4 terms and runs from mid-January through mid-December, each term lasting 10 weeks.

Afrikaans language study is required in all government and most private schools in the Western Cape, but exceptions are given to temporary residents (consular children) in most private schools. Language instruction other than Afrikaans usually begins in grade 5.

Most schools (except nursery schools) require students to wear a uniform. This usually includes, but is not limited to blazers, dresses or shirts and trousers, hats, sweater, stockings, shoes, gym suits, and in many cases underclothing. Purchase these items locally.

Special Educational Opportunities

Many adult classes at institutions such as the University of Cape Town (UCT), The University of Western Cape (UWC) and University of Stellenbosch offer instruction in the normal range of university studies, including various degree courses. Compared with American universities, the full-time annual tuition at these universities is inexpensive for a university of fairly high academic standards.

The Cape Technikon (Technical College) offers a wide selection of homemaking courses. A nominal fee is charged.

Sports

As mentioned above Cape Town offers excellent facilities for outdoor activities and sports, such as hiking, mountain climbing, bird and whale watching, tennis, golf, horseback riding, bicycling, surfing, swimming. There are several country clubs where expatriates might obtain membership. Initial fees for these clubs are substantial. Cape Town has two yacht clubs, and the peninsula boasts hundreds of small boat enthusiasts. One yacht club has headquarters in the port basin, the other is on a 600-acre freshwater lake 13 miles from Cape Town.

The Cape is unique in providing opportunities for both cold and warm water fishing. The wide range of fish around the reefs and beaches of the peninsula coastline provides excellent sport for anglers. Reasonably good freshwater fishing is also available.

Durban

Durban once famed as the "last outpost of the British Empire," today is the commercial, transport and vacation center of the Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) region. The city is in the heart of one of the nine provinces created after the historic general election in 1994. Out of a total of 7.7 million KZN population, the city proper has about 775,000 people and the entire metropolitan 2.5 million people.

Durban is located 437 miles Southeast of Pretoria, (5 hours by road or 1 hour by air) and 1,108 miles Northeast of Cape Town. It is the second largest city after Johannesburg and also the fastest growing in South Africa. Its expanding rates are similar to those of Mexico City and Lima.

Renowned as a tourist resort center, Durban is equally important as the largest international port in Africa, as an industrial commercial center and as a center of a thriving agricultural area. Although sometimes hot and humid, the year round subtropical and long stretch of beaches com-

bine to make the coast of Kwa-Zulu Natal a popular resort area.

Numerous cultures and subcultures co-exist in the city also known by its Zulu name Thekwini. The three major groupings totaling 2.5 million include 13.7% whites, 3% coloreds, 27% Indians and 57.3% Africans. The Zulus comprise the predominant cultural group.

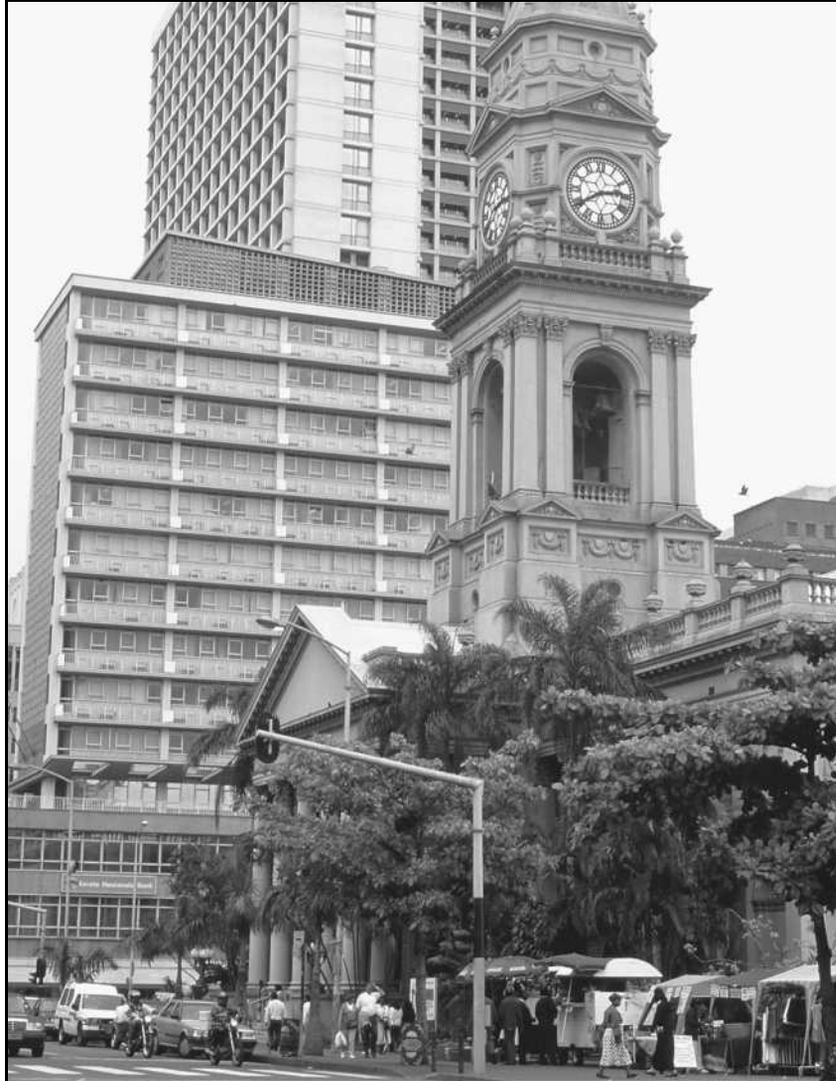
Many people of British origin live in Durban, though in recent years more Afrikaans-speaking people have settled there, attracted down from the "reef" by the warmer weather and the low prices. As with major South African cities, former racial barriers remain evident in housing and in schooling but access to public facilities is fully open.

Americans in the Durban area number 3,200 persons of whom one-third live in Durban. Americans in Durban are mainly retired or American children of South African citizens, academics, and businessmen. Americans residing elsewhere in KZN are largely engaged in missionary work.

Education

The division of Durban schooling into standards parallels the British system. South Africa's school year starts in January, but children are accepted at any time. School uniforms are compulsory for boys and girls. South African education, with its rigid curriculum requirements and often rigid rules governing behavior and appearance, is different from American education. Adjustment, particularly in the upper grades, may be difficult for American students.

Only two co-ed schools are located in Durban, but many excellent private schools for girls or boys (ages 8-18) are available. Several outstanding English-model boarding schools are located in the cool hill areas within an hour of Durban. A day and boarding school in Tongatt is about 25 minutes from the city, and this school extends from grade 7 to grade 12 (Standard V to matriculation). This school has a more relaxed atmosphere but high aca-



© Charles O'Rear/Corbis. Reproduced by permission.

Street in Durban, South Africa

demic standards. The private schools are expensive, but standards are high.

Government schools average 30 students per classroom. Primary schools, up to and including Standard V (7th grade), charge minimal fees. At the high school level, some nominal fees are charged in government schools.

High schools offer a 5-year course culminating in the matriculation examination. Passing this examination qualifies a student for admission to a university. New students will have difficulty with instruction in Afrikaans, as it is part of the required curriculum as a second

language in English-medium schools. Athletics, including cricket, rugby, swimming, and track, are usually included as part of the curriculum for boys. Girls participate in tennis, swimming, hockey, and basketball. Sports are a big interest for students and adults as well.

Three government high schools (one for boys and two for girls) are located in Durban North. Other high schools, private and government owned, are located in the city and may be reached by bus. Primary schools through grade 7 are distributed throughout the residential areas and are usually co-educational. On the average, not more

than three or four American children attend any one school.

The University of Natal, with branches in both Durban and Pietermaritzburg, offers a wide variety of courses leading to degrees in liberal arts, science, engineering, and law. The University of Durban Westville also offers courses in these areas. In addition, many technical schools called "technikons" offer a range of courses in arts, design, dress making, commercial cookery, engineering, etc.

Some private nursery schools catering to 3- and 5-year-old children are available.

Special Educational Opportunities

Both the Universities of Natal and Durban Westville, as well as the technikons, offer adult part-time courses for academic credit. Actual degree programs are not offered part time. UNISA has offices in Durban that offer course work (including master's and doctoral) in various fields.

Private tutoring in music, ballet, and art is available to adults and children. Business courses and instruction in driving, flying, popular dance, fishing, diving, golf, tennis, swimming, riding, and ice skating, etc., are available. The cost of flight school is reasonable, and the instruction is excellent.

Sports

Durban offers recreational facilities of all types, with emphasis on outdoor sports for both spectators and participants. The many parks and playgrounds for children and the beaches are among the finest in South Africa. Sports, including yachting, fishing, golf, tennis, swimming, and bowls, may be enjoyed throughout the year, but access to some sports requires membership in a private club. Durban also has an ice dome for skating. Other popular sports include rugby, cricket, tennis, horseracing, baseball, and squash.

Four first-class, 18-hole golf courses are within Durban proper and four or five more are within a radius of 15 miles. Local courses are not designed to accommodate golf carts. At most courses, nonmembers can play for a nominal green fee.

Excellent asphalt and concrete all-weather tennis courts, most of which are operated by private clubs, are available, but admission is by availability. Inexpensive aqua-cise classes and well-equipped health studios, which provide aerobics and individual training programs, are close to homes in Durban and in the central business district.

All types of sporting equipment can be purchased locally, though costs are slightly higher than in the U.S.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Durban is blessed with a wide range of outdoor recreational facilities. KZN offers hunting, fishing, camping, boating, mountain climbing, hiking, lake swimming, and sight-seeing. Ocean swimming and surfing are major attractions, but Durban must contend with shark dangers. The city has instituted a system of shark netting to protect most of its public beaches.

The city maintains several museums, a botanical garden, library, aquarium, and an aviary. Game reserves are within a few hours' drive from Durban, as are extensive parks and nature reserves.

Entertainment

American, English, and other films are shown at reasonable prices. Visiting professional repertory companies present plays and musicals, and several university and amateur companies perform regularly.

The city boasts many excellent restaurants and many nightclubs, ranging from sailors' dives to plush discos.

Photography is popular in Durban, and all equipment, including developing and printing services, is available at higher than U.S. prices.

Many colorful and interesting local festivals, including fire-walking ceremonies in the Indian community and Zulu dancing, especially the Zulu King's Reed Dance, are popular attractions.

Johannesburg

Johannesburg is a city of skyscrapers but is often called the Golden City for the gold mines in the surrounding area. It is the industrial, commercial, and financial capital of South Africa. Hotels, restaurants, theaters, shops, homes, and apartment buildings are similar to those in modern European and American cities.

Johannesburg is South Africa's largest city. Located 35 miles south of Pretoria, it is 300 square miles with an official population of 1.6 million. PWV area (Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Vereeniging) has about 7.4 million people. This figure includes the black township of Soweto, which is an integral part of the Johannesburg metropolitan area. Estimates of Soweto's population exceed 2 million. Johannesburg, Pretoria and the Southern Transvaal have an American community of about 7,000.

Education

Most American children attend local, private, or public schools, or the American International School serving the Johannesburg/Pretoria area. Attendance is daily, but limited boarding facilities are available.

Popular schools for boys include: Marist Brothers St. David's College (private, Catholic); King Edward (public); St. John's (private, Anglican); St. Stithian's (private, Methodist); Woodmead (private); and King David (private, Jewish). Most private schools are oversubscribed and have long waiting lists for admission.

Girls' schools include: Roedean (private); Kingsmead (private); Parktown Convent School (private, Catholic); St. Andrews (private, Anglican); and St. Mary's School for Girls (Anglican). Redhill is a private coeducational school. Parents are responsible for transportation to private schools.

Johannesburg also has a large number of private preschools (including Montessori) in the suburban areas.

Special Educational Opportunities

The University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg is South Africa's largest English-language university. Its eight faculties include arts, science, medicine, engineering, commerce, law, dentistry, and architecture. The university confers degrees in arts (including education, fine arts,



View of Johannesburg, South Africa

EPD Photos/Woodfin Camp. Reproduced by permission.

music, public administration, and social work); science, medicine, physiotherapy, engineering (chemical, civil, electrical, land surveying, mechanical, mining, and mining geology); commerce, law, dentistry, architecture, town and regional planning, and quantity surveying. It also grants post-graduate and undergraduate diplomas and certificates. Classes are during the day only.

Other educational opportunities are provided by several vocational schools, technical colleges, and colleges of education. These institutions serve as professional training centers for whites and nonwhites.

Sports

Facilities for all sports are available and enjoyed throughout the year. See also Sports—Pretoria.

Entertainment

Johannesburg is larger and more cosmopolitan than Pretoria and offers considerably more by way of restaurants, theaters, museums, art galleries, and night life. For general information, see also Entertainment—Pretoria.

Social Activities

The American Society of South Africa holds several large annual

dinners, dances, and outings. The American International Women's Club has numerous activities, including talks and outings. Many opportunities for volunteer work are available.

Bloemfontein

Bloemfontein, the republic's judicial capital, is also the capital of the Free State. It is a bright and modern Afrikaner city, about 295 miles west of Durban, and close to the border of Lesotho, the "enclave country" which lies within the boundaries of South Africa. Bloemfontein is noted for its beautiful parks and gardens and for the many buildings which date back to the founding of the city in the middle of the 19th century. On Naval Hill, overlooking Bloemfontein, is a large game reserve featuring eland, springbok, and blesbok, animals indigenous to the area. The Lamont-Hussey Observatory, established on Naval Hill in cooperation with the University of Michigan, now serves as a theater.

The Appeal Court, the highest judicial authority in South Africa, is located here, as are the Supreme Court and the official residences of the Free State president, the state administrator, and the chief justice

of the republic. Among the newer attractions is Sand du Plessis Theatre, which is the venue for opera, ballet, and conferences. Bloemfontein's Zoological Garden in King's Park is the home of the famous "tiger," a cross between an African lion and a Bengal tigress; a large collection of apes is also featured.

The University of the Orange Free State, formerly a constituent college of the University of South Africa, was founded here as an independent institution in 1950. There are currently nine faculties and a student body of close to 9,000. Bloemfontein is also the home of the noted Boyden Station Observatory. The metropolitan population is about 400,000.

OTHER CITIES

Situated 20 miles east of Johannesburg at an altitude of 5,600 feet is **BENONI**, home to such industries as iron and steelworks and a brass foundry. It has a metropolitan population of 406,000. Benoni began as a mining camp in 1887, and today is an important mining center with some of the richest gold mines in the world.

BOKSBURG is the principal gold-producing city of the region just east of Johannesburg, with a population of about 290,000. Electric motors, cranes, soap, and ceramics are among its products. The town is surrounded by residential suburbs and is the focal point of a number of major roads.

South Africa's largest railway junction is at **GERMISTON**, immediately southeast of Johannesburg. This city of some 284,000 residents is the site of the Rand Refinery, the largest gold refinery in the world. Gold bullion from all over the country is recovered here. Germiston also has smelting, cotton-ginning, and other industries.

KIMBERLEY, an industrial city of close to 190,000 people, is the capital of the Northern Cape province

and lies about 90 miles west of Bloemfontein. It was founded in 1871 following the discovery of diamonds in the region. Kimberley is the world's diamond center (DeBeers and Kimberley are among the mines in operation), but it is known also as a commercial center and rail hub. To the south of the city are several Boer War battlefields. Kimberley's scenery is marked by large pits and mounds of earth, the aftermath of mining operations. Today, diamond mining and cutting remain prominent industries. Kimberley is also a marketing and service center for a prosperous irrigated-farming and cattle-raising area. Iron, salt, and gypsum are also mined near Kimberley.

KRUGERSDORP, in the northeast 20 miles west of Johannesburg, is the site of the Paardekraal Monument, commemorating the victory of the Boers over the Zulu chieftain Dingaan on December 16, 1838. It is the object of an annual pilgrimage. The city is a mining and industrial center. Gold deposits have declined steadily in recent years. Manganese, asbestos, and limestone are also mined near Krugersdorp. The Sterkfontein Caves and archaeological sites are near the town, which was founded in 1887 and has a population of about 225,000.

LADYSMITH, located in northwestern KwaZulu-Natal province, was founded by the British in 1850. The town was the sight of a 115-day siege during the Boer War. The Boers besieged the town from November 2, 1899 until February 28, 1900 cutting off all supplies. Many people died during the siege and subsequent British operation to rescue the town. Today, Ladysmith has almost 100,000 residents. The city serves as an important rail junction and industry is based on food processing and the nearby KwaZulu-Natal coal fields.

PAARL, 30 miles east of Cape Town, is known for its agricultural products. Wine-making has been a part of the city's life since the Huguenots introduced viticulture in the 17th century. Citrus fruits,

tobacco, and olives are also important products. Cigarettes, processed foods, and textiles are manufactured here. Paarl is a center of education, with a population of about 156,000.

PIETERMARITZBURG, a city of 420,000, lies in the eastern part of the country in KwaZulu-Natal. There is currently uncertainty whether the provincial capital will be in Pietermaritzburg or Ulundi. Its name, unfamiliar to most foreigners (except those acquainted with South Africa's history and geography), is derived from the names of two Boer War leaders, Pieter Retief and Gert Maritz. The city has several industries, producing rubber and aluminum products, furniture, footwear, and rice. One of the University of Natal's campuses is here (the other is at Durban). The Queen Elizabeth Nature Reserve, Union Park, Municipal Game Reserve, Bakone Malapa Open-Air Museum, and the Scottsville Race Course are among the city's many attractions.

PORT ELIZABETH, located in southeastern Cape Province 400 miles east of Cape Town, is a major seaport for South Africa, and the center of the automobile industry. Although it was settled in 1799, there was no real development until the completion of the Kimberley Railroad 75 years later. The current metropolitan population is about 834,000. A notable seaside resort, Port Elizabeth is also known for its Snake Park, which features more than 2,000 reptiles. In addition, Addo Elephant Park is nearby. Excellent communications, cheap power, and water combine to create one of the country's busiest manufacturing centers. Tourists are attracted by Port Elizabeth's beautiful beaches and excellent surfing.

ROODEPOORT, 12 miles west of Johannesburg, is an industrial and residential. It was founded with the discovery of gold in 1885 and has since expanded through the annexation of nearby areas. It was here that the noted colonial administrator, Leander Starr Jameson, was

captured in 1895 after leading an unauthorized and premature raid into Boer territory. The venture became famous as Jameson's Raid. Roodepoort's eastern section is an industrial and manufacturing district. Most of the city's residents live in the western portion of Roodepoort.

SOWETO is a residential community adjacent to Johannesburg, with its name taken from the South-Western Townships. Soweto has a population of over one million people, primarily Zulus and Xhosas. Homes in Soweto range from stately mansions to makeshift shantytowns. The township was the scene of the Soweto Rebellion, the 1976 uprising that focused international attention on apartheid. A Community Council authorizes the development of roads, transport, water supply, housing, and electricity. Other municipal services include schools, libraries, sports facilities, playgrounds, and hospital. Since Soweto has very little industrial development, most of Soweto's residents commute to Johannesburg for employment.

SPRINGS, a manufacturing town of almost 180,000 residents, 29 miles east of Johannesburg, was the world's most productive gold-producing area in the 1950s. It began as a coal-mining camp in 1885. Glass, machine tools, bicycles, foodstuffs, cosmetics, and paper are manufactured in Springs today.

VEREENIGING, 35 miles south of Johannesburg on the Vaal River, was the site of peace negotiations that ended the South African (or Boer) War in 1902. It is one of the country's major industrial communities, manufacturing iron and steel products, bricks, glass, and tiles. Large local thermal power stations transmit electricity through the national grid. Demonstrations in 1960 denouncing pass laws at the nearby township of Sharpville led to the shooting deaths of 69 blacks. The population is about 385,000.

WELKOM, located southwest of Johannesburg, was founded in 1947

amid goldfields. The booming gold industry helped Welkom to become Free State's second largest city. Welkom, with a population of 226,000, continues to grow quickly. It is a wealthy industrial city whose inhabitants boast the highest per capita income in the country. The city has numerous citizens, drive-in theaters, a variety of restaurants, a library, and numerous modern sports facilities.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

South Africa lies at the southern tip of the African continent. To the west, south and east, South Africa borders on the Atlantic and Indian Oceans with a coastline of 1,836 miles. To the north, South Africa shares common borders with Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland. The independent kingdom of Lesotho is completely enclosed by South Africa.

South Africa has a narrow coastal zone and an extensive interior plateau with altitudes ranging from 3,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level. Lacking arterial rivers or lakes of significance, extensive water conservation and controls are necessary. South Africa's 472,494 square mile area is about twice the size of Texas. South Africa has nine provinces, starting from the south they are the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Free State, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Northwest and Northern Provinces.

South Africa has a moderate climate with sunny days and cool nights. The most southerly point has a mean yearly temperature of 61.8 degrees Fahrenheit, while Johannesburg about 1,000 miles to the northeast and 5,700 feet higher, has an annual mean of 60.8 degrees Fahrenheit. Pretoria is 4,452 feet

above sea level and has a mean annual temperature of 63.5 degrees Fahrenheit. The temperatures can be deceiving because of the very bright and dangerous high sun during most of the year, especially in the high yield areas.

Pretoria and Johannesburg in Gauteng Province are on the high plateau. The surrounding countryside is characterized by treeless, rolling hills. The Magaliesberg Mountain Range is thirty miles northwest of Johannesburg and about the same distance west of Pretoria. The large Hardebeestport Dam is located in this area. The more picturesque Drakensberg Mountain Range (located in Mpumalanga and Kwa-Zulu Natal) extends north and south 200 miles to the east. Its beautiful peaks rise to 11,000 feet in Lesotho. The lower range of the Lebombo Mountains form the eastern boundary of the Johannesburg Consular District in the Mpumalanga Province.

The Free State offers a geographic variety of high plateaus spotted with barren but picturesque hills on the East and characterized by flat country to the west and south. The Vaal River separates the Free State from Gauteng Province. Bloemfontein is the provincial capital of the Free State as well as the Judicial Capital of South Africa.

Durban, located on the eastern seaboard of the Indian Ocean, is the principal city in Kwa-Zulu Natal Province and the largest seaport in Africa. Its shoreline extends north and south, along the Indian Ocean. Topographically, the coastal belt of Kwa-Zulu Natal rises sharply from the ocean to a fertile central plateau and then extends to the escarpment of the Drakensberg Mountain Range.

The Western Cape has the widest range of scenic attractions, including the Mediterranean-like luxuriance of the Cape Peninsula, rolling uplands to the east, excellent surfing beaches, the majestic peaks of the Katberg, the placid lakes of the Wilderness on the south coast of the

picturesque Garden Route, and the vast, arid distances of the Karoo and in the northern and northwestern Cape.

Although the country lies close to the Tropic of Capricorn, the inland areas are tempered by the high altitude. Being in the Southern Hemisphere, its seasons are opposite those of the U.S.—summer extends from October to March; winter from June to September. The rainy season in the Pretoria-Johannesburg area is during summer, and the temperature seldom rises above 90°F, with cool nights. Winter is dry and cool with daily temperatures varying from as low as 30°F during night to as high as 75°F during day.

Along the coastal area where Durban and Cape Town are located, heavier rainfall occurs during winter and spring, causing high humidity. Both cities experience strong winds—Durban from August through October and Cape Town throughout the year. The seasons are not pronounced but blend almost imperceptibly. South Africa's climate is comparable to that of central and southern California. For the most part, trees and shrubs remain green, with flowers blooming throughout the year. The high veld, however, which includes the Pretoria-Johannesburg area, has a dry, brown landscape during the winter drought period.

Population

Census figures indicate South Africa's population is 44.6 million. This attempts to take into account the unknown numbers of non-documented immigrants moving into the country from neighboring African states. Because ethnicity is politics in South Africa, a country with a history of cultural diversity, most analyses of the country's population are broken down into the major cultural and linguistic groupings. As of this date, no generally recognized nomenclature has yet taken the place of the former apartheid categories which were used as an instrument of racial domination and suppression. The terms remain and

are used in the census descriptively rather than prescriptively as in the past: "Africans" or "blacks" constitute 34.3 million, or 77% of the population; "whites" 5.4 million, or 12%; "coloreds" (people of mixed racial origin) 3.8 million or 8.5%; "Asians" (including Indians) 1.2 million or 2.5%. (Source: Development Bank of South Africa) Of the population of European descent, 60% are native Afrikaans speakers, 40% native English speakers.

Most of the "colored" population lives in the Cape, while most South Africans of Indian descent live in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Eleven languages are officially recognized and enjoy equal legal status. In descending order of demographic importance they are Zulu (7 million), Xhosa (6 million), Afrikaans (5 million), Pedi, English, Tswana, Sotho, Tsonga, Swati, Venda and Ndebele. While English is spoken by only 9% of South Africans in the home, it is the lingua franca of the country, with Zulu, Xhosa and Afrikaans spoken across a wide spectrum as well.

While many Africans still have no economic options other than to live in the rural areas (former "Homelands") to which they were relegated by the apartheid regime, blacks of all ethnic groups can be found living and working throughout South Africa. About 75% of employed blacks work outside the Homelands to which they were originally assigned. The Homelands are now fully politically integrated into the country.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Boer War (or the "Anglo-Boer War," as it is called in South Africa) largely ignored the majority of indigenous peoples living on South African territory. The struggle was between "Afrikaner"-descendants of the Dutch, French Huguenots, and Germans who came to the Cape in the seventeenth century; and the English who arrived two centuries later. The influence of these two groups remains disproportionately high compared to their demographic

representation, mainly because they were able to impose their political, cultural, and economic will over the country during the course of 300 years. Afrikaners are largely members of the Dutch Reformed ("NG") Church, traditionally a bastion of conservatism. Other religions found in South Africa include other Protestant as well as Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches, and Hinduism, Judaism and Islam.

The system of legally mandated racial segregation, or "apartheid," is now officially dismantled though economic and social barriers still stand in the way of genuine integration. Former apartheid laws which held the system together (now repealed) were the Group Areas Act of 1950, which segregated residential neighborhoods by race; the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936, which restricted black ownership of land to certain designated homelands; and the Population Act of 1950, by which people were racially classified at birth.

The Homelands, which were never recognized by the U.S. or the world community at large, gathered ethnic groups in geographic areas, which were not conducive to trade, production or development. The efforts of the apartheid government to make life in these areas economically viable were a generally recognized failure. Much of the black labor from the Homelands was employed in areas of production outside the Homelands as transient workers. The practice was highly disruptive to the family structures of those employed.

Now that the impediments to free movement have been lifted, black migration to the cities has intensified, and has created challenges to urbanization with rapid shifts in population, and with infrastructures unprepared. Questions of land reform, electrification, potable water and other amenities have become acute. The ANC government can boast of doubling school enrolment since it took office in 1994, and in major advances in rural electrification. However, hous-

ing construction has followed at a much slower pace.

Local and national governmental structures have generally passed to the hands of the majority population, and antidiscrimination laws have been passed in areas such as fair employment and fair access to housing. However, economic readjustments have taken only baby steps thus far, with high unemployment exacerbating the sense of stagnancy in the black community. The official figures on unemployment hover at 28-30%, while the generally accepted rate is 50-60%. In the townships, the figure often approaches 80-90%.

Another indicator of discrepancies in the lifestyle of the various ethnic groups is life expectancy, which for whites is 73.1 years, but remains at 60.3 for blacks (and 66.5 for coloreds and 68.9 for Asians). Birth rates have declined in recent years in all ethnic groups, from 40 per 1000 for blacks in 1970 to 25.3 in 1994; versus 22.9 for whites in 1970 down to 13.7 in 1994 (source: Central Statistical Service).

Crime remains a challenge for the government and the citizenry, with all ethnic groups among the victims. Homicide, now stemming generally from criminal and not political motives, stands at a proportional rate of seven times that of the U.S.

Public Institutions

The new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, signed into law on December 10, 1996, codifies the separation of powers, appropriate checks and balances and a far-reaching Bill of Rights. South Africa is one of the few countries, which, through a single entrenched law, protects all universally accepted fundamental rights against government interference and individual abuse. Socioeconomic rights such as housing, health care, access to food and water, social security and basic education are also recognized. The constitution makes the bill of rights "horizontal" in its application, bind-

ing private persons as well as the State.

In terms of the constitution, the Constitutional Court is the highest court in cases regarding the interpretation, protection and enforcement of the constitution. While the Constitutional Court decides on constitutional matters only, the Supreme Court of Appeal has jurisdiction to hear and determine an appeal against any decision of a High Court.

After centuries of minority rule and decades of confrontation, South Africa held its first democratic election in April 1994. The African National Congress (ANC) obtained 62.65% of the national vote in the 1994 elections against the National Party's (NP) 20.39%, the Inkatha Freedom Party's (IFP) 10.54%, the Freedom Front's (FF) 2.17%, the Democratic Party's (DP) 1.73%, the Pan Africanist Congress's (PAC) 1.25% and the African Christian Democratic Party's (ACDP) 0.45%. Nelson Mandela (ANC) subsequently became President, with Thabo Mbeki (ANC) as Executive Deputy-President and FW de Klerk (NP) as Deputy-President. On a provincial level the ANC won seven out of the nine provinces, while the NP won a majority in the Western Cape and the IFP in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

The Cabinet consists of the President, the Executive Deputy-President and 25 Ministers appointed by the President. A party with at least five percent of the seats in the National Assembly, which decides to take part, may have one or more Cabinet posts based on the number of seats it holds.

Government is structured at national, provincial and local levels. Instead of a clear division of powers, the constitution introduces the concept of "co-operative governance" in terms of which each tier of government must endeavor to resolve any disputes by mediation and negotiation.

Parliament consists of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) and

the National Assembly. The Senate was replaced by the NCOP, which came into operation on February 4, 1997. The NCOP was established to ensure that provincial interests are taken into account in the national legislature. South Africa is divided into nine provinces, each with its own Legislature, Premier and Ministers.

The National Assembly consists of 400 members elected by a system of proportional representation. Each party has a number of seats based on the share of the votes gained in the 1994 election. Of the 400 members, 200 were elected on a national list and 200 on provincial lists.

There are currently seven political parties represented in the South African Parliament and the seat representation in the National Assembly is as follows:

- African National Congress, 252
- National Party, 82
- Inkatha Freedom Party, 43
- Freedom Front, 9
- Democratic Party, 7
- Pan Africanist Congress, 5
- African Christian Democratic Party, 2

The ANC has succeeded in stabilizing the inflation rate and liberalizing exchange control regulations, but unemployment, low economic growth and housing shortages remain serious problems. The ANC has had problems maintaining labor support for its "liberal" Growth, Equity and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic framework.

With the May 1996 withdrawal of the NP from the Government of National Unity (GNU), party politics entered a new phase. Deputy President FW de Klerk's resignation from the Cabinet left the ANC in almost total charge of government, with the IFP receiving two ministerial positions. The NP has been racked by internal tensions and resignations; has experienced a distinct decline in the opinion polls; has had little success in building a black support base; and may be headed towards a future as a

regional political entity in the Western Cape.

While the IFP remains a powerful force in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal, it has lost substantial support amongst White and Indian voters, leaving little formal organization outside of its key support base of Zulus in the Kwa-Zulu Natal hinterland. More serious to the IFP is the party's loss of popular electoral support amongst Zulus in the urban areas of Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The IFP now faces a dilemma-to move closer to the ANC in order to form an alliance or to keep its distance, acting as a regional opposition party.

Born out of the Afrikaner nationalist far right, the Freedom Front (FF) has continuously engaged the ANC-led government in pursuing its goal of protecting Afrikaner minority rights in the new South Africa. A pragmatic approach from General Constand Viljoen has made him one of the most respected white political leaders outside the ANC. A dwindling ethnic-Afrikaner support base and the ANC's refusal to countenance the creation of a "volkstaat" does not bode well, however, for the party in the run-up to the next election.

The DP, while outperforming many of its rivals in proposing alternative policies to those offered by the ANC, is still hampered by its inability to break out of its narrow support base of middle-income whites. The party has bounced back after a poor performance in the 1994 elections under the dynamic leadership of Tony Leon. The party refused an offer in 1997 from President Mandela to join the government, preferring to polish its opposition credentials.

The Pan Africanist Congress is still unable to attract any large-scale support away from the ANC. The party is simply too small with too few symbols of the struggle to attract meaningful quantities of black voters.

Arts, Science, and Education

Most South African cities have an active cultural life. Each province has a Performing Arts Council, subsidized by the central government, whose productions come from both the Western and indigenous repertoires. Following the end of the cultural boycott, a number of prominent foreign artists have recently appeared in South Africa. Johannesburg has several ambitious multiracial performing arts centers and an active local community theater. South Africa is highly developed scientifically. Its scientists are well educated, and many have international reputations. The veterinary faculty of the University of Pretoria at Onderstepport is one of the world's finest. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) covers a wide range of scientific research. The medical profession is highly developed, and significant progress has been made in experimental medicine—South Africa was the pioneer in successful heart transplant surgery. The Medical Research Institute is capable of the development and production of sophisticated pharmaceuticals. South Africa has 21 universities that include those in the former Homelands. They are open to all races, although historically many have been reserved for either white or black students. All of the most prestigious traditionally white institutions now freely admit qualified blacks. The University of South Africa, with 110,000 enrolled, offers instruction to all races by correspondence. Admission is based on stringent matriculation examinations. Universities do not yet have programs of general studies during the first 2 years as in American universities, but require specialization for the entire 3-year course at which the bachelor degree is given. "Honors," the completed fourth year of university instruction, provides the equivalent of a 4-year U.S. bachelor's degree. Other bachelor degrees may take 4-5 years. A bachelor of architecture takes 6 years.

For those students not attending the American International School in Johannesburg (AISJ), which provides a standard American high school curriculum, entry into American universities may pose some problems. Some students may have difficulty in adjusting to different curriculum standards beginning with Standard 9 (11th grade) when local students begin a 2-year matriculation program geared toward entry into the local university system. An above-average student should have little difficulty, but a weak student, without the benefit of pre-matriculation curriculum training, may find it difficult to master the program without tutoring, particularly in science and mathematics which are accelerated compared to most American public schools. The school year begins in January and ends in December with 3-4 week holidays separating the three school terms.

The South African curriculum is a blend of British and South African education (i.e., Standard 9 corresponds to the British Form IV and almost corresponds to U.S. grade 11—Standard 10 [Form V] is the matriculation year that is followed by university study). The regular matriculation course of study includes English, a physical science, a foreign language, a social science, a combined mathematics course, and minor courses such as art and physical education.

The manner in which subjects are presented in class may also require adaptation by American students. Mathematics is broken down into algebra, geometry, trigonometry, etc., but is considered one completely integrated unit with advancing stages of difficulty each year. A percentage grading system is used in almost all schools that require clarification to U.S. university systems. In some high school courses, for example, 40% can be a pass and 75%-80% is frequently a distinction.

The local high school curriculum follows the same subject matter as in the U.S. (English, social science, foreign language, mathematics, etc.)

American students entering the matriculation process (Standard 9) at age 16 or 17 without previous earlier level study here may find little flexibility in course offerings. Students are required to take whatever language or social science is given in a particular school. World history is also a course that extends through the entire 2 year matriculation period and mainly focuses on South African and European history. Local schools do not teach American history which is required in the U.S. Matriculation courses are taught through the lecture method; students should take extensive notes and frequent examinations. The seminar or project educational method is rarely used in the public high school system. Examinations are given much emphasis and weigh heavily in determining the final grade. For these reasons, Americans with 17- and 18-year-old children (preparing for U.S. universities) may prefer to send their children to AISJ. AISJ enrollment as of June 1998 is approximately 600 students (K-12).

Contact AISJ directly (Tel 27-11-464-1505 and Facsimile 2711-464-1327). AISJ is accredited in all areas.

Commerce and Industry

Despite the introduction of democracy to South Africa in 1994, gross inequities continue to exist along racial lines in wealth, income distribution and education as a result of apartheid. In addition, the South African economy declined during apartheid's final decade and the increase since then has been too small to create the formal-sector jobs needed by the country's population. Nevertheless, much of the South African formal economy more closely resembles that of the United States or Western Europe than those of other African countries. There are modern transportation, communication and financial infrastructures that easily overshadow and dominate the economies of South Africa's neighbors. A large

manufacturing sector produces a wide variety of consumer goods including automobiles, some of which are exported to Europe and Asia. Inflation has recently declined to about 5% and the decline of the Rand since 1996 has made prices on many items inexpensive in dollar terms. While tariffs on most items have declined considerably over the past few years, automobiles are still expensive relative to similar U.S. models. With the decline in the price of gold, mining is no longer the single most vital part of the economy. Agriculture, financial services and tourism are all strong and growing contributors to the South African GNP. The economy is organized according to free market principles, but there remains from apartheid days considerable government involvement in many industrial sectors. The private sector remains dominated by six large industrial groups but the degree of dominance has declined considerably as the economy has opened to the outside world and local conglomerates restructure themselves in order to compete internationally.

Transportation

Automobiles

Privately owned motor vehicles are essential in South Africa. Public transportation is available but does not serve all areas. Taxis must be called by phone but are not reliable and expensive.

Traffic moves on the left. Right hand drive imported Chryslers and Fords are now available (not US model) in South Africa. Other vehicles, which can be purchased from a bonded warehouse, are Saab, Volvo, Renault and Peugeot. Toyota, Nissan, Hyundai, BMW and VW are available locally. 4 x 4 models currently available are Jeep, Isuzu, Mitsubishi, Toyota and Ford Explorer. Prices of new vehicles are competitive. Reconditioned vehicles can be imported from Japan. The quality of these vehicles seems satisfactory.

Leaded and unleaded gas is available locally and prices fluctuate regularly around R2.25 per liter.

The South African Foreign Ministry requires balance of third-party insurance for all vehicles, as a minimum. However, due to the high crime and accident rates in South Africa, comprehensive insurance is recommended. The Department of State requires personal liability insurance for all personal vehicles whilst vehicles are being driven in South Africa or any other African country. Local insurance companies offer the required coverage at good rates.

Local

Public transportation to and from the city and around the suburbs is frequent and reliable during business hours. However, it does not serve all residential areas. Weekend and evening schedules are limited both in area of service and availability. Taxi service is available 24 hours daily by telephone because they do not service areas seeking passengers.

Regional

With few exceptions, international flights into South Africa land at Johannesburg International Airport located 16 miles from Johannesburg and 30 miles from Pretoria. However, there is a direct SAA/AA flight between Cape Town and Miami. International arrivals and departures with direct or connecting flights are scheduled to almost any point in the world. The American Airlines/ South African Airlines code share provides daily flights from Johannesburg and Cape Town to New York and Miami respectively. United/Lufthansa and Northwest/KLM also provide daily service to the United States via Europe and return. South African Airways serves all major cities in South Africa. Service is good with numerous daily flights to Cape Town, Durban, and other cities. British Airways, operated by ComAir and Sun Air also serve major cities in South Africa as well as neighboring cities including Windhoek, Victoria Falls and Gaborone.

Railroad transportation with South Africa is available. The Blue Train from Pretoria or Johannesburg to Cape Town provides luxury service at very high cost but make reservations well in advance.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Telephone communications in South Africa are good. International Direct-dial connects all major cities and connections to the U.S. are good but rates are higher than in the U.S. Many people use MCI, SPRINT, AT&T or a call-back service for their long distance carrier. Telegraph service is available at reasonable rates to all parts of the world.

Mail

International mail to and from the U.S. is reliable and takes 8-14 days. Air letter forms may be used in either direction at a reduced rate. International surface mail from the U.S. takes 4-8 weeks.

Radio and TV

South Africa's state-owned television service (SABC-TV) broadcasts daily on three channels. SABC 1 and SABC2 offer entertainment and news programs in all of South Africa's eleven official languages. SABC3 offers news, entertainment and educational programming in English only. All SABC-TV broadcasts are in the PAL-I system. American broadcast standard (NTSC) television sets will not work properly in South Africa. Cable TV (M-NET) and Direct Satellite TV (MultiChoice) are available at reasonable costs. These services offer movies, sports, and American and international news, and audio programming. South Africa's first privately owned free-to-air television station is scheduled to begin broadcasting in late 1998.

Video rental stores are common throughout South Africa. Rental tapes are all in VHS format and PAL system. Your VCR must either be a PAL or multi-system machine to view locally rented videotapes.

Radio in South Africa ranges from low-power community stations (broadcasting mostly in FM), to state-owned SABC stations throughout the country, to several new privately owned stations. There is a format for every taste. For local news, listen to Radio 702 (702 kHz) and SAFM (103 to 107 MHz). VOA reception at 909 kHz is very good in the evenings and early mornings.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

English-language newspapers are published daily in South Africa. The Star, Sowetan, Pretoria News, Business Day, Citizen (in the Johannesburg-Pretoria area), the Cape Times and the Cape Argus (in Cape Town), and the Mercury and Natal Witness (in Durban) are the main English-language dailies. Weeklies include the Weekly Mail

Guardian and City Press. The two main Sunday papers are the Sunday Times and the Sunday Independent. The International Herald Tribune, Time, and Newsweek are available at bookstores or by subscription at slightly higher than U.S. prices. Reader's Digest is also published in South Africa. Bookstores are well stocked with current books and magazines, including technical journals. U.S. editions of magazines may be received through the pouch or through international mail, but may arrive several weeks late. You may also use the Internet to access publications, news and information.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

South Africa medical and dental facilities in the major cities of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Durban, Cape Town, Nelspruit, Kimberly, Rustenberg, and Port Elizabeth are excellent.

Specialists of all types are available in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, and Durban. Many excellent private hospitals and clinics are available and most public univer-

sity hospitals are also well equipped. Nursing care is excellent. Extremely modern and well-equipped laboratory and radiology facilities exist throughout the country. A highly developed pharmaceutical industry produces or imports a complete listing of medications.

Community Health

High standards for community sanitation exist in the major cities. The water is potable and in good supply. Sewage and refuse disposal is good. Electricity supply is excellent. Minor traffic congestion and city pollution exist.

Animals are immunized for rabies. A lowland, rainy season annual increase in malaria cases occurs requiring travelers to those areas to take malarial prophylactics. The AIDS virus has reached epidemic levels in South Africa. Because of the high caseloads of HIV disease, tuberculosis cases are also increasing.

Fresh water lakes and rivers are infested with the schistosomiasis (bilharzia) parasite that enters through the skin.

Restaurants in general are reputable and prepare good food with sanitary techniques.

Meat, poultry and seafood can be purchased locally and prepared normally. Insects and vermin are no major problems although occasional poisonous snake and scorpion exposure occurs.

Vegetables and fruits require no special treatment, and milk and milk products are pasteurized.

Preventive Measures

Pretoria and Johannesburg are between 5000 and 6000 feet above sea level causing some mild symptoms of increased fatigue upon arrival. These symptoms clear in a couple of weeks.

The climate is dry with increased dust in the highlands. Solar exposure is increased and sun block, pro-

TECTIVE clothing and sunglasses should be used.

Although malaria is not a problem in the major cities of South Africa, medication prophylactics is needed in lowland areas near the game parks and along the Zimbabwean/Mozambican borders.

In South Africa, precautions are mandatory for sexual and body fluid exposure due to the high incidence of AIDS. Unprotected sex must be avoided. Blood exposure should occur only in hospitals with HIV testing available.

Fresh water wading and swimming should be avoided due to schistosomiasis. Yellow fever immunizations are required for travel to tropical countries, and South Africa requires proof of immunization if you visit any of those countries.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

When packing, remember that seasons are the reverse of those in the U.S. Spring and fall coincide approximately with fall and spring in the U.S.

South Africa has tightened its visa requirements for certain categories of visitors. Only visitors on tourism, short business consultations, or in transit do not require visas; others need visas or they will be refused admission and returned to their point of origin. Visitors who intend to work in South Africa must apply for work permits abroad at the appropriate South African embassy or consulate. Travelers entering South Africa from countries where yellow fever is endemic are often required to present their yellow World Health Organization (WHO) vaccination record or other proof of inoculation, or they must be inoculated at the airport in order to be permitted entry. Travelers may obtain further information from the Embassy of South Africa, 3051 Mas-

sachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 232-4400, web site at <http://usaembassy.southafrica.net>, or, the South African consulates in Los Angeles, Chicago, or New York. Overseas, inquiries should be made at the nearest South African embassy or consulate.

Travelers should avoid nighttime travel and use caution when driving in the former "independent homelands" of Transkei and Ciskei, which have been incorporated into the provinces of Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. Some areas, such as the "wild coast" in the former Transkei, have significant levels of crime and inadequate medical services. This situation, though improving, has caused problems for foreign travelers to the area. Travelers may contact the U.S. Consulate General in Cape Town or the U.S. Consulate General in Durban for further information before embarking on trips to these areas.

Americans living in or visiting South Africa are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the nearest U.S. consulate and obtain updated information on travel and security within South Africa. The U.S. Embassy is located at 877 Pretorius Street Arcadia in Pretoria, telephone (27-12) 342-1048, fax (27-12) 342-5504. The U.S. Embassy web site is <http://usembassy.state.gov/pretoria/>. Note: The U.S. Consulate General in Johannesburg provides most consular services for Americans in the Pretoria area.

The Consulate General in Johannesburg is located at No. 1 River Street (corner of River and Riviera Road), Killarney, Johannesburg, telephone (27-11) 644-8000, fax (27-11) 646-6916. Its consular jurisdiction includes Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Northern, North West, and Free State provinces.

The Consulate General in Cape Town is located at Broadway Industries Center, Heerengracht, Foreshore, telephone (27-21) 421-4280, fax (27-21) 425-3014. Its consular

jurisdiction includes Western Cape, Eastern Cape, and Northern Cape provinces.

The Consulate General in Durban is located at Durban Bay House, 29th floor, 333 Smith Street, telephone (27-31) 304-4737, fax (27-31) 301-8206. Its consular jurisdiction includes KwaZulu-Natal province.

Pets

At present, there is no quarantine imposed for pets being imported from the USA. Pets shipped from the US must be in possession of a valid rabies and health certificate and must be accompanied by the original import permit. The rabies vaccine must be older than 30 days and not older than one year. Your

local vet should carry out the health clearance, within 90 days prior to departure for South Africa. The area or Government vet must also clear the rabies and health clearance certificate within 90 days prior to departure for South Africa.

The following information must be furnished to obtain an import permit: Number and/or species and/or class of animal, Country and city of origin, Airport from which the animal will be loaded, Date of embarkation for South Africa, Address and telephone number to which the permit must be sent. Permits are sent via courier service at a cost of approximately \$20.

Pets must travel as manifested cargo and may not be brought as excess baggage or in the cabin. Should you not comply with this regulation and/or provide the required documentation, the pet will be returned to the country of origin.

In addition to the above regulations, cats must be accompanied by a feline enteritis vaccination certificate and a rhinotracheitis vaccination certificate (snuffles vaccination).

Firearms and Ammunition

Those over age 16 or older may purchase locally from a reputable and

licensed South African weapons dealer one rifle and one approved shotgun each for personal use provided they comply with all South African laws pertaining to the use and storage of such weapons. Under no circumstances is the purchase, possession or use of handguns permitted.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

South Africa's currency is the Rand (R). The rate of exchange in July 1998 was approximately \$1 = R6.40; the rate is subject to frequent fluctuation. Banking facilities are adequate. With good Internet service available, Internet banking, for paying bills and transferring money in the U.S., is possible for an increasing number of people.

While Electronic Funds Transfers are not yet reliable enough to recommend within South Africa, FSC Paris does have the capability.

The South African Rand is a freely convertible currency and the rate against the US Dollar varies daily due to market influences. Many find it convenient to open a checking account with a local bank. Banks also have available Visa and MasterCard for your use, although the interest rates are high. Stateside credit cards can be used at most local stores including supermarkets, theaters, travel agencies and numerous retail outlets.

US Dollars and travelers checks as well as cashier checks are available from the banks given sufficient notice (usually two workdays).

The system of measurement in South Africa is primarily metric.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Feb. 14 Valentine's Day
- Feb/Mar. Shrove Tuesday/
Pancake Day*
- Mar.
(2nd Mon) Commonwealth
Day*

Mar/Apr Good Friday*
 Mar/Apr Easter*
 Mar/Apr Easter Monday/
 Family Day *
 Mar. 17 St. Patrick's Day
 Mar. 21 Human Rights
 Day
 Apr. 1 April Fool's Day
 April 27 Freedom Day
 May 1 Worker's Day
 June 16 Youth Day
 Aug. 9 National
 Women's Day
 Sept. 24 Heritage Day
 Oct. 31 Halloween
 Nov 5 Guy Fawkes
 Day
 Dec. 16 Day of
 Reconciliation
 Dec. 25 Christmas Day
 Dec. 26 Day of Goodwill
 * variable

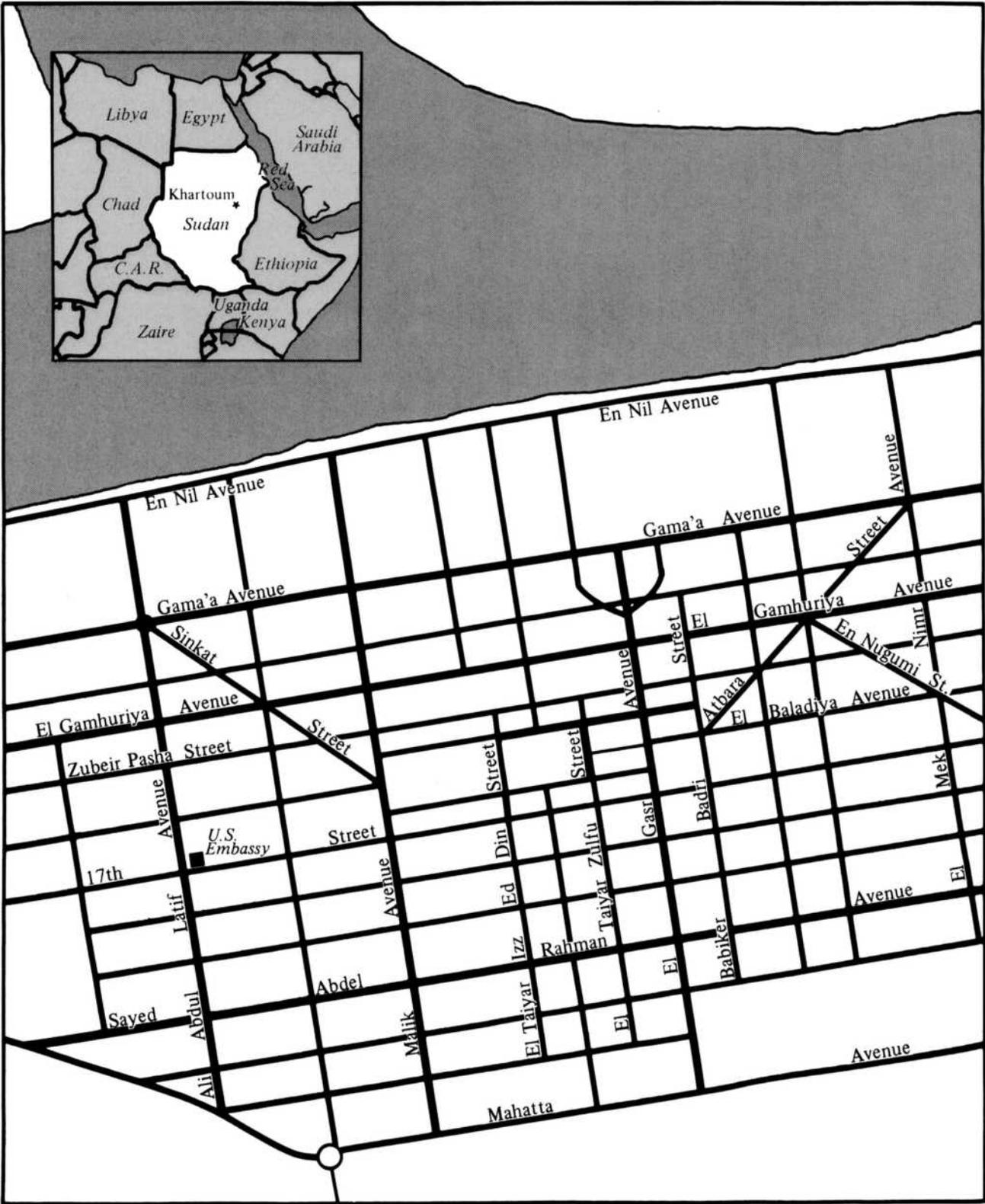
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Khartoum, Sudan

SUDAN

Republic of the Sudan

Major City:

Khartoum

Other Cities:

'Atbarah, El Fasher, El-Gedaref, Jubā, Kassalā, Khartoum North, Omdurman, Port Sudan, Wadi Medani, Wau

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated July 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Called Nubia by the ancient Egyptians, the Republic of the **SUDAN**, with its rich cultural diversity and historical background is, in many ways, Africa in microcosm. The largest country in area on the continent, it lies at the traditional crossroads between East and West Africa, and between Africa and the Middle East.

Sudan has been called a country of the 21st century. Although it is one of the least-developed nations in the world, and remains primarily agricultural, it continues efforts to implement an ambitious development program. With the cooperation of several Western countries and

international institutions, it has had the potential of emerging as a principal food-growing area and an important source of minerals. However, the drought which has enveloped such a large part of Africa in this decade has significantly slowed economic growth.

MAJOR CITY

Khartoum

Khartoum is northeast of the country's geographical center, at about 15 degrees north latitude. At the junction of the White and Blue Niles, the area contains a total population of an estimated 3.8 million in three cities: Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman. Khartoum is the busiest and the government center. Most resident Europeans live in the city and its outlying suburbs. Across the Blue Nile from Khartoum is Khartoum North, a traditional city with a growing industrial area. The ancient city of Omdurman, across the White Nile from Khartoum, contains miles of traditional markets, where local artisans make and sell their wares.

Once dominated by Arabs, Khartoum now has a sizable population

of displaced southerners. Arabic is the common language, but English is usually understood by Sudanese who have completed secondary school. English is used in transacting business with foreigners. Minority groups resident in Khartoum include Egyptian, Greek, Lebanese, Italian, West African, and Armenian.

Shops and businesses often close between 1:30 pm and 5:30 pm, during the hottest part of the day.

Food

Importation, manufacture, or consumption of alcohol is prohibited by the Government of Sudan.

Some imported products can occasionally be found in local groceries. Fresh fruits and vegetables are sold at open air markets. Available fruit includes small bananas, grapefruit, limes, oranges, watermelon, and mangoes. Throughout the year, onions, cucumbers, green peppers, carrots, tomatoes, okra, garlic, and eggplant are available. For a few months such cool season crops as cabbage, potatoes, beets, squash, lettuce, green beans, radishes, peas, and cauliflower appear. Beef, mutton, chicken, and, occasionally pork are available locally. Pork can be ordered. Beef and mutton are frequently found in unfamiliar cuts.



AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. Reproduced by permission.

Flooding in Khartoum, Sudan

Outstanding Nile perch and tilapia provide an alternative to meat and are sometimes available.

Individuals in outlying areas find some food staples available locally. Meat and seasonal fruits and vegetables are usually available; the variety depends on local production.

Clothing

Clothing is informal; however, Sudanese are conservative in dress, and Western attire is frowned upon. Clothing is washed more frequently here and therefore wears out faster. Sturdy cottons are best for hot months, and polyester is suitable for winter. Sweaters and wraps are needed in early mornings and evenings during cool months; a few winter things are necessary if you intend to travel to cooler climates.

Clothing needs in outlying areas are similar to those in Khartoum, except individuals visiting the

southern regions should include rain gear because of the heavy annual rainfall in that area.

For men, work attire consists of sport shirts or safari suits. Many men wear shorts for home or recreation. A lightweight suit or sports jacket is appropriate for more formal occasions. Men should avoid shorts and going shirtless in public. Bring wash-and-wear shirts since dry-cleaning is expensive, and quality may be unsatisfactory. Women wear dresses, skirts, and tops or pants in the office or for leisure. In deference to Islamic traditions, women should avoid sundresses, shorts, or tight slacks or blouses. For evenings, long skirts or caftans are popular. Outdoor entertaining makes flats more comfortable, as high heels sink into the lawn. Children wear jeans and shorts, and sandals or tennis shoes. Long Bermuda shorts can be worn to school.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: Many commodities are in short supply or not available. Bring favorite brands of toiletries and cosmetics, unless you are prepared to switch.

Basic Services: Tailors and seamstresses can be found, but work is slow and quality poor, except for the most simple safari suits for men and long, formless dresses for women. Simple shoe repair is available.

Barber shops and beauty parlors are more reasonably priced than those in U.S. cities. Quality of supplies, cleanliness standards in the shops, and qualifications of some operators, do not measure up to U.S. standards, however.

Religious Activities

The Anglican, Greek Orthodox, and Roman Catholic churches, and the Khartoum International Church

(Protestant) conduct regular English-language church services.

Education

Most American children attend Khartoum American School (KAS). The school's major vacation is 18 days at Christmas. School hours are 7:20 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The school is located on the southern edge of New Extension in a new, air-conditioned/air-cooled, eight-building campus built to U.S. standards. KAS offers a U.S. curriculum taught by a well-qualified staff that maintains U.S. standards. The curriculum consists of various academic subjects, ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction, music, art, and physical education. Foreign-language offerings include Arabic and French. There is also a computer specialist and a resource specialist. A good library is served by a trained librarian. It has 14 classrooms, a science laboratory, a computer lab, and art and music rooms.

Bring paper, notebooks, pencils, pens, colored pencils, colored pens, etc., as a limited supply is available at school. A lunch break is given at midday. All children take at least a quart of water to drink each day, usually utilizing a large, unbreakable Thermos (e.g., Playmate jug).

There are no other English-language schools in the area, other than the KAS. The French School might accommodate students reasonably fluent in French, though its enrollment is small.

While there are secondary-level English-language schools in Khartoum (e.g., Unity High School, Sisters School for girls, and Camboni College for boys), vacancies are rare.

Special Educational Opportunities

The University of Khartoum and the African International University offer language instruction in Arabic. Applicants for full-time uni-

versity study must pass rigorous exams in *both* English and Arabic.

Sports

Khartoum has an American Club. Membership includes expatriates assigned to Sudan as well as Sudanese. The American Club's facilities include a swimming pool, concrete tennis courts, and a snack bar.

Sudanese professional clubs—civil service, army, engineers, university—are exclusive, but sports clubs accept those actively interested. The Sudan Lawn Tennis Association is also open for membership and offers both grass and cement courts.

Bowling and billiards are available to those who join the private Hilton Hotel Club. The annual individual membership fee allows access to bowling (with automatic equipment), billiards, sauna, massage, and hard-surface tennis courts with lighting.

Water skiing on the Blue Nile is available. Joggers are invited to participate with the Khartoum Hash House Harriers on their weekly jaunts. Spectator sports are limited to soccer, tennis tournaments, occasional horse and camel races, and informal polo matches. Public sports facilities are scarce, and each private national club has its own activities for members only.

Al Mogran Family Park is an amusement park on the point of land where the White and Blue Niles meet. The park has rides, refreshment stands, and a first-aid station. It is operated by the Sudanese People's Armed Forces.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Jebel Aulia Dam, a 1-hour drive (possible in a sedan with high clearance), is a pleasant spot to see a wide variety of water birds and watch Sudanese cast their round nets for fish. Fish can be purchased on the spot. A small grass plot is

available for picnics. The dam serves as a major crossing of the White Nile. A constant stream of camels, donkeys, sheep, and goats with their herders passes by. Bird-watching, especially during migratory seasons, is also good all along the Niles.

Other excursions outside Khartoum are likely to take on the aspects of a picnic or a camping trip by four-wheel-drive vehicle fully equipped for the length of the journey. A favorite day or overnight outing is an about a 2-hour drive north to the Nile's Sixth Cataract in Sabaloka Gorge. On a 3-day weekend you can visit the Meroitic ruins near Shendi. A visit to Dinder National Park, a game preserve, takes several days and is rugged. If attempting this last trip, one must be prepared to carry along about 90 gallons of fuel.

Facilities available to travelers are almost nonexistent outside Khartoum. Ample food, fuel, and water must be carried on trips. Bring camping gear if you enjoy this type of activity. With continual fair skies, people rarely bother with tents, but cots are recommended, as the ground is stony and covered with thorns.

The Red Sea has some of the world's most beautiful coral. Snorkeling and scuba diving in Port Sudan are popular, but no facilities are available to refill scuba tanks. The coast is over 700 miles away from Khartoum. Port Sudan is 1 hour by jet, or 2½ hours by prop plane from Khartoum. A small resort at Arusa is north of Port Sudan, and the ancient city of Suakin is 60 km. south of Port Sudan. To reach Suakin, one must fly to Port Sudan and obtain transportation to Suakin.

Hunting opportunities range from local bird shooting (sand grouse, dove, water fowl) to big game hunting in the southern parts of Sudan. Hunting requires use of a four-wheel-drive vehicle and often a guide. Hunting licenses are required for different types of game.

Sport fishing is possible along either Nile or at Jebel Aulia Dam on the White Nile. Giant Nile perch are excellent to eat, but are rarely caught from shore. Good tasting and commonly caught from shore are tilapia and several varieties of catfish. Tigerfish are good game fish, but they are not edible.

Points of interest in the Khartoum area include the National Museum housing archeological collections and the Faras frescoes, the Ethnological Museum with a charming display of tribal artifacts, and the Natural History Museum's display of specimens of Sudan's birds and wild game. There are a few zoological gardens in Khartoum that are also pleasant to visit.

Omdurman's large market area (or "souk") offers local color, an occasional bargain, and the Khalifa Museum. The museum was formerly a residence and now houses relics of the Mahdiya period. On Friday afternoons, whirling dervishes perform near the tomb of a saint. Opposite the zoo is the landing for the Tuti Island Ferry. You can cross to the island for a walk around its typical rural village and small farms.

Photography in Sudan requires a special permit. Caution must be exercised, since many scenes or areas are not to be photographed. At times whole groups will insist on posing for you; in other cases, the presence of your camera will create vigorous disapproval.

Entertainment

American, British, French, and German cultural centers have libraries, show films, and sometimes offer special programs. The Rec Site has a film night each week. Dining out choices include restaurants in the larger hotels, a Chinese restaurant, and a few restaurants serving local cuisines.

Social Activities

Among Americans: The International Volunteer Welfare Group (IVWG) membership has open

membership. They meet monthly to raise funds for Sudanese charities and hold monthly programs on Sudanese culture.

International Contacts: Although private clubs are strongly divided by nationality, it is possible to mix internationally. Social activities, such as tennis, bridge, Hash runs, bingo, and sports, provide contacts in the local and international communities. For those interested in singing, the Khartoum Singers is an informal group that performs at Christmas and at a few private functions. The Sudanese Archaeological Society, supported by the German and British Cultural Centers and the University of Khartoum, arranges regular tours of sites and lectures for its members.

OTHER CITIES

'ATBARAH (also spelled Atbara), a city of about 115,000 in 2002, is situated in northeastern Sudan. Located at the junction of the Nile and Atbara rivers, it is a major administrative and commercial center. Two main road and rail lines converge at 'Atbarah, providing the bulk of the jobs in railway maintenance. A large cement factory is located south of town.

EL FASHER (also spelled Al-Fashir) is the capital of Darfur Province, about 500 miles southwest of Khartoum. It is a primitive city, with simple buildings and straw homes. As the market center for the cereals and fruits of Darfur, El Fasher also has a vigorous trade in animals, as well as in gum. El Fasher's population is about 186,000.

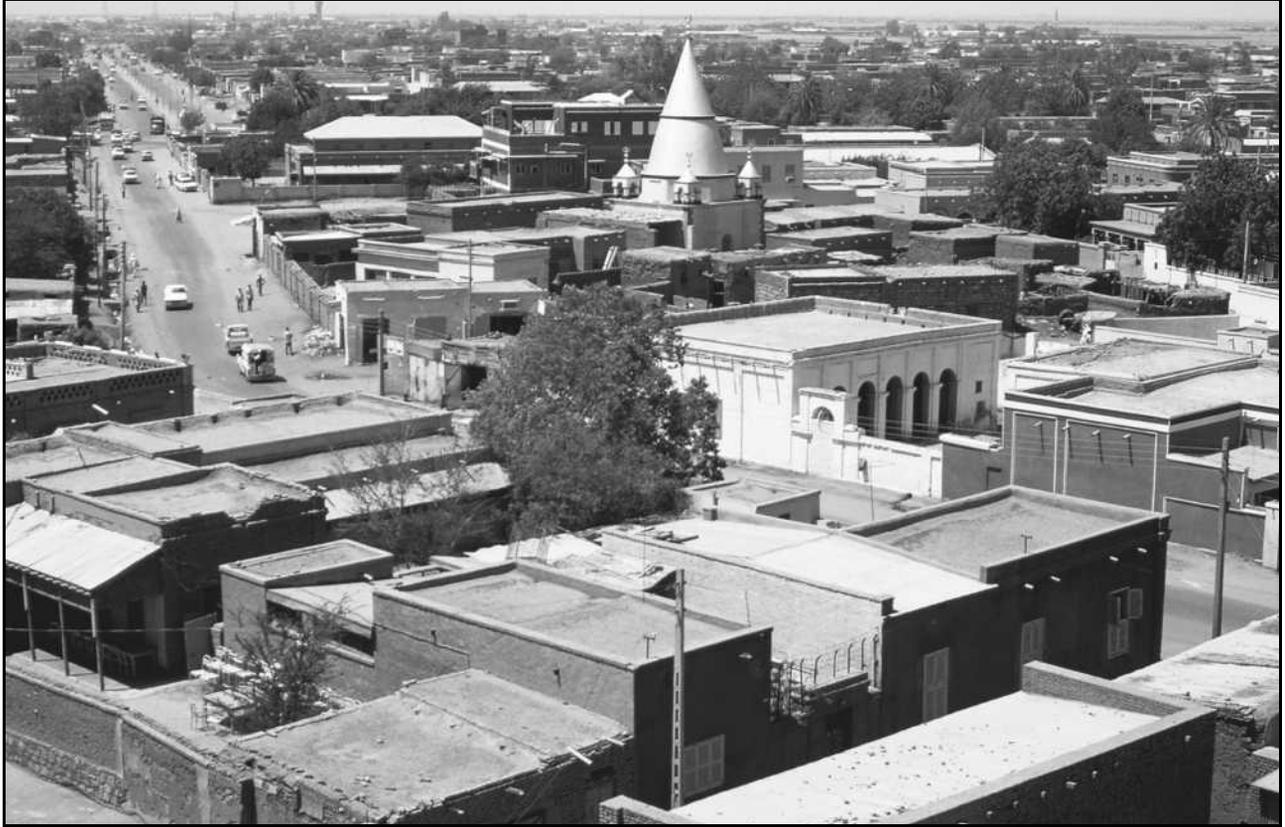
About 200 miles southeast of Khartoum is **EL-GEDAREF** (also spelled al Qadārif), a commercial center for many products from the southern areas of the province. The population, currently 251,000, is mainly Arab or Nubian Sudanese.

Situated in southern Sudan, 100 miles north of the Ugandan border, **JUBĀ** acts as a critical transportation hub. The nearby agricultural areas bring tobacco and coffee for trade; Jubā is the southern terminus for Nile River traffic. It is the headquarters of the University of Jubā, founded in 1975. The city was the site of a conference in 1947 which united the Sudan. Ironically, Jubā spurred a revolt that led to civil war in the late 1950s. The population is about 151,000.

KASSALĀ is the capital of Kassalā Province in the northeast, 250 miles east of Khartoum. The city, with a current population of 308,000, is situated on a plain about 1,700 feet above sea level. It has noted fruit gardens and an extensive market trade which compensate for the decline of its cotton trade. It has excellent transportation links to Khartoum and Port Sudan, to the north of the Red Sea. Kassalā was founded as a fort by the Egyptians in 1840. It was held from 1885 through 1894 by Mahdists and retaken by Italian forces after a battle on July 17, 1894, and restored to Egypt in 1897. During World War II, the city was held briefly by the Italians.

KHARTOUM NORTH and Omdurman, although technically part of the greater capital area, are large cities which have expanded from town or suburb status on the river banks across from Khartoum. Khartoum North, with a population of 921,000, is a growing textile city, and the site of an agricultural college. The city contains dockyards, marine and rail work shops, and sawmills. Several industries are located in Khartoum North, among them brewing, brickmaking, tanning, and food processing. A cultural center located in town has tennis courts, a swimming pool, and a library.

OMDURMAN has a population of 1.7 million, and is a commercial center for livestock and a variety of handicrafts and other goods. The Islamic University of Omdurman



Aerial view of Omdurman, Sudan

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founded there in 1912, was elevated to university status in 1965. Furniture, pottery factories, and a tannery are also important to the local economy. Most goods are shipped by truck. For the tourist, Port Sudan offers sailing, a selection of swimming pools, and an excellent fishing opportunities.

PORT SUDAN, in the far northeast part of the country on the Red Sea, is a modern harbor and rail terminus. Located in Kassalā Province about 400 miles northeast of Khartoum, it currently is the country's only port; however, another is planned at New Suakin. Port Sudan was founded in 1904, but was not expanded and modernized until the 1950s and 1960s. Shipping lines are operated here from the Red Sea to ports in the Mediterranean and northern Europe. Port Sudan serves the cotton-growing regions of the Nile Valley, and also is the export center for peanuts, oils, and hides. An oil refinery and an international

airport are located near the city. The city has a population of approximately 401,000 (2002).

WADI MEDANI (also spelled Wad Madanī), capital of the Blue Nile Province 100 miles southeast of Khartoum, is another city of significant size (277,000), but is not often visited by Americans. It is the center of Sudan's irrigated agricultural region. The University of al-Jazirah, founded in 1975, is located in Wadi Medani. A good railway and road link Wadi Medani to Khartoum. A ferry service operates on the Blue Nile near the city.

Located in Southwestern Sudan, **WAU** is an important trading center for agricultural produce, cereals, fruits, and vegetables grown north of the city. Wau was virtually destroyed during anti-government protests in 1965. The city was reconstructed in 1972 and is home to 110,000 residents.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Sudan, a vast, sun-baked land, gained independence in 1956, following the end of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium. It is the largest country in all Africa, stretching almost 1 million square miles. Superimposed over a map of the U.S., Sudan would reach from the Canadian border to Houston, and from eastern Utah to St. Louis. To the north are the Libyan and Nubian Deserts. In mid-country, a band of rocky semi-desert reaches from the Chad border eastward to encompass the range of arid mountains along the Red Sea coast and the Ethiopian border. The southern half consists of savanna and swampland grading into semitropical forests along the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda

borders. Although arable, fertile land is available (37%); little (1.5%) is cultivated because of inadequate water usage. The U.S. was involved in many projects to improve water usage and agricultural methods through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), but these programs were cut when the military took over the civilian government in 1989.

Through these diverse regions flow the White and Blue Niles, which converge at Khartoum. The Nile system, with its major tributaries—the Bahr al Ghazal, Sobat, and Atbara—is the primary water supply for much of northeastern Africa. Most cultivation in the north of Sudan depends on these rivers, but further south, rainfall is sufficient for cultivation and grazing.

The river is navigable only in certain areas. The Bahr al-Arab, flowing west to east, forms a natural frontier. Another, more formidable obstacle to the south is the Sudd, an immense 12,000 square miles of swamp and floating vegetation into which the White Nile expands before reverting to river again. Over great distances, only a few paved roads, a limited rail line, and unreliable air service connect broadly scattered towns and settlements.

Khartoum is Usually hot and dUsty. During May, June, and July, daily temperatures average 120 °F, with frequent dust storms called “haboobs.” July, August, and part of September are not as hot, with rare but heavy rain storms (average 8 inches yearly) and continuing haboobs. From November until April, daily temperatures range around 95 °F; nights, around 70 °F, are pleasant. Cool weather at night and in the early mornings sometimes requires light sweaters or blankets.

Population

Sudan bridges Arabic and African cultures. Its approximately 36 million people are from different ethnic

groups, cultures, and creeds. About 70 percent are Moslem and 30 percent are Christian or animistic. Among the northern groups are the Hadendowa, Bisharin, and Beni Amer of the Red Sea hills; the Nubian tribes of the northern Nile Valley; a conglomeration of “Arab” tribes occupying the central belt; the Kababish and other nomadic tribes west of the Nile; and descendants of earlier peoples, such as Nuba, Fur, and Ingessana. Although some still speak their own Hamitic, Semitic, or other ancient languages, the common language of northern Sudan is Arabic. Many local dialects are spoken.

Southern Sudan was isolated from early external influences by climate and geography. It is inhabited by African ethnic groups that speak over 100 separate languages and dialects classified as Sudanic, Nilotic, and Nile Hamitic. The common language of Sudan is Arabic. The Dinkas, with a population around 2 million, constitute the largest southern tribe. Other tribal groups include the Nuer, Shilluk, and Azande.

Political History

The North and South of Sudan have been at war for the last 10 years. The military dictatorship was overthrown in April 1985. After a transitional period, Sudan held its first free elections in 17 years in 1986. Although the civil war prevented elections in 37 of 68 southern constituencies, a Parliament was elected and a democratic coalition government formed. Six of 40 parties from a broad political spectrum participated in Sadiq Al-Mahdi’s coalition government until June 30 1989, when General Omar Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir headed a military coup which overthrew the government. Bashir dissolved the Parliament and suspended activities of all political parties. The present regime is heavily influenced by the National Islamic Front.

Arts, Science, and Education

Sudan’s education system requires 12 years compulsory education. Literacy is 46 percent. Instruction through high school is in Arabic. The University of Khartoum is the center of Khartoum’s intellectual life. Arabic has replaced English as the primary language of instruction in Sudanese universities.

Al Nilein University (or University of Two Niles), formerly the University of Cairo, is located in Khartoum; the Islamic University and the Ahfad College for Women operate in Omdurman—adjacent to Khartoum. The University of Juba has moved to Khartoum due to the war. There are also the University of Gezira in Wad Medani, and Kordofan University in El-Obeid. The French and German Cultural Centers offer language classes and cultural events. The American Center (U.S.IS) sponsors academic exchanges and arranges cultural activities.

Commerce and Industry

Agriculture is one of the country’s major activities, capitalizing on extensive fertile land irrigated from the Nile. Agriculture provides much of the country’s export income: cotton is the leading cash crop, followed by sorghum, groundnuts, sesame, gum arabic, and livestock. Fruits and vegetables are grown for local consumption. Limited industry processes agriculture produce. Sudan’s natural resources include some oil reserves, iron ore, copper, and chrome. Although Sudan is believed to possess other minerals, including zinc, iron, and uranium, mining is still insignificant. The country’s petroleum resources had attracted some foreign investment (led by Chevron), but Chevron sold its last oil concessions to a private Sudanese corporation in 1992. In 1999, a boom in oil production changed the face of Sudan’s economy, spurring economic growth.

Approximately 185,000 barrels of oil are produced daily, and oil now accounts for 70 percent of the country's export earnings.

Despite Sudan's physical advantages, it is among the world's poorest countries, with a per capita income of about \$1,000 a year. The Sudanese economy has suffered from high inflation and low output. Labor shortages have developed, because skilled workers have emigrated to better job prospects abroad. Like many developing countries, Sudan's infrastructure has gaps: Transportation, especially outside Khartoum, is difficult and impedes development; power blackouts are frequent, and telephone service is irregular. Certain essential commodities are occasionally scarce.

Oil production has helped lift Sudan's economy, allowing growth of 6-7% annually in recent years. Overall results, however, have been disappointing, in part because of declining foreign assistance levels. Western economic assistance has declined drastically due to international dissatisfaction with the Government's human rights record, and any assistance received from the Gulf states was terminated when Sudan sided with Iraq during the Gulf War. Current Western assistance is almost entirely humanitarian relief.

Transportation

Local

Local buses are rarely used by foreigners. Taxis are easy to find downtown, but cannot be called by telephone. Most Sudanese white-collar workers use taxis, frequently in groups. Taxis are not readily available after dark in residential areas. Most taxi drivers do not speak English. Daytime rates are reasonable; they usually double at night. Rates typically are at least double for foreigners.

Regional

Sudan's regional transportation system seriously impedes its economic development. Paved, all-weather roads connect Khartoum with Port Sudan via Kassala, and with Kosti and Sennar. Travel elsewhere by car is difficult, even with four-wheel-drive vehicles. In the rainy season, travel in the southern regions is virtually impossible. At the present time, travel to the south is restricted due to the ongoing civil war. Because of the danger of breakdown, you should travel any lengthy journey with at least another four-wheel-drive vehicle.

There is good, daily train service between Port Sudan and Khartoum.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

The telephone system is overloaded in Khartoum and inadequate beyond. Installation of a new telecommunication system is underway.

Commercial telex facilities are available at the Hilton and the Acropole hotels. Some individuals have had success placing international calls at Key International and the Nissan Parts Place, both in the Amarat section of Khartoum.

Radio and TV

Radio Omdurman broadcasts one 15-minute English newscast daily. Other programs of commentary, poetry, drama, and music are in Arabic. Sudan TV broadcasts in color about 7 hours each day. Four or five programs a week are broadcast in English, but they are usually dated and of minimal interest.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The main printed source of news in English is the daily mimeographed news bulletin put out by SUNA (Sudanese News Agency). A monthly magazine in English published by the Government of Sudan, *Sudanow*, is filled with informative stories of Sudanese issues and

events, as does the daily *New Horizon*.

The European edition of *Newsweek* appears on newsstands some days old, as do copies of the *International Herald Tribune* and a few other European papers, but availability is inconsistent. If you want regular delivery, it is best to order your own subscription. The American Center (U.S.IS) holds the best collection of U.S. periodicals and newspapers.

Several small bookshops offer a limited selection. All English-language books are imported, and the costs of transportation, duty, etc., make them expensive.

Health and Medicine

Community Health

Khartoum water is potable when it leaves the processing plant, but the distribution system is subject to contamination.

The extreme heat occurring 9 out of 12 months of the year quickly ferments uncollected garbage dumped on abundant vacant lots. Sewage problems are common in some areas of the city when frequent power outages stop sewage pumps. Lack of toilet facilities, inadequate refrigeration, and poor health standards in food handling and processing make it necessary to use extreme care in preparing food at home and selecting food when eating out. During and following the short rainy season, the city is infested with flies, mosquitoes, and other insects.

Constant dust plays havoc with sinus and bronchial systems. If you are prone to respiratory disease, dust allergies, and hay fever, be aware that this is a hazard in Khartoum. Air humidifiers are recommended in the bedrooms at night because of extremely low humidity.

Preventive Measures

Endemic diseases or other health hazards in Khartoum and through-

out Sudan include malaria, dysentery, parasitic and respiratory infections, hepatitis, rabies, cerebrospinal meningitis, and tuberculosis. Bilharzia is present in the Blue and White Niles, and the main Nile.

Boil and filter drinking water, and drink pasteurized, fresh milk. Do not use local long-life milk because of local storage and age factors. Other brands of long-life milk are available at the commissary. Meat should be well cooked, and salads or other uncooked vegetables and fruits should be avoided unless you are sure that they have been properly cleaned.

Adults should drink 12–16 glasses of water or similar clear liquid (excluding coffee, tea, and alcohol) a day to prevent dehydration in the extreme heat and low humidity.

All persons coming to Sudan should begin taking malaria suppressant tablets two weeks before arrival and continue the program throughout the specified period. Yellow fever, rabies, polio, tetanus, typhoid, and hepatitis immunizations, and necessary childhood immunizations should also be current before arrival.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

The U.S. Department of State warns against travel to Sudan due to security instability. Rebel activities, ongoing civil war, and bombing campaigns make the area unsafe for travelers. Extreme caution should be exercised at all times.

American carriers do not operate to Sudan. The best connections from the U.S. are made through Frankfurt, Paris, and Amsterdam. Each of these involves another stop in Cairo before arriving in Khartoum.

Importing foreign currency is not quantitatively restricted, but is

closely monitored by the Sudan Government.

A visa is required for entry into Sudan. Although presentation of up-to-date immunization records is no longer routinely required upon arrival in Sudan, travelers should have them available.

Careful consideration should be made before bringing a pet to Sudan. Owners should keep in mind the extreme heat and possibilities of disease. Though death/illness of pets does not happen often, a few very unfortunate incidents have occurred. Many people choose to adopt animals found in Khartoum, such as dogs, cats, even rabbits. Veterinary care is available in Khartoum for treatment or inoculation.

You may bring animals into Sudan with an import permit. Pets arriving without a permit are subject to quarantine and possible extermination.

The Sudanese dinar (SDD) is the national currency. In January 2002, the exchange rate was SDD 257.44/ U.S.D.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Jan. 1 | Independence Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Sham El Nasseem/ Easter Monday |
| Jun. 30 | National Salvation Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| | Id al-Adah* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |
| | Hijra New Year* |
| | Mawlid an Nabi* |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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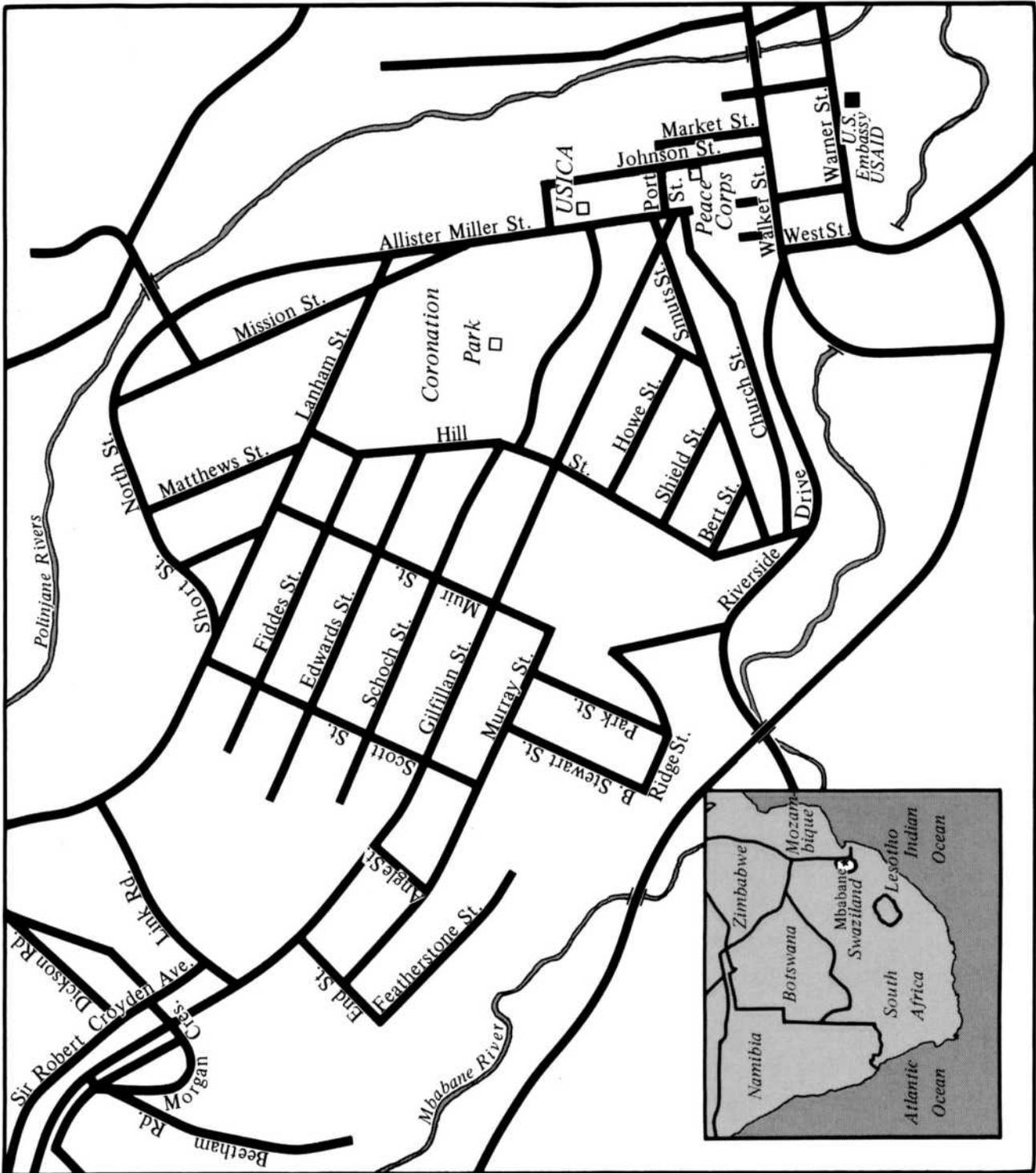
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Mbabane, Swaziland

SWAZILAND

Kingdom of Swaziland

Major City:

Mbabane

Other City:

Manzini

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report for Swaziland. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

SWAZILAND, geographically one of Africa's most diverse smaller states, lies landlocked in the southeast corner of the continent between Mozambique and South Africa. A country of rolling hills and valleys, sound fiscal management, and financial cooperation with its largest neighbor, South Africa, Swaziland's standard of living is better than that of most African countries. Swaziland also maintains the simplicity and mysterious traditions that tend to keep it relatively insulated from the turmoil that afflicts the other nations of southern Africa. Many Swazis continue to wear traditional dress rather than Western fashions. Mbabane, Swaziland's capital city, is a clean and orderly

town where an outdoor African market and a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant coexist.

Sobhuza II, known to his people as the Lion of the Swazis, the Inexplicable, the Great Mountain, the Bull, the Son of the She-Elephant, and the Knight of the British Empire, was the world's longest reigning monarch, ruling Swaziland from 1921 until his death on August 21, 1982. For the next four years, Queen Ntombi Tfwala, one of Sobhuza's many wives, acted as regent until the coronation of Crown Prince Makhosetive. The coronation, held April 25, 1986, took place three years earlier than anticipated in order to end an ongoing power struggle between vying royalist factions. Eighteen-year-old King Mswati III, *the Ngwenyama*, or lion of his people, told his countrymen at his colorful coronation ceremony: "My experience is short, but I have behind me the sacred trust and strength of the people."

MAJOR CITY

Mbabane

Mbabane was chosen by the former British administrators as the capital of the High Commission Terri-

tory because it was free of the malaria prevalent at lower altitudes in the country. Today, it bustles with commercial and official activity resulting from its status as the seat of government of independent Swaziland. Pleasant, well-shaped residential areas spread over the hills surrounding the growing business section. Downtown stores and a nearby shopping mall with a U.S.-style supermarket provide most of the goods and services available in a small- to medium-sized American town. Mbabane's population is approximately 67,000.

Mbabane has many social and climatic characteristics of a small town in Oregon or Washington. The combination of its 26° south latitude (longitude 31° east) and 3,800-foot altitude gives Mbabane cool and dry winters and mild summers. Most of the rainfall comes in long, misty drizzles between October and March. Heavy rains in that period are frequently accompanied by hail and violent electrical storms. Evenings tend to be cool, even in summer, and frost can occur in the winter months.

The capital's previous English colonial atmosphere has dissipated with the "localization" of the civil service. Although a substantial European population remains, it is now com-



Women outside a mall in Mbabane, Swaziland

Jason Laure. Reproduced by permission.

posed mostly of South Africans, English, and Portuguese engaged in commercial activity. Mbabane's Swazi population is made up of government officials and also rural Swazis who have to come to the capital looking for jobs. Languages most heard in the capital are siSwati, used by Swazis among themselves and for most local broadcasting; English, spoken by expatriates and in government offices; and Portuguese, used by members of the Portuguese business community.

Taxis are available at all hotels in Mbabane; the usual tip is 10 percent. There are also car rental services in Mbabane; an international driver's license is required and driving is on the left.

Allister Miller Street, one of the main thoroughfares in Mbabane, has modern shops, boutiques, hotels, commercial banks, and the offices of several diplomatic missions. Nearly all of Swaziland's government ministries and departments are located in and around the Mbabane area.

On the south side of the city is the Industrial Site, with several light industries and commercial concerns. The Small Enterprises Devel-

opment Company's (SEDCO) complex is located here. There is a friendly little shopping center offering handmade clothes in colorful African fabrics, finely crocheted shawls, pottery, tapestries, artificial flowers made from local grasses, and a wide range of other items.

Visitors are drawn to the Swazi Plaza, now the established commercial center of Mbabane. The plaza provides nearly every type of shopping and service facility, all on one level. Access from the adjacent Mbabane town center is gained by merely walking across the bridge that spans the Mbabane River.

Education

Sifundzani School is a primary school in the city of Mbabane that provides adequate facilities for American children, and as a Swazi Government school, it follows a British curriculum. Founded in 1981, the school is a coeducational institution and receives support from the Office of Overseas Schools. The school is situated in a hillside area and consists of six buildings, 14 classrooms, an auditorium, playing field, and swimming pool. Sifundzani has grades one through seven and enrolls children the year they turn six. The curriculum at the school includes five years of French

and siSwati. Extracurricular activities include drama, sports, and choral and instrumental music. Visits to game reserves, museums, houses of Parliament, industrial areas, and agricultural projects are part of the curriculum. The school day is from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Simple, inexpensive uniforms of shirts and jeans for boys and pinafores for girls are required. The school year lasts from January to December. Further information can be obtained at: P.O. Box A286, Swazi Plazi, Mbabane, Swaziland.

Waterford-Kamhlaba United World College of Southern Africa (P.O. Box 52, Mbabane), a private school set among the foothills overlooking the city, is considered one of the finest preparatory schools in southern Africa. Because it is usually full and often has a waiting list, parents contemplating enrolling their children in Waterford-Kamhlaba should communicate with the headmaster as many months ahead as possible. However, admission to Waterford-Kamhlaba on any level is by competitive entrance examination and by merit.

The school was founded in 1963 with the aim of providing a high standard of secondary education in a multiracial environment. Originally a boy's school, it is now coeducational.

The school is comprised of 20 buildings, 21 classrooms, a 16,000-volume library, auditorium, four tennis courts, three playing fields, seven science labs, computer center, swimming pool, and infirmary.

Waterford-Kamhlaba offers a seven-year British (approximate) secondary curriculum divided into a five-year section and a final two-year section. The first five-year program leads to the Cambridge External Board School Certificate ("O" level) which is almost equivalent to a U.S. high school diploma. At the end of the first five years, a student must reapply for the final two years, which will lead to the International Baccalaureate degree. Classes begin at 8 a.m. Monday

through Friday and alternate Saturdays. They end at 3 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and at 1 p.m. on Wednesday and alternate Saturdays. Sports activities are scheduled two days a week and, on these days, students may remain as late as 4 or 5 p.m.

Subjects offered include English language and literature, history, geography, mathematics, economics, chemistry, physics, biology, languages (Afrikaans, Spanish, French, Zulu/siSwati), music, and art. The "O" level examinations are taken on six to nine subjects from the list. The International Baccalaureate examination is taken on a combination of six subjects and includes a "theory of knowledge" paper and an extended essay based on the student's own research and reading under the guidance of one of the teachers. Extracurricular activities consist of sports (including swimming), art, chess, music, science clubs, camping and other outdoor activities, drama, gymnastics, dance, yearbook, and newspaper.

Many parents and children living in the Mbabane area, including American families, share the faculty's view that boarding provides the ideal educational and social experience. Boarders may join their families every Wednesday afternoon and weekends.

Several nursery schools operate in Mbabane. Private tutoring in art, crafts, and sports is also available. In addition to its regular Swazi-oriented programs in English and siSwati, Sebenta National Institute (adult education) has evening courses in siSwati for foreigners.

Recreation

Swaziland has many good sports facilities. Group sports, usually conducted by clubs, are typically British: soccer, rugby, cricket, and bowls. Many Swazis are avid soccer players and fans, and semi-professional games are played weekends in Mbabane, or in the Somhlolo National Stadium in Lobamba.

The country has several golf courses, including one at the Mbabane Club and the international-standard course at the Royal Swazi Hotel. Tennis is increasing in popularity. There are three municipal courts at Coronation Park in Mbabane, six courts at the Mbabane Club, and others at nearly every major center in the country. Horseback riding facilities are available at several hotels and nature reserves around the county as well as privately run stables. Stabling is available for privately owned horses. Most hotels have their own pools.

Swaziland's striking mountains and highveld attract outdoor enthusiasts. Camping, hiking, picnicking, and fishing are popular in the latter. Horses can be rented for outings. Several bushmen painting sites are within easy driving distance of Mbabane. The country now has five game parks: a small but growing one in the middleveld in the Malkerns valley (Mlilwane), and a larger, undeveloped protected area in the bushveld (Ehlane). The former has well-kept roads that bring the visitor within a few feet of a wide variety of game, many imported from other parts of Africa. These include antelope, rhino, zebra, giraffe, hippo, ostrich, and many birds. Elephants and rhinos are being reintroduced into Swaziland in the outlying reserves. The Swaziland Natural History and Mineral and Gem Societies often arrange lectures and tours to these areas.

Indigenous fish, including bream, yellowfish, silver barbel, mud fish, and eels, are found in most rivers. Black bass have been successfully introduced into a number of dams. Streams in the Usutu Forest are stocked with trout but fishing in these waters is by permit only. Permits are available from the Usutu Forest Fishing Club.

The Swaziland Automobile Club organizes many rallies during the year. The Swaziland Flying Club at Matsapha Airport has its own plane and gives flying lessons. An annual

raft race is held on the Usutu River near Big Bend.

Travel in neighboring South Africa is a favorite way of adding variety to Mbabane's small-town life. American tourist travel is not encouraged by Mozambique, which usually issues visas to Americans on official business only.

Those in search of "city lights" can choose between the South African cities of Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Durban, all of which offer cinema, theater, music, and good restaurants and nightclubs. However, many facilities are closed on Sundays. Durban, on the Indian Ocean, has the additional attraction of beaches and a seaport atmosphere.

Those looking for wider open spaces have a number of available routes. Two hours north of Swaziland is South Africa's Kruger National Park, containing much of the game still found in southern Africa, including lion and elephant. The northern Natal areas have other smaller game parks, and also the famous Drakensberg mountains with snow-covered peaks where one can go climbing, trout fishing, and camping. Blyde River canyon, about three hours north of Mbabane, has beautiful hiking and climbing areas.

Entertainment

Mbabane is a town of self-generated entertainment. It can be dull for a person not active in sports or in social and cultural life. Nightly movies are shown, including recent releases, at the Cinelux Theater in Mbabane, and older films are shown at a cinema in Manzini. "Classic" and art films are shown several times a week in the 230-seat theater of the Mbabane Theatre Club, which also stages frequent dramatic productions. They also have a dinner theater featuring short plays and amateur folk nights. Touring vocal and instrumental artists appear on an average of once a month, under the auspices of the Swaziland Music Society.

In addition to its nightclub entertainment, the Royal Swazi Sun

Hotel has roulette tables, poker and blackjack games, and slot machines. On payment of a small fee, nonresidents have access to these diversions and to the hotel's facilities for golf, tennis, bowls, swimming, and dancing, as well as to its spa compound. Several "local color" nightclubs are in Mbabane. Square dance evenings are organized in Mbabane, and Scottish dancing evenings are held in Manzini.

Occasional horse events and gymkhanas are held at local stables. The Swaziland Art Society sponsors two exhibitions each year featuring the work of artists residing in Swaziland. A commercial art gallery, Indinglizi, in Mbabane, has regular exhibitions. Swaziland is a photographer's delight with both natural scenery and colorful national dress. Film processing is available in Mbabane, but slides are sent to South Africa.

The Swazis have two traditional dance festivals each year, the *Umhlanga* or Reed Dance (women) in late August or early September, and the *Incwala* (men) in late December or early January. Both are open to the public. Permits are normally required for taking still photographs at close quarters, and the use of movie cameras is discouraged. Visitors may get permission to photograph these ceremonies from the Government Information Service at B.P. 338, Mbabane.

Although social entertaining in the Western sense is not a part of Swazi social life, occasional opportunities exist to visit Swazi homes, and Swazis usually accept dinner invitations. Small lunches, dinners, barbecues (called *braais*), and similar get-togethers are held often. Many Swazis go to their homesteads on weekends, so most entertaining is done during the week. Swazi people are very friendly and helpful to visitors.

OTHER CITY

The largest city in Swaziland is **MANZINI**, located in the central part of the country about 25 miles southeast of Mbabane, with a population of 73,000. Most Swazi towns originally grew around trading stores, and Manzini, the industrial and agricultural center of the country, is a prime example. The town has modern shops, a maize mill, light engineering works, small factories, a rice drying plant, and is the seat of the Swaziland Trade Fair Exhibition Center. Dairy and beef cattle are also raised, and Swaziland's main meat processing plant, creamery, cotton gin, and fruit canning factory are located in and around Manzini. Manzini was the capital of Swaziland before 1902. There are two hotels in Manzini. Their names and addresses are: The George, P.O. Box 51; and Highlands Inn, P.O. Box 12. Taxis are available for hire at the hotels. Cars may be rented at the Manzini airport, located five miles outside of town.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Swaziland is an independent kingdom in southeastern Africa. Its 6,704 square miles (less than the area of New Jersey) are all but surrounded by the Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal provinces of the Republic of South Africa. Its eastern border on Mozambique is about 40 miles from the Indian Ocean. The greatest distance from north to south is less than 120 miles, and from east to west is less than 90 miles.

Swaziland has four well-defined regions of roughly equal breadth, running from north to south: highveld, middleveld, lowveld (or bushveld), and the Lubombo Plateau. The mountainous highveld in the west (where Mbabane, the capital,

is located) rises over 6,000 feet, with an average altitude of 4,000 feet. The middleveld averages 2,000 feet, the lowveld 700 feet, and the Lubombo Plateau about 1,800 feet.

The highveld has a humid, near-temperate climate with 40 to 90 inches mean annual rainfall. Daytime weather is more variable in the highveld than in the other regions, with a foggy or overcast morning sometimes followed by a sunny afternoon, and vice versa. Temperatures for Mbabane, located in the highveld, range between a mean low of 51°F and a mean high of 72°F. Extremes of 17°F and 99°F have also been recorded.

The middleveld and Lubombo Plateau are subtropical and drier, with 30 to 45 inches mean annual rainfall. Temperatures for Manzini, the country's main industrial center and the city nearest the university campuses, range between a mean low of 57°F and a mean high of 78°F. Extremes of 32°F and 108°F also have been recorded.

The lowveld is warmer and less humid than the middleveld, with 20 to 35 inches mean annual rainfall, usually during heavy summer storms. Temperatures for Big Bend, center of the sugarcane industry in eastern Swaziland, range between a mean low of 58°F and a mean high of 84°F. Extremes of 26°F and 108°F have been recorded.

Population

Swaziland's resident population is estimated at 1.1 million. Thousands of Swazi nationals normally work outside the country, principally in the South African mines. Mbabane has a population of 67,000 (2002 estimate). Swaziland's other major city is Manzini, which has a population of 73,000. The annual growth rate is about 1.8 percent.

A small percentage of the Africans in southern Swaziland are Zulus; most of the rest are Swazis. The European community of about 30,000 consists of English-, Afrikaans-, and Portuguese-speaking

groups. Afrikaners are in both the northern and southern parts of the country, whereas the English and Portuguese are located largely in the north. Europeans engage mainly in agriculture, trading, construction, mining, and the professions.

Most Swazis are engaged in agriculture and are strongly bound to tradition. Society is patriarchal, with the usual family homestead including a man, his wives, his unmarried children, and his married sons and their families. If his mother is living, she has a great deal of influence in the homestead. The Swazi farmer lives in a "beehive" hut, wears beaded neck ornaments and a brightly colored wraparound cloth overlaid with an animal skin, and has a diet consisting mainly of maize, greens, and milk. Although Swazis love meat, those living in homesteads have meat only on special occasions or when they have visitors. Even though many homesteads have cattle, they prefer to slaughter them mainly for celebrations.

More than half of the Swazis belong to various Christian churches; most of the rest practice a traditional religion based on ancestor-worship. The official languages of Swaziland are English and siSwati.

History

One of Africa's last ruling dynasties, the Swazis trace their history back 400 years. In the 19th century, as one of the weaker Bantu tribes of southern Africa, the Swazis were driven back by the powerful Zulus to the rocky, mountainous region that became Swaziland.

Early Swazi rulers kept their land independent from the surging Zulus, Boers, and British with a combination of warfare and diplomacy, until the 1890s when the Boers took control. Following the British victory in the Boer War, Swaziland became a British High Commission Territory in 1903. It achieved independence on September 6, 1968, becoming the 28th inde-

pendent member of the British Commonwealth.

Government

As a British colony, the British High Commissioners who ruled Swaziland foresaw the tiny African nation as one day being incorporated into South Africa. Independence was not contemplated until the 1960s, and at that time, the British envisioned the government to be a constitutional monarchy with a democratic parliament. But Sobhuza II, whose reign during the British protectorate was as a limited constitutional monarch with a largely ceremonial role, believed that his rule, with the advice of a tribal council, was better for the Swazis than any form of Western democracy. He formed his own political party—*Imbokodvo* (Grinding Stone)—and in the first parliamentary election held in 1967, won all 24 seats in Parliament with 80 percent of the vote. Full independence was achieved for Swaziland, with Sobhuza II in control, on September 6, 1968.

The constitution in effect at the time of independence stated that legislative power was vested in a bicameral parliament, with a senate and a house of assembly. In April 1973, King Sobhuza repealed the constitution, suspended political activity, and took all executive, legislative, and judicial powers himself. Although there was no threat to Sobhuza's power, it appeared that he preferred to rule as Swazi King rather than as constitutional monarch, and to have governmental organization and procedures more compatible with Swazi tradition. In September 1973, the Royal Constitutional Commission was appointed to draw up a new constitution. In March 1977, the king abolished the parliamentary system and replaced it with traditional tribal communities—*tinkhundla*. The other traditional council—known as the Supreme Council of State until 1985 (*liqoqo*)—is composed of 16 members of Swazi royalty and other notables appointed by the king, who advise him on all matters regulated

by Swazi law and custom and connected with Swazi tradition and culture.

A new constitution was declared on October 13, 1978, and is based on traditional tribal communities. It called for a bicameral Parliament, or *Libandla*, made up of a House of Assembly with 50 deputies and a Senate with 20 senators. An 80-member electoral college, made up of two people elected from each *tinkhundla*, in turn elect 40 deputies and 10 senators. The king then chooses an additional 10 members for each house. The functions of the legislature were confined to debating government proposals and advising the king. Ultimately, the king must approve any parliamentary acts before they become law.

Sobhuza II was the world's longest reigning monarch when he died in 1982 at the age of 83. He was born the same year in which his father, King Ngwane V, died. Traditionally, the king's successor is not named until after his death so as to prevent the successor from posing a threat to his father. Sobhuza was chosen from among his father's many heirs by a tribal council headed by the queen mother, or favored wife, who is designated as a She-Elephant. Sobhuza's power was partly based on tradition and on his people's belief that he was the great rainmaker and the sole source of fertility in Swaziland. The role he played during the British protectorate, while viewed as merely ceremonial, was in fact very important because ritual plays a large role in the lives of the Swazis.

On August 21, 1982, the full powers of the head of state were transferred to the constitutional dual monarch—the Queen Mother, or She-Elephant (*Indlovukazi*). The Queen Mother, Dzeliwe, also took the title of Queen Regent. On August 9, 1983, Dzeliwe was replaced in a palace coup by Queen Ntombi, the mother of Sobhuza's successor, Prince Makhosetive. The new Queen Regent was advised by the Supreme Council of State (*liqoqo*) and was assisted by Prince

Sozisa Dlamini in administering state affairs until his suspension in September 1984. It was expected that Queen Ntombi would act as regent until her son reached age 21 and was crowned king. During that time, the young prince was to receive his formal education in England as well as learn his country's tribal customs and laws. However, due to the power struggle between members of Sobhuza's family that began with the dismissal of Queen Dzeliwe, the regency of Queen Ntombi was terminated three years early. Prince Makhosetive, Sobhuza's second youngest son, born April 19, 1968, was crowned King Mswati III on April 25, 1986. Swaziland is one of only three monarchies that rule on the African continent. The others are Morocco and Lesotho.

Swaziland has two court systems. Swazi National Courts, under the Ministry of Local Administration, administer Swazi law and custom and all rules made by the *Ngwenyama* or chiefs. The other system, under the Ministry of Justice, deals with matters in the modern sector. It comprises a number of magistrate courts throughout the country, plus a one-man high court (chief justice) and a multi-judge court of appeal, convened when necessary to review decisions of the high court.

Red Cross, Scouting, and 4-H (called 4-S in Swaziland) are active in varying degrees throughout the country.

Swaziland is a member of the United Nations, UNESCO, WHO, the Economic Commission for Africa, and several other world and African organizations. It maintains diplomatic relations with 40 countries, including Israel, Mozambique, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, all of whom have embassies in Mbabane. Swaziland also maintains diplomatic missions abroad in London; Washington, D.C.; Maputo, Mozambique; and Nairobi, Kenya.

Swaziland's flag consists of five horizontal bands: narrow blue (for peace), broad crimson (for past bat-

ties), and narrow blue, divided by gold stripes (for mineral resources). The large central emblem consists of an ox-hide shield and spears decorated with feathers.

Arts, Science, Education

Much of the Swazi artistic expression is reflected in traditional dances held several times a year nationally, and more frequently on a regional basis. Best known are the dances performed by special male troupes called *Sibaca* dancers; by puberty-age girls in the annual Reed Dance in reverence to the queen mother; and by men of the various age-group "regiments" in their year-end homage to the king on the occasion of the religious festival of Incwala. Choral singing is another form of artistic expression for the Swazis. Regional, national, and international competitions are held annually.

Swazi handicrafts are widely recognized as being among the most creative in Africa. In recent years, a lively export market has been established worldwide. The Mantenga Craft Center, located south of Mbabane near Swaziland's most famous waterfall—Mantenga Falls—has contributed to the success of the handicraft market in stimulating the natural weaving ability of local women trained at the center. Established in May 1976 as the country's original handicraft center, Mantenga Craft Center trains people in tapestry, rug-making, ceramics, screen-printing, and the making of silver jewelry. The center consists of a series of workshops converted from farmsheds situated in the cool shade of tall trees, and today employs 150 local craftspeople.

Pictorial tapestries, woven from handspun, hand-dyed wools, cotton, and mohair are among the most outstanding items produced at the center. Scenes depicted in the tapestries are based on the pastoral elements of daily traditional life. The workers at the center also produce intricate woven hair tapes-

tries. These are based on the traditional African culture that decreed a wide range of hairstyles. The tapestries are woven in merino wool, with long thick strands of cotton or linen representing the hair, which is tied, twisted, and knotted in various styles. Many of these tapestries have been displayed in Europe or are in private collections. Handwoven cottons produced on fast-shuttle looms are another specialty of the Mantenga Craft Center. Designs are taken from traditional and contemporary symbols of local life and are sewn into placemats, tablecloths, and bedspreads. Beautifully shaped pottery, with a distinctive earthy look, is yet another facet of the center's craftsmanship.

Primary education in Swaziland is voluntary beginning at age six and lasting for seven years. Secondary education is by choice; it begins at age 13 and is divided into two cycles of three and two years.

Swaziland is the site of two campuses of the University of Swaziland, both some 20 miles southeast of Mbabane. The Kwaluseni campus houses the faculties of humanities, economics and social studies, education, and science; the Luyengo campus houses the faculty of agriculture, which operates a farm and several research stations around the country. In addition to the University, several schools exist for technical training, adult literacy, management, and teacher training.

In 1995, 77 percent of the Swazis were considered literate. Almost all of them have at least attended primary school.

Commerce and Industry

Since independence in 1968, Swaziland has made steady progress in terms of economic growth and has significant promise for the future. Given its size and population, it is one of the wealthiest countries in Africa. Because of the pineapples and sugarcane grown here, it is often called the "African Hawaii."

Real growth averaged around 4.7 percent in the 1970s; from 1979 through 1982, it averaged about 1.7 percent; in 1984, it jumped to 11 percent. In 1990, real growth rate was estimated at five percent. This has been made possible by rapid expansion in the modern agricultural sector and through diversification of the economy as a whole. Swaziland's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was \$4.4 billion in 2000; per capita income was estimated to be about \$4,000, making it one of the highest in Africa. However, this figure does not accurately represent the average Swazi, who is still a subsistence farmer.

About 60 percent of the country's land area is held by the *Ngwenyama* in trust for the Swazi nation. The remaining land is owned primarily by Europeans and commercial companies, many of whom are not resident in Swaziland. The problem of land alienation, stemming from the granting of extensive concessions to Europeans in the last two decades of the 19th century, is still large. However, under a British grant-financed program, the Swazi nation is acquiring under-utilized freehold land on a "willing buyer, willing seller" basis. Almost 70 percent of the country is unimproved grazing area.

About 75 percent of the country's exports go to South Africa. Agriculture and forestry account for approximately one-quarter of the GNP and employ three-quarters of the work force. However, due to the fact that most land in the country is owned by foreigners, the agricultural sector is almost entirely in non-Swazi hands.

The country's three sugar mills, all of which are irrigated, are located in the lowveld. The sugar industry (headquartered in the southeastern town of Big Bend) produces the largest export and employs close to 20 percent of the work force. Soft drink concentrate and sugar are the main exports. Much of the sugar is exported to the European Union countries. Wood pulp is produced from pine and eucalyptus trees har-

vested from some of Africa's largest man-made forests.

Swaziland's manufacturing is considered large for a developing country. Manufacturing activities consist primarily of five export-oriented sectors: wood pulp production, drink processing, fruit canning, refrigerators, and sugar processing. Mining has been declining in Swaziland. The Ngwenya iron ore mine, which opened in 1964, ceased production in 1978. Exports stopped late in 1980 with the depletion of the reserves. The Havelock asbestos mine is one of the largest in the world and is 15 percent government owned. In the past Swazis have valued cattle for their own sake as a nonproductive status symbol. They are increasingly regarding them as a source of milk, meat, and profit. Slaughter stock, hides, and skins are becoming important exports.

Tourism is a very important component of Swaziland's economy. Visitors are attracted to the country's game reserves and beautiful mountain scenery. Of the total number of visitors, most were from South Africa. Most South Africans are lured by the Swaziland Casino, since gambling is prohibited in South Africa. Most tourist visits to Swaziland are short, usually weekend visits. Nearly 300,000 tourists visit Swaziland each year.

Most of Swaziland's imports are of South African origin. Principal imports are motor vehicles, machinery, transport equipment, petroleum products, foodstuffs, and chemicals.

Remittances by Swazi nationals working in South African mines accounts for a significant percent of national income. Receipts from the Southern African Customs Union provides between a quarter and a half of the government's revenue.

The government promotes foreign investment through the National Industrial Development Corporation of Swaziland (NIDCS).

The Swaziland Chamber of Commerce and Industry is located in Mbabane. The mailing address is P.O. Box 72, Mbabane. The address of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism is B.P. 451, Mbabane.

Transportation

Daily flights from Matsapha Airport, near Manzini, link Swaziland, with Johannesburg (for connections to main world routes). Twice weekly there are flights to Kenya, Lesotho, and Tanzania and there are five weekly flights to Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Flights leave for Maputo daily except Tuesday and for Durban four times a week. The Swaziland railway crosses from the Ngwenya iron ore mine, near Oshoek, to the Mozambique border, where it connects with the line to the port of Maputo. It does not, however, have passenger service.

A private car is essential for the enjoyment of any prolonged stay in Swaziland. Registration and licensing of motor vehicles is a simple procedure, which requires a road-worthiness certificate issued by the Public Works Department. The Mbabane and Manzini areas have taxis (few, expensive, and unreliable) and unscheduled buses. Scheduled buses link the main towns. Few Americans use public transportation

Traffic moves on the left. Good all-weather roads link the main centers, but most side roads are dusty and uneven during the dry season, and very slippery and dangerous during the rainy season. The maximum speed limit for all motorists is 50 miles per hour. Drivers must keep within the indicated limits; must be careful of pedestrians, particularly children; and must keep an eye open for stray cattle. It is not advisable to drive at a high speed on



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Street scene in Swaziland

gravel roads, especially in wet weather.

Heavy mists, which blankets Mbabane and other areas of the highveld several months each year, combined with poor car maintenance, intoxication, and general risk-taking behind the wheel makes driving hazardous. Indeed, Swaziland has one of the highest accident rates and accident fatality rates in the world. It is highly recommended to wear seat belts at all times, to have children in car seats or seat belts, and to drive defensively. The crime rate in Swaziland, particularly violent crime and theft, is increasing. Car alarms and immobilizers are recommended to combat the escalating rate of car theft in Swaziland.

The main national highway runs from Oshoek on the western border to Lomahasha on the eastern border. It is paved for the 65 miles

between Oshoek and Mpaka. The remaining 38 miles to Lomahasha are of fair-quality gravel. Thirty-one miles of paved road link the Usutu Forest settlement of Mhlambanyati with the main national highway.

Car dealerships in Mbabane include Audi, BMW, Mazda, Nissan, Opel, Toyota, and Volkswagen, Honda and Mercedes are available in Manzini.

Third-party insurance is covered by a levy included in the gasoline price. Comprehensive coverage is highly recommended because of the high rate of vehicle theft and accidents.

Communications

Telephones in Mbabane and Manzini operate on a dial system, and are connected to the rest of Swaziland and to international operators through the local exchange. Direct dialing is available for between many countries, including the U.S.,

and for calls from those cities to South African exchanges. International and local telegraph facilities are available. Fax machines are incorporated into most business and donor communities. International airmail takes about five days to two weeks between the U.S. and Swaziland.

The Swaziland Broadcasting Service (SBS) is on the air in both siSwati and English. FM is the popular mode, but there is one medium-wave station that also provides service. English service is on the air approximately eight hours per day (medium-wave only). Daily programs are listed in the local newspapers. South African broadcasts can be heard in most areas with normal aerials. Voice of America (VOA) medium-wave transmission can be picked up clearly in the evening, and other English-language short-wave transmissions, including the BBC, can be heard in Swaziland

with a high-quality FM and short-wave receiver.

Color TV is broadcast by the Swaziland Television Broadcasting Corporation for five-six hours each evening, with extended service on weekends. Transmission includes local news and delayed international news from London as well as programs purchased in the U.S. and Europe. With special antennas, you can receive broadcasts from South Africa, including daily South African and international news and sports programming. American expatriates are advised to bring a multi-system or PAL/I TV set and VCR with them, as local broadcasts and videotapes are PAL/I system. Several video rental outlets have opened around Swaziland, carrying a good, up-to-date selection. Most tapes are PAL/I VHS format.

There are two daily English-language newspapers in Swaziland that are published Monday through Friday with separate weekend/Saturday editions. They are the privately-owned *The Times of Swaziland* and the parastatal *The Swazi Observer*. The *Swazi News* is published weekly. South African newspapers arrive in Swaziland about six hours after publication in Johannesburg. Two magazines are published monthly in Swaziland. *Dzadze* family magazine covers various aspects of Swazi life, customs, and politics, *Swazi TV Times* is a TV guide, with local news and events. International editions of *Time* and *Newsweek* are sold at newsstands. The Swaziland News Agency in Mbabane carries some London papers, arriving five days after publication, and a limited variety of magazines and paperbacks. Books can be borrowed from the National Library in Manzini, 25 miles from Mbabane, and from the privately-operated lending library in downtown Mbabane.

Health

Adequate medical care is available in Swaziland for routine illnesses. Because there are no trauma or intensive care facilities in Swazi-

land, serious illnesses and accidents must be treated in South Africa. In such emergencies, helicopters airlift patients to Johannesburg or Pretoria to medical facilities and care that compare to those in the U.S. However, helicopter evacuations can only occur during daylight hours, in the absence of rain and fog. In addition to government hospitals and clinics throughout the territory, a few privately run clinics and hospitals operate, which Americans use more frequently. One of the latter, the Mbabane clinic, has 26 beds, major and minor operating rooms, and X-ray equipment. It also has a small medical laboratory, but complicated tests must be performed in South Africa. The Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital in Manzini, operated under Nazarene missionary auspices, has 25 beds for private patient care, X-ray equipment, a small laboratory, and U.S.-trained anesthetists. A limited intensive-care unit is being added. The Mbabane clinic and the Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital provide 24-hour medical care.

Swaziland lacks trained anesthetists and functioning EKG equipment. There are also no satisfactory delivery facilities. It is recommended that women plan to deliver in South Africa or elsewhere. There are physicians who provide prenatal care in Mbabane.

Most physicians are associated with the local government or missionary-run installations. About half of the physicians in the country were trained in Great Britain or South Africa. Mbabane and Manzini have adequately stocked pharmacies. Dental services are available from the clinic and from private expatriate dentists.

Public sanitation facilities (sewage, garbage disposal, etc.) run by the Mbabane and Manzini municipal governments are satisfactory. Water from the town supply is not considered safe for drinking. Milk from the local commercial dairies is pasteurized and is used by many American and other foreign families. Since dairy sanitary controls are not up to

U.S. standards, some families prefer to use powdered milk.

Tuberculosis, bilharzia, malaria, venereal diseases, and tick fever, are endemic to Swaziland. Malaria is not found in the highveld, but it is found year round in the middleveld and lowveld areas. Those living in or traveling to the lowveld should take malaria suppressants and see a physician at the onset of any fever. Similarly, travelers to Mozambique, Kruger Park, and Natal should take malaria suppressants; in all cases, these should be effective against chloroquine-resistant malaria. Bilharzia is still prevalent in all streams, ponds, and lakes below 4,000 feet, and can be contracted simply by coming into contact with the water. Swimming, wading, or washing in natural bodies of water should be avoided here. Snakes, including poisonous species, are common in Swaziland, especially in the bushveld.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is an increasing problem in southern Africa as it is worldwide. Local blood supplies are not safe, although they are screened. The American community contributes to a "walking blood donor" program administered by the Embassy nurse. Advice on AIDS prevention is available from the health staff at the American Embassy and HIV testing is available locally.

Roaming dogs are sometimes rabid, even in Mbabane, and persons (especially children) who may be frequently in contact with them should receive injections against rabies.

Clothing and Services

Mbabane's climate is moderate throughout the year. However, the temperature can vary noticeably between morning and evening in both summer and winter. For this reason, the layered look is practical because various articles of clothing, including a sweater, can be added or

removed. Several hot weeks in summer require light dresses or suits. Woolens and sweaters are sometimes needed for the rainy, misty weather common to Mbabane summers and are essential in winter. Therefore, a full range of clothing, including rainwear, is needed.

The only clothing taboo in Swaziland pertains to women wearing slacks and pantsuits. Mini-skirts, see-through blouses, and short tennis skirts are not appreciated in town. Women wear short dresses or skirts to work and in the evening.

Because of Swaziland's outdoor orientation, visitors will find a good pair of walking shoes useful. Adults should bring a supply of dress and regular shoes with them. It is impossible to find shoes in narrow widths such as AA. Children's shoes are available locally. Sandal-toe or support hose are not obtainable in Swaziland or South Africa.

A basic but limited selection of clothing is available in Mbabane at prices generally higher than in the U.S. Adults should bring most of their clothes with them.

The range of foodstuffs in Mbabane compares with that available in a small- to medium-size American town, but with occasional shortages. Several grocery stores, produce markets, bakeries, and butcher shops, as well as a delicatessen, are available. Items not available include chocolate chips, solid vegetable shortening, good vanilla extract, and other baking essentials. Some ingredients for Mexican, Italian, and other ethnic dishes are hard to find. However, many can be obtained on shopping trips to South Africa where those items are usually quite expensive. A full range of liquor is available in the local stores. Swaziland also has a brewery. Wine from South Africa is both inexpensive and quite good.

Most personal and household needs can be supplied in Mbabane; they are usually imported from South Africa and are expensive. Not all

American brand name products are obtainable.

Clothing repair and dry cleaning facilities are available in Mbabane, but at a standard lower than in the U.S. Dressmakers and tailors are available. The quality is variable. Beauty salons and barbershops are available.

Some garages in town do adequate work on European and South African cars, but are rarely able to deal adequately with American makes. American-made cars should be taken to Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, or Ermelo (90 miles from Mbabane) for major repairs. Body work is available at a reasonable price.

Domestic Help

Most houses in Mbabane have servants quarters and many families hire domestic and garden workers. Domestic workers usually live in, sometimes with their children. Workers are usually provided a "13th-month" payment, a food allowance, overtime pay for baby-sitting and dinner parties, and many employers take responsibility for their worker's health care. An employment act lists minimum wages and other regulations concerning worker employment.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Jan.1 | New Year's Day |
| Mar. | |
| (2nd Mon) | Commonwealth Day* |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| Apr. 25 | National Flag Day |
| May/June. | Ascension Day* |
| July 22 | King Sobhuza II's Birthday |
| Aug/Sept. | Reed Dance Day* |
| Sept. 6 | Independence Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas |
| Dec. 26 | Boxing Day |
| | *variable |

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Swaziland is linked with international routes by regular air service to and from Matsapa Airport, which is about five miles from Manzini.

To enter the country, an American citizen needs only a valid passport unless he is entering from an endemic yellow fever area, in which case yellow fever immunization papers are required. Inoculations for infectious hepatitis A (gamma globulin), hepatitis B, yellow fever, tetanus, and typhoid are recommended before arrival.

Visitors or temporary residents must register with police within 48 hours of arrival.

An import permit for pets is required by the Swaziland Government and must be presented upon the pet's arrival. If the animal will transit South Africa, a South African transit permit for the animal is also required. Both permits can be mailed to the traveler if at least eight weeks notice is given. It is advisable to have several copies of all papers dealing with pets. The Swaziland Animal Welfare Society operates kennel facilities in Mbabane. They also have pets for adoption. A private veterinarian practices in Mbabane and several veterinarians are on contract with the Swazi Government.

Big game hunting is prohibited in Swaziland. Permits for hunting small game and birds are issued by the Ministry of Agriculture. Diplomatic personnel are discouraged from bringing firearms into Swaziland. Non-diplomatic personnel desiring to import firearms into Swaziland must obtain a permit in advance from the Firearms Licensing Board, P.O. Box 49, Mbabane or apply to the Royal Swazi Police.

Anglicans (Episcopalians), Baha'is, Baptists, Catholics, Christian Scientists, and Methodists hold Sunday services in English in Mbabane.

There is a nondenominational Protestant Sunday school. The Nazarenes are very active throughout the country and have services in most towns. There is no synagogue, but the Israeli Embassy usually holds services on the important holidays. An Islamic Information Service organization and a Christian Women's Club are located in Mbabane. Several Bible study groups and prayer cells meet regularly.

The time in Swaziland is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus two hours.

Swaziland introduced its own currency (singular, *lilangeni*; plural, *emalangeni*) in 1974, although the South African rand is still freely

accepted by local vendors on a par basis.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

The U.S. Embassy is located in Mbabane in the Central Bank Building, Warner Street, P.O. Box 199; telephone (268) 404-6441/5; FAX (268) 404-5959.

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

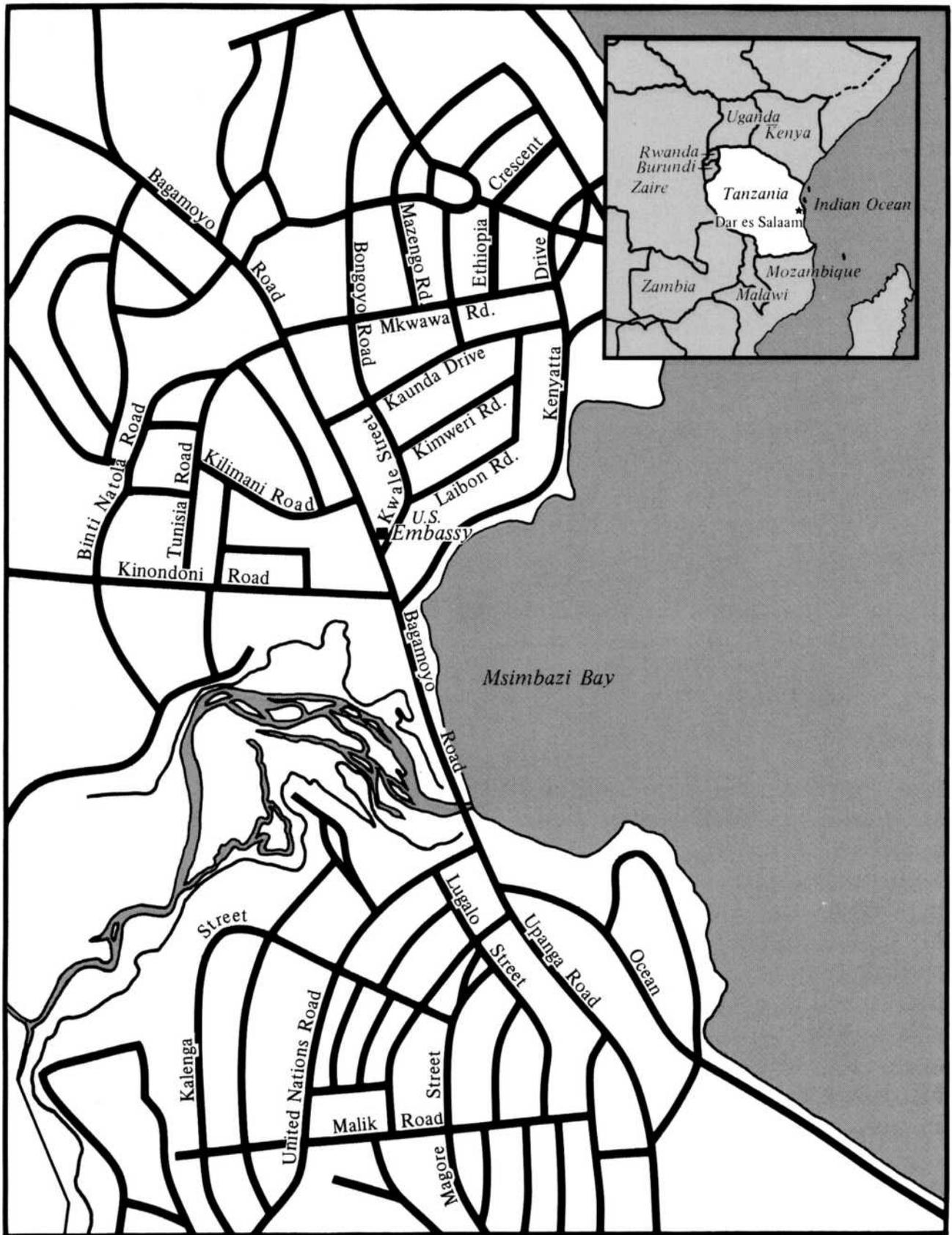
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Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

TANZANIA

United Republic of Tanzania

Major Cities:

Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar

Other Cities:

Arusha, Bagamoyo, Bukoba, Dodoma, Iringa, Lindi, Mbeya, Morogoro, Moshi, Mwanza, Tabora

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated July 1993. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

Tanzania's history is varied—including Portuguese exploration, Arab domination, German colonization, British administration under a League of Nations mandate, and UN Trusteeship. Tanganyika gained independence in 1961, and in 1964, Zanzibar, also independent, united with the mainland to become the United Republic of Tanzania.

For over 20 years following the 1967 Arusha Declaration, Tanzania followed a policy of socialism and self-reliance. Although this is still the official policy guiding government programs, the past few years have seen significant changes. The United Republic has played an active role in efforts to bring inde-

pendence and majority rule in southern Africa. Mainly because of its past prominence in regional and international affairs, Dar es Salaam is an active diplomatic post.

A hot climate, changing economic conditions, and health risks offer challenges for those staying in Dar es Salaam, but a visit here can be stimulating and enjoyable. Tanzania offers warm and friendly people, magnificent mountain scenery, the seashore, the finest wild game preserves on earth, excellent game fishing, scuba diving, and other water sports.

MAJOR CITIES

Dar es Salaam

Under German rule, Dar es Salaam became the capital of Tanganyika in 1894. The Germans designed a spacious city plan, began to develop the natural harbor as a port, and constructed many public buildings that are still in use. On the north side of the harbor are tree-lined streets, a botanical garden, and a museum. The President's office and most government buildings are in this area.

At the end of World War I, Tanganyika became a mandated territory of

the League of Nations under British rule. Between wars, the town developed slowly. But after World War II, the city developed rapidly and great population growth brought wealth to the capital.

Since the 1979 war with Uganda, and as foreign exchange problems have become acute, the city has deteriorated sharply. Streets are poorly maintained. The prices of luxury items and basic commodities have risen astronomically. Crime has increased with the shortage of commodities. The city is home to 2.4 million in habitants.

Food

On the local market shortages of basic items such as flour, sugar, bread, rice, and cooking oil sometimes occur. Fresh fruits and vegetables are available seasonally. Green beans, cauliflower, carrots, eggplant, onions, potatoes, and salad vegetables are of fair-to-good quality and available most of the year. Tropical fruits such as coconuts, pineapples, papayas, bananas, oranges, limes, avocados, and mangoes are plentiful.

The quality of local fresh meat is below U.S. standard cuts, but is, nonetheless, quite adequate. Beef, pork, lamb, chicken, and eggs are available. Shrimp, lobster, and

other fish are excellent, plentiful, and not overly expensive.

Clothing

Tanzanian custom combined with the climate make Dar es Salaam very informal. Tropical clothing is worn year round. Local shoes are of poor quality, and sizes and widths differ from the U.S.

Dry-cleaning facilities are limited and of poor quality, so bring washable fabrics.

Men: Men wear short-sleeved shirts and trousers or short-sleeved safari suits to the office and to most evening gatherings. Sports clothes are similar to those worn in the warmer regions of the U.S.

Women: Women need several washable skirts, tops, and dresses for daytime wear both in and out of the office. Informal long or short dresses or skirts are common for most evening occasions; caftans or evening dresses are worn to receptions and more formal dinners. A lightweight sweater or shawl is useful for evenings in the cooler season. Panty hose or stockings are seldom worn. Miniskirts and low-cut blouses or dresses should not be worn. Sundresses, jeans, modest shorts, and T-shirts are acceptable for nonbusiness occasions.

Children: Bring comfortable summer-weight clothes and sneakers or sandals. Sunhats are useful for trips to the beach.

Supplies and Services

Basic Services: Tailoring services are available, but workmanship is only fair.

Religious Activities

Christian denominations in Dar es Salaam include Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist, and Mennonite. Many, including the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Lutheran have Sunday morning services in English. Dar es Salaam

has several mosques and Hindu temples, but no synagogues.

Education

Most children attend the International School of Tanganyika in Dar es Salaam. Three units—located on separate campuses—comprise the school: Kindergarten, Lower School (grades 1-6), and Upper School (grades 7-12).

In the past kindergarten to grade 6 levels have suffered from erratic leadership and organization. A new curriculum is being instituted, a new management team is in place, and teacher performance is being more closely monitored, however. Most parents consider the elementary school to be of adequate standard. Educational materials for classroom use are adequate.

Grade 7-8 fall well below overall U.S. standards. The school board is making a concerted effort to correct deficiencies, however, and improve overall academic standards. The curriculum for grades 9 and 10 is based on the English system known as IGSCSE.

Grades 11-12, which make up the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, are considered sound academically. The school has now brought its program into conformity with international standards and the educational program is a standard 12-year program.

Children must have reached the age of 5 by September 1 to enter kindergarten 2, and age 6 by September 1 to enter 1st grade. The school is very rigid in this regard; no exceptions are made.

Classes are taught in English, but many students are learning English as a second language. The curriculum is a mixture of British and American curriculums with the British influence stronger at the upper level. Some curricular modifications are made to accommodate the needs of an international student body such as the English-as-a-second-language program. The

Upper School offers French language classes.

The school does not have programs for handicapped children, but does have a program for children with mild learning disabilities in the Lower and Middle schools.

The school year, approximately September 1 through the end of June, is divided into three terms with a 3-week vacation at Christmas and a 1-week break in October and at Easter. The Lower and Middle School begins at 7:10 am and ends at 12:30 pm, Monday-Friday. The Upper School begins at 7:10 am and ends at 1 pm, Monday-Friday. Upper-level students in the Upper School also attend afternoon classes twice a week.

Students must wear uniforms to school. Girls wear a simple-styled dress made from blue/white vertically striped material. This may be of any material, so long as it is blue and white striped. There is no standard for shade of blue. Girls can wear a blue-and-white-striped skirt and a white blouse—the blouse must have a collar and at least short sleeves. Sleeveless dresses or blouses are not acceptable. Boys wear plain white cotton shirts with collar and short-sleeves and gray shorts. There is no standard for shade of gray. Uniforms are worn 2 days per week. Both boys and girls wear navy blue shorts and plain white T-shirts for physical education classes twice a week. Some ready-made uniforms are available, but they are expensive and children may be reluctant to wear them once they see the range of clothing worn to school. Bathing suits are required for swimming lessons. One day per week is designated as a free-dress day when students may wear clothes of their choosing.

The school has its own large playing fields and swimming pool with instruction once a week. Afternoon programs for the children include instruction in art, drama, music, and sports but enrollment is limited.

Dar es Salaam also has a French school with supervised correspondence instruction in French, and a Swedish elementary school with instruction in Swedish.

Special Educational Opportunities

The Alliance Francaise gives French lessons. The Goethe Institute offers instruction in German.

A number of departments at the University of Dar es Salaam conduct seminars in English that are open to the public. Under exceptional circumstances, foreigners can enroll in certain subjects at the University.

Sports

Tanzania is one of the world's principal "big game" countries. The Tanzanian Wildlife Corporation enforces strict control of hunting. Hunting licenses for select game such as impala, warthog, and buffalo are granted to residents from July 1 to December 30.

Several beaches offer year-round swimming, scuba diving, and snorkeling. Sailing, fishing, and shelling are also favorite pastimes. You can keep both sail and power boats at the Yacht Club. The Yacht Club offers scuba diving lessons.

The Gymkhana Sports Club has tennis courts and an 18-hole golf course of fair quality with sand greens. Lessons in tennis and golf are offered. Squash courts are maintained. The club sponsors cricket, soccer, hockey, and rugby teams.

Membership in the Yacht Club and Gymkhana Club take some time to acquire. Both are based on a British membership system that requires that prospective members be sponsored and seconded by current members. Americans frequently find this tedious, but it can be an entertaining experience if approached in the right spirit. Both of these clubs have members from a variety of cultures, races, and ethnic groups, and each provides multiple opportunities for socializing outside the official American community.

The International School pool is open to school families on a membership basis.

The amateur mountain climber can try to climb Mount Kilimanjaro (19,340 feet). It is an extremely long, but technically not exacting, hike. Tanzanian law requires that experienced guides take climbing parties up the mountain. Children under age 12 are not allowed to climb. You do not need special equipment, but warm clothing and comfortable climbing shoes are necessary. Almost everything that is needed can be rented from nearby hotels.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Tanzania's many game parks offer opportunities for vacations away from the city. You can visit several of these parks by car, but road conditions make a four-wheel drive vehicle preferable and, in many cases, necessary. Rental vehicles are sometimes available from the AERA and occasionally charter aircraft are available locally, but they are expensive.

You can drive from Dar es Salaam to Mikumi National Park in 3-4 hours. Arusha, near the northern game parks, is an 8-10 hour drive. Accommodations are adequate, but not luxurious. If you plan to go on safaris, tent camping offers a unique dimension to the experience as well as greater economy. All major wildlife parks have camping facilities.

Air service operates between Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. Zanzibar is 30 minutes by plane, and about 90 minutes by hydrofoil.

Entertainment

Dar es Salaam has several movie theaters, including a drive-in theater that usually shows Asian films. Few American travelers attend films at any of the cinema houses.

The Dar es Salaam Musical Society is open to anyone who plays an instrument or sings. The Dar es Salaam Players, an amateur group, is open to prospective thespians.

They stage five or six plays a year. Sometimes foreign governments sponsor concerts by artisans from their countries.

A number of restaurants offer European, Chinese, Indian, and Ethiopian food, but the food can be unsafe. Dining out can be pleasant, however, so long as one chooses foods that are not subject to quick spoilage (generally, avoid shellfish in restaurants). The service at Tanzanian restaurants is a source of entertainment all its own.

Social Activities

Among Americans: Social contact among Americans is mostly at informal cocktail parties, dinners, and buffet suppers at home. Daytime coffees, teas, and bridge parties are held occasionally. The American Community in Tanzania (ACT) is an active organization open to both women and men. Its purpose is to have enjoyable gatherings and learn more about the host country through tours, lectures, and films.

International Contacts: The most popular form of entertainment is the cocktail party, held in the home between 7 and 9 pm. Small dinners and buffets are also held at home. At functions you will have an opportunity to meet Tanzanians and citizens of other countries represented in Tanzania. The International Women's Group hold monthly meetings. A number of charitable and social organizations such as Rotary, Lions, the Corona Society, and the Caledonian, St. Patrick, and St. George Societies welcome members.

American travelers in Tanzania find limited opportunities for community activities with the International School, churches, hospitals, and orphanages.

Zanzibar

The city of Zanzibar on Zanzibar Island, 45 miles to the north off the coast from Dar es Salaam, has a fascinating history as a slave trading center. The Afro-Arabian architecture of the old town has been pre-



Sailors at work in Dhow Harbor, Zanzibar, Tanzania

Susan Rock. Reproduced by permission.

served, and its unique setting in luxuriant tropical scenery makes it one of Africa's most beautiful spots. Among its historic buildings are David Livingstone's house near the harbor, and the former sultan's magnificent palace facing the sea. The island itself is called the Isle of Cloves in recognition of its principal export.

Bougainvillea, exotic flame trees, and the bright blue blossoms of the jacaranda line the streets, providing a colorful backdrop for the market and residential areas. Westerners who visit Zanzibar find that life here is quite different; there is opportunity for swimming, fishing, or sailing, but there is no golf, limited access to tennis, and no hunting. The beaches provide excellent bathing at high tide. Little danger exists from sharks, but care must be taken in some coral and rocky areas to avoid cuts and abrasions.

It is possible to take interesting drives to visit beaches and palace ruins, but the island is small and the length of drives is, accordingly, limited.

Zanzibar has no live Western entertainment. African music, local or from the mainland, is presented

periodically, usually in connection with public functions at one of the clubs. Cinemas show Indian and European and, occasionally, American, German, Russian, or Chinese films. Color television, the first in Africa, is broadcast for about two-and-a-half hours each evening, but programming is almost entirely in Swahili, and is strongly local in orientation. The current population is approximately 249,000.

OTHER CITIES

ARUSHA, 50 miles from the Kenyan border, is the starting point for safaris into the famous Serengeti National Park. The city, which has several shops and services that cater to both photographic and hunting safaris, is noted for its lavish flower displays. Manufactured products include the renowned meerscham and briar pipes. Arusha's population is about 166,000.

BAGAMOYO is a seaport town 50 miles north of Dar es Salaam. The last mainland stop for slaves before shipment to the Zanzibar slave markets, the settlement was once Tanganyika's capital. The Old Customs

House, ruins where the slaves were kept, and a small German fort are among historic sites. The population is about 66,000.

BUKOBA, on the western shore of Lake Victoria, lies in an area of rolling grassland and heavy rainfall. The presence here of the tsetse fly has prevented livestock raising. Coffee, tea, and bananas number among the principal cash crops of the region. Fishing is also important. Bukoba has a population of approximately 42,000.

DODOMA, in the northeast-central zone, will be the nation's capital in a few years. All government ministries have moved to the city from Dar es Salaam. A wine industry and 84,000-acre ranch are in the vicinity. On the Arusha road, about 100 miles north of Dodoma, the Stone Age Kondoia Iranqi rock paintings can be viewed. The city is a market center for peanuts, sunflower seeds, maize, rice, wheat, coffee, tea, tobacco, and sorghum. Several industries are located in Dodoma. These industries manufacture furniture, beverages, processed food, milled rice, flour, and soap. The population of Dodoma is about 157,000.

IRINGA, 100 miles due south of Dodoma on the main Tanzania-Zambia road, is a farming center. Tobacco is the major crop. Ruaha National Park can be easily reached from Iringa, whose population is 138,000.

LINDI, a regional capital and seaport, lies in southwestern Tanzania at the mouth of the Lukeledi River. Roads link the city to Dar es Salaam and Nachingwea. Lindi, with a population of about 67,000, is the site of a regional airport.

Situated near the Southern Highlands in the southwest, **MBEYA** is the final stop on the Tanzam railroad before Zambia. The city is the capital of Mbeya region, and has a population of about 199,000.

MOROGORO, one of the most industrialized cities in Tanzania, lies 105 miles west of Dar es

Salaam. An industrial hub, it ships sisal (a durable fiber used to make twine), tobacco, kapok (a silky fiber mass utilized as filling for mattresses), and sugar. The area is the site of a large military base. A tarmac road, rail access, and an airport provide good transportation. Morogoro's current population is about 235,000.

Mount Kilimanjaro towers over **MOSHI** in the far northeast. The city is in the middle of a fertile area which grows nearly half of Tanzania's wheat. It is also the heart of the coffee-growing zone. Kilimanjaro International Airport, located between Moshi and Arusha, spurs development for the expanding game-park tourism industry. Moshi's population is approximately 183,000.

MWANZA is a city of nearly 291,000 residents in the northern region of Tanzania. It lies on the southern shore of magnificent Lake Victoria, and serves the surrounding area as a major port and rail terminus.

TABORA (formerly called Kazeh) is a commercial and agricultural trade center in the west-central area. Its location at the junction of east-west and north-south railways makes the city a major trade link. The modern town was founded by Arabs in 1820; during World War I, it was taken by Belgian forces on September 19, 1916. Tobacco, vegetables, and cassava are principal cash crops. The current population in 2002 was estimated at 139,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Tanzania, the second largest country in East Africa, is just south of the Equator. The mainland stretches from north to south for 740 miles and from east to west for 760 miles with a 500-mile coastline

on the Indian Ocean. It shares borders with Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Zaire, Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique. Including the islands of Unguja and Pemba that make up Zanzibar, Tanzania's total area is 362,820 square miles (with 20,600 square miles of lakes), equal to the area of Texas and New Mexico. The coastal strip is tropical with high humidity; temperatures range from 80°F to 95°F. The country's annual rainfall averages 65 inches. The central plateau (altitude 3,000-4,000 feet; rainfall 2-30 inches), which covers much of the country, is hot and dry. The semi-temperate highlands (up to 6,000 feet; rainfall 40-100 inches) are fertile and cool. The islands of Zanzibar (rainfall 60-75 inches), 25 miles off the coast, are tropical and humid.

Tanzania has two rainy and two dry seasons. During the long rains, from March through May, heavy downpours occur daily (though it is not unusual to have as many as 2-3 days of sunny, pleasant weather between showers). The short rains come in November and December. Temperatures and humidity are high from November to April, and surface winds are moderate. June through September is pleasant and generally mild. Mildew and rust are constant problems.

Population

Tanzania's population is about 36.2 million; 99 percent are of African origin. Tanzania has more than 130 tribes; principal tribes are the Nyamwezi, Ha, Makonde, Gogo, Haya, Chagga, and Hehe. These agricultural peoples migrated to Tanzania in the last 2,000 years. A small part of the population is made up of peoples of Nilotic origin. The Masai, the best-known group, are nomadic livestock keepers.

The national language is Kiswahili; however, each tribe has its own language, often related to other Bantu languages. Kiswahili is a Bantu language with strong Arabic and some English influences. English is widely used in government, commerce, and for all education above

the primary level, although the level of English has fallen sharply in recent years.

About 50,000 Tanzanians trace their ancestry to the Indian subcontinent and southwest Asia. Its traders came to East Africa during the last 3 centuries, but mostly since 1900. About half the original number of Asians have left Tanzania since independence. Arab immigrants and people claiming Persian origin have migrated to East Africa for 1,000 years; this group has almost been assimilated into the African population. Several thousand Western expatriates live in Tanzania as missionaries, technical experts, business people, or farmers.

Tanzania's first residents were animists. Their practices and rituals included ancestor worship and belief in the unity of the dead and living. The first Arab traders were Islamic, and Islam is now the religion of over one-third of the population. Christian missionaries first arrived in the mid-19th century. Today about one-third of the population is Christian. The remainder practice traditional religions, and members of all faiths continue to share many traditional beliefs, such as ancestor worship. A sizable percentage of the Asian minority are Hindus.

Public Institutions

In 1992, Tanzania became a multiparty democracy. This amendment was made to allow for political opposition to the Revolutionary Party (Chama Cha Mapinduzi in Swahili, or CCM), which was formed in February 1977 with the merger of the mainland's Tanganyika African National Union and the Afro-Shirazi Party of Zanzibar. Currently, thirteen different political parties are officially recognized by the government, although the CCM still holds a significant majority in the National Assembly. The country's first multiparty elections were held in 1995. Elections were held again in 2000, at that time Benjamin William Mkapa was elected

for a second term as president. Frederick Sumaye was appointed as prime minister in 1995.

All major posts in government and civil service are held by Tanzanian citizens. Foreign expatriate employees serve as advisers or technicians in fields for which Tanzanians are not yet trained. The government's policy is to gradually replace these expatriates with Tanzanian citizens.

The National Assembly has 275 members, 232 of whom are popularly elected from the mainland and Zanzibar. The remaining composition of the assembly includes 37 seats appointed for women and 5 members elected by the Zanzibar House of Representatives.

National Assembly actions are valid for Zanzibar only in specifically designated Union matters. Zanzibar's own 75-member House of Representatives has jurisdiction over all non-Union matters.

The judiciary includes primary courts, district courts, resident magistrate courts (regional), the High Court of Tanzania, and the Court of Appeals. Tanzania bases its legal system on Anglo-Saxon principles of jurisprudence, with modifications to accommodate the country's authoritarian political system, and customary and Islamic law in civil cases. The Constitution provides for a nominally independent judiciary, due process, and equality before the law and, for the first time, the 1984 Constitution contains a Bill of Rights.

The Chief Justices appoint judges, except those for the Court of Appeals and High Court, who are appointed by the President. Military courts do not try civilians, and no security courts exist. The government offers legal counsel to defendants charged with treason or murder; in Dar es Salaam, free legal counsel is provided to some indigent defendants by the Tanzanian Bar Association and Legal Aid Society.

Zanzibar, comprising the islands of Unguja and Pemba, united with mainland Tanganyika in 1964 to form the United Republic of Tanzania. Despite the Union, Zanzibar retains considerable self-government. Foreign affairs and defense are considered Union matters. Following the 1964 revolution, Zanzibar experienced bloody purges and expulsions and a severely repressive, arbitrary regime. The first popular election did not take place until 1981. The adoption of a 1984 Isles Constitution, however, brought with it a number of reforms. The new constitution includes a Bill of Rights, provides for the popular election of the President run by the sole political party, and, for the first time, mandates that a two-thirds majority of the Zanzibar House of Representatives must be directly elected by the people. The new constitution also brought Zanzibar's judiciary into conformity with that of the mainland and did away with the former system of people's courts in which legal representation was denied and judges had no legal training.

Among the nongovernmental organizations active in Tanzania are the Red Cross, YMCA and YWCA, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Confederation of Tanzanian Industries, Rotary Club, Lions Club, Round Table, Christian Council, Caritas, Salvation Army, Catholic Relief Services, Plan International, Africa Wildlife Fund, and World Wildlife Fund.

Arts, Science, and Education

Tanzania has made a major effort to improve its educational system. It has a literacy rates estimated at approximately 69 percent of the population (1995). The University of Dar es Salaam is located on the city's western edge. Sokoine University, a smaller agricultural and technical college, is located in Morogoro about 100 miles west of Dar es Salaam.

Educational, scientific, and artistic activities accessible to foreigners are limited. Tanzania is one of the world's best known areas for field work in paleontology and zoology. The traveler can visit the site of the famous Leakey discoveries at Olduvai and browse through the tiny museum. Jane Goodall's work with chimpanzees at Gombe Stream is well known. A number of Americans come to Tanzania every year to do other extensive field work in wildlife studies. Many researchers are affiliated with the Serengeti Research Institute.

Commerce and Industry

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita GDP of \$710. Numerous external factors have contributed to the problem—oil price increases, poor rainfall, and the war with Uganda—but most of the blame falls on the government's socialist economic policies. These policies were viewed by sympathetic nations in the 1970s as an alternative model for African development. The policies, however, were not successful. Recently, in partnership with multilateral and bilateral donors, Tanzania has undertaken an economic reform program that has begun to reverse previous negative economic trends. Strict fiscal policies have helped the country achieve significant economic growth in recent years, averaging 5 percent each year.

The Tanzanian economy is heavily dependent on agriculture. This sector accounts for about 49 percent of the total gross domestic product (GDP), about 88 percent of total employment for the country's 36.2 million people, and 85 percent of Tanzania's export earnings. Tanzania grows crops for food and export. The most important food crops are maize (corn), rice, cassava, wheat, bananas, and beans. Export crops include coffee, cotton, tea, sisal, cashews, pyrethrum, and cloves. From 1973 to 1985, when the agricultural policies of the ruling party were implemented, production

steadily declined, particularly that of export crops. Poor government policies included artificially low producer prices, over-centralized marketing systems, poor input delivery programs, and over concentration on an inefficient, state-owned industrial sector.

Minerals are exploited only on the mainland. Diamond production from mines near Shinyanga has declined considerably since the 1967 peak of 998,000 carats, but is still an important foreign-exchange earner. The deposits are owned by the government and private business. Other important mineral products are gold; Tanzanite, a gemstone unique to Tanzania; other gemstones; coal; and salt.

Despite the government's strong emphasis on the industrial sector, it is one of the smallest in Africa, contributing about 17 percent of GDP. The severe economic crisis the country has been facing, which worsened seriously starting in 1981, has forced many plants to close. Virtually all run far below capacity due to water and energy shortages, as well as the inability to obtain the foreign exchange needed to purchase new materials and spare parts.

The oldest and largest manufacturing enterprises are in the agricultural processing sector; cigarettes, meat canning, brewing, pyrethrum processing, and cashew nut shelling. Textiles, sugar refining, and cement capacities have expanded rapidly but operate substantially below capacity.

Tanzania has great potential to attract tourists, but remains substantially undeveloped. The beautiful Indian Ocean beaches, magnificent game parks, and reserves of the north and south are tremendous resources that are hardly used. The tourist infrastructure is gradually improving, but the industry's services are erratic in quality and significantly overpriced.

The country has been experiencing severe balance-of-payment problems. Exports have been declining



Transporting bananas in Tanzania

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

in dollars and volume. Despite stiff economic reforms, imports continue to grow faster than exports, increasing the hard currency deficit and the government's dependence on foreign donors.

The World Bank, Sweden, Netherlands, EEC, West Germany, and Denmark provide much of Tanzania's donor assistance. The USAID assistance to Tanzania is active in the transport (rural roads and the Tazara Railroad), private enterprise development, and health (family planning and AIDS control) sectors.

Peace Corps volunteers are working in Tanzania. Their projects cover a wide range of activities including wildlife management, teaching, forestry, and agricultural mechanics.

Transportation

Local

Bus service is available in and around Dar es Salaam and up-country, but schedules and routes are inadequate. Buses are always crowded, undependable, and unsafe.

Taxis are available 24 hours daily at certain locations, including the airport, railway station, Kilimanjaro Hotel, and the Palm Beach Hotel at

Selander Bridge. Drivers seldom use meters, but charge flat rates per trip. Agree on the rate in advance, as taxi drivers will try to gouge the passenger.

Regional

From Dar es Salaam International Airport, flights are available to several points in Europe and East Africa. At least one European airline is scheduled almost every day between Dar es Salaam and various European cities. Flights and connections to African locations are fewer and less convenient; most are via Nairobi or Addis Ababa. Air Tanzania provides domestic and some regional service, but due to overbookings and maintenance problems, delays and cancellation of flights are common.

Dar es Salaam is the ocean terminus of the railway that runs 900 miles to Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika and to Mwanza on Lake Victoria by way of a branch line beginning at Tabora. Full train service with sleeping and dining cars runs daily but experience lengthy delays and occasional derailments. The Chinese-built Uhuru Railway, or TAZARA as it is more commonly known, running 1,000 miles from Dar es Salaam to New Kapiri-Mposhi, Zambia, began passenger service in



View of Zanzibar, Tanzania

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October 1975 and now operates four round trips weekly. Facilities on passenger trains are far below American standards, but for the adventurous a trip can be a unique experience.

Many of Tanzania's roads are badly deteriorated, but an extensive World Bank integrated roads program is attempting to reverse that trend. One main paved 123-mile road to Morogoro leads out of Dar es Salaam. This road connects with the main road system in Tanzania and East Africa and provides connections to Tanga, Arusha, Nairobi, and Mbeya, among other locations. Do not drive at night outside Dar es Salaam, even on good roads.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Tanzania has local and long-distance telephone service. International connections are available to the U.K., U.S., and other parts of the world. Direct dialing of international calls is now available.

The telephone system is in very poor condition; as not all residences have telephones.

Radio and TV

Radio Tanzania, a government-owned company, broadcasts locally in Swahili and English on medium, shortwave, and FM (monophonic).

Programs consist of music, news, and special features. A good short-wave receiver can pick up Europe and the U.S., as well as Nairobi. Schedules for the Voice of America are available from USIS. Bring a good-quality shortwave radio.

Zanzibar telecasts in color in Swahili a few hours in the evenings. These telecasts require a good antenna in Dar es Salaam and cannot be picked up by standard American sets.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The Daily News is an English-language newspaper and has limited coverage of world events. Uhuru is published in Swahili. A few new weekly and biweekly newspapers have recently started publication. The International Herald Tribune, available by postal subscription, arrives at least 4 days after publication (though street vendors frequently have it within 2 days of publication). The Kenya Daily Nation is available on the day of publication.

Local bookstores carry a few international magazines and very few paperbacks.

The Dar es Salaam Public Library has an aging collection of books for children and adults. The British Council also has a good collection of books. The USIS Library is open to the American community, but its collection contains little fiction; rather it concentrates on economics, international affairs, management, business, and communications for a Tanzanian audience.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Tanzania has legalized the private practice of medicine, and several clinics and small hospitals in Dar es Salaam offer limited services. Muhimbili Medical Centre, the public teaching hospital administered by the Department of Health, is the main source of medical care for the

general population. Although the local hospitals have some fairly well trained physicians, they are not reliably accessible and when available have limited diagnostic or treatment facilities. Ancillary medical facilities such as laboratory, x-ray, and EKG are either not available or not reliable as to accuracy of results. Equipment is often antiquated or, if newer, not functioning because of lack of parts. Unreliable sources of electricity and water contribute to nonfunctional medical facilities.

The Nordic Dental Clinic will see Americans for emergency dental work and on a space-available basis for routine care. Most employees defer dental work until they are in the U.S. Optical services are available in town. Repairs and simple lens work can be readily accomplished. Eyeglass frames are expensive and in short supply.

Tanzania has some well-trained physicians, but they are hampered by severe shortages of medicines, medical equipment and supplies, lack of trained staff, and medical facilities that have been allowed to deteriorate over the last 30 years.

Bring prescriptions for ongoing medical problems, as well as birth control supplies, contact lens solutions, over the counter medications, lotions and sun screens, extra eyeglasses, and sunglasses.

Community Health

The level of sanitation in Tanzania requires special measures. Tap water is not safe to drink until it is boiled or otherwise disinfected and filtered. The city streets in Dar es Salaam are full of piles of garbage, due to extremely irregular garbage pickup. Disinfect all fruits and vegetables before eating.

Mosquito and fly control measures are necessary. Residences are equipped with screens on the windows and mosquito nets are supplied for each occupied bed.

A number of diseases now rare in the United States are endemic to

Tanzania. These include bacterial meningitis, cholera, rabies, plague, and a variety of parasitic infections.

Preventive Measures

Simple precautions will offer more than adequate protection from any of the common medical problems. Don't eat or drink anything unless you know that it has been properly cleaned and disinfected. Don't go near animals unless you are certain that they are not infected with rabies or other transmittable animal-borne diseases. Make sure all your recommended vaccinations and inoculations are up to date.

Chloroquine-resistant malaria is endemic in Tanzania. Several measures are recommended to limit mosquito bites. Sleep under mosquito nets, use mosquito repellent, wear protective clothing, ensure that the windows are adequately screened, and use insecticides to kill the mosquitoes inside the house.

Anti-malarial medication is provided for members of the mission. The current recommendations are: (1) chloroquine weekly and Paludrine daily, or (2) Mefloquine weekly.

Chloroquine is a very potent drug with a narrow margin between the effective dose and the toxic dose. It is extremely toxic for small children in excessive amounts, so it should be stored in a safe place where a child cannot have access. Significant side effects to chloroquine are rare. Some people experience some nausea and stomach distress that can usually be avoided by taking the medication with meals or at bedtime.

Chloroquine in the recommended dosage does not affect the eyes and is safe to take during pregnancy. Paludrine is a drug with relatively minor adverse reactions, such as mouth ulcers or stomach upset. Paludrine must be taken daily to be effective. Mefloquine is a relatively new drug as an alternative medication for malaria prophylaxis. Side effects can include GI upset, dizzi-

ness, headache, and, rarely, psychotic episodes.

Malaria in a pregnant woman is a very serious problem because the changes brought on by pregnancy alter a woman's ability to fight this disease. Paludrine and chloroquine can be taken safely during pregnancy. Because malaria is potentially a threat during pregnancy, pregnant women may wish to consider departure to the U.S. early in pregnancy.

The fluoride level in the water in Dar es Salaam is 0.25 parts per million. Children between the ages of 3 and 13 should receive 2.2 mg of sodium fluoride daily.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a serious problem in Tanzania. It is transmitted sexually and through blood transfusions and use of contaminated needles. The Government of Tanzania is beginning to recognize the seriousness of the problem and has launched an extensive AIDS control program. With personal prevention, exposure to the virus can be avoided.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Several flights during the week are available from a number of European cities to Dar es Salaam.

Visas are required to enter Tanzania. All travelers to Tanzania must have valid immunization certificates for yellow fever and cholera.

You must have an import permit to bring a pet into Tanzania. This permit may be obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Animal Industry Subdivision, P.O. Box 9152, Dar es Salaam. You should initiate this action far in advance since the procedures are time consuming. For both cats and dogs, include a certificate that the animal has been vaccinated against rabies at least 6

months and not more than 3 years before entry into Tanzania. No dogs or cats younger than 7 months old will be allowed into Tanzania except with the special permission of the Director of Veterinary Services. The permit, along with a health certificate from a licensed veterinarian issued within 10 days of departure for Tanzania, should be attached to the pet's shipping crate. Keep copies of these documents.

The Tanzanian shilling, divided into 100 cents, is the basic local currency. It cannot be imported or exported and generally is nonconvertible. The official rate of exchange changes slightly from time to time. In December 2000, the rate of exchange was Tshs 803.4=U.S.\$1. Coins in current use are in denominations of 1, 5, 10, and 20 shillings. Bill denominations are 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1,000 shillings.

Tanzania uses the metric system of weights and measures.

No limit is placed on the amount of dollars, other foreign currency, or travelers checks that you can bring into the country. You can convert foreign currency to shillings only at authorized points. Strict currency control regulations govern conversion of shillings into foreign currencies.

No private or foreign banking facilities are yet available in Tanzania. The banking laws have been revised, however, and although private banking is legal, no private foreign bank has yet been licensed. For the time being, the government-owned National Bank of Commerce (NBC), the only commercial bank, has branches throughout Tanzania. It provides a wide range of national and international banking services including sale of U.S. and foreign travelers checks. Major credit cards are becoming increasingly accepted at major hotels and restaurants.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Jan. 12 | Zanzibar Revolution Day |
| Feb. 5 | Birth of Chama Cha Mapinduzi |
| Mar. (2nd Mon) | Commonwealth Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| Apr. 26 | Union Day |
| May 1 | Workers' Day |
| May 9 | Idd El Hajj |
| July 7 | Peasants' Day |
| Dec. 9 | Independence Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Id al-Adah* Ramadan* Id al-Fitr* Hijra New Year* Mawlid an Nabi* |

* variable

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These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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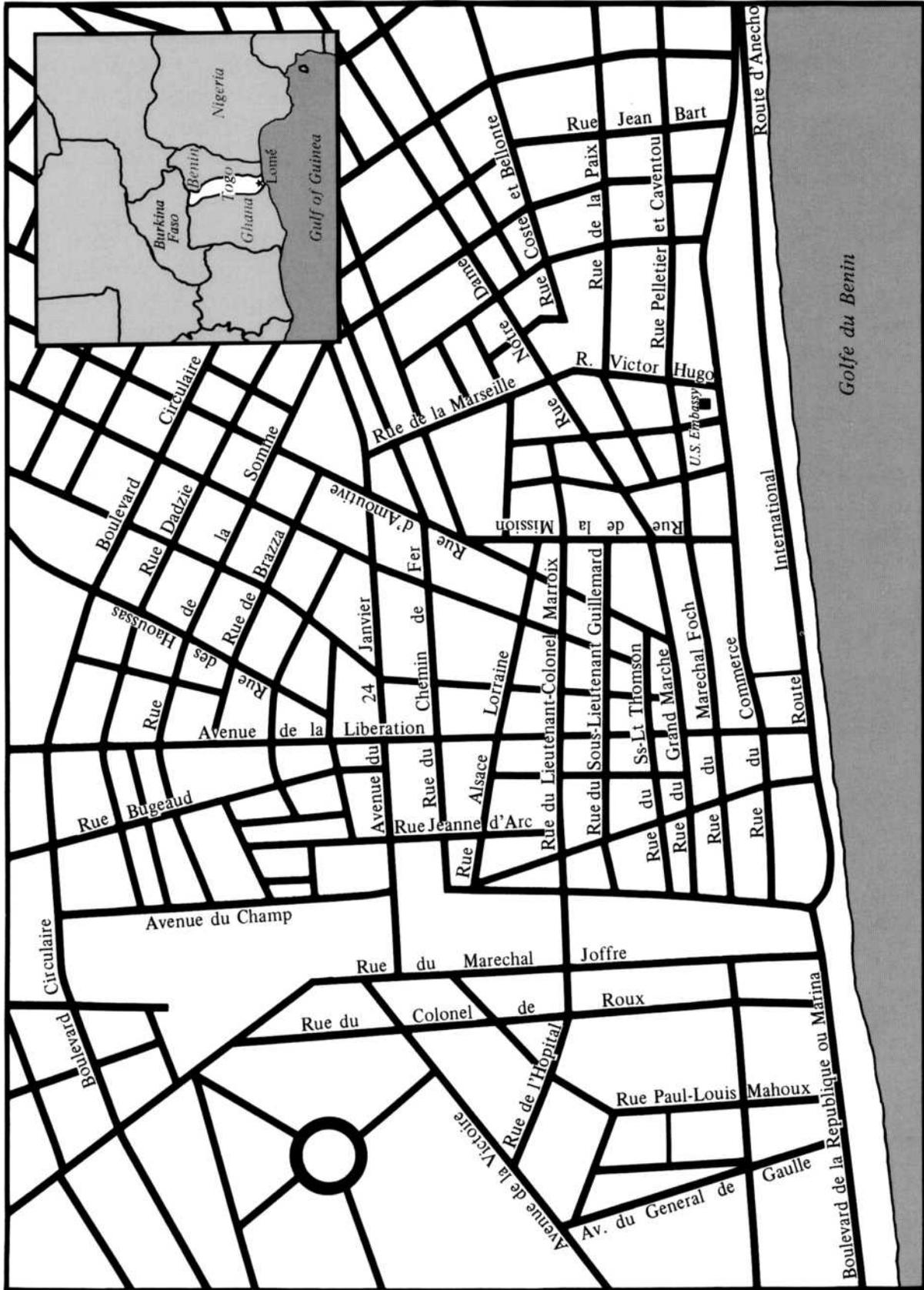
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Lome, Togo

TOGO

Republic of Togo

Major Cities:

Lome

Other Cities:

Aného, Atakpamé, Dapaong, Kpalimé, Mango, Sokodé, Tsévié

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated September 1995. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The West African Republic of **TOGO**, which had existed as part of the German protectorate of Togoland, as a League of Nations mandate and, later, as a United Nations trust territory under French administration, has been independent since 1960. Four years earlier, Togo had gained autonomy within the French Union.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to explore the Togolese coast, arriving late in the 15th century. Between 1600 and 1800, Brazilian, British, and other slave traders repeatedly and tragically raided the region, and Togo became known as the Slave Coast.

This small republic gives the visitor an unusual, first-hand look at developing Africa. Densely populated by African standards, it has a variety of cultures among its more than 35 ethnic groups, many of whom still follow their African traditions and customs.

MAJOR CITIES

Lome

Lome, the capital and chief commercial center of Togo, is on the Atlantic coast at Togo's extreme southwest corner. Part of the city lies on a mile-wide sandbar that rises 15–20 feet above the sea. The center of the city is a 20-minute walk from the Ghanaian border. Lome shares the climate of Togo's southern zone, and its sea breeze blows pleasantly all year. The city proper has 658,000 residents, and the greater area has a population of 727,000.

The major central thoroughfares are lined with small shops, occasional parks, and countless street vendors. In the Grand Marche, a bustling three-story building, vendors sell food, cloth (largely wax-print cottons locally made or imported from England and the Netherlands), housewares, small

fetish objects, and almost anything else found in Lome. The railroad, as well as some buildings and roads still in use today, were built by the Germans.

Only main city streets have lights. Some streets are paved; others are of red laterite earth and sand—dusty in the dry season, muddy when it rains, and usually full of potholes.

Most buildings are cement over soft-brick or concrete blocks. However, traditional rectangular one- or two-room mud-brick with corrugated metal or palm-thatch roofs built along the walls of a compound are still common. Residential areas with large houses include Lome proper, the suburb of Tokoin above the lagoons, Kodjoviakope, and a housing project located near the University of Benin.

The larger businesses are, for the most part, controlled by the French. A small but economically important Lebanese population also engages in commerce. Lome has 11 resident foreign diplomatic missions, 8 honorary consulates, U.N. and other country aid organizations, and regional banks.

Food

Lome has a good supply of fresh foods, although supply can be sea-



Aerial view of Lome, Togo

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sonal. Local vegetables include leaf lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, green beans, sweet peppers, cabbage, eggplant, spring onions, onions, carrots, palm hearts, potatoes, sweet yams, African yams, hot peppers, mint, parsley, and several other herbs. The local fruits available are avocado, lemon, lime, orange, pineapple, banana, papaya, guava, grapefruit, cantaloupe, watermelon, coconut, mango, and passion fruit. Imported apples, pears, kiwi, and a few other European fruits can sometimes be found. Local fruits and vegetables are generally available in open markets throughout the year. Imported fresh fruits and vegeta-

bles are sometimes available in supermarkets at high prices.

Fresh meat, imported and domestic, includes beef, veal, pork, lamb and poultry. Locally made and imported French and German sausage, pate, ham and other prepared meats are available in the butcher section of local supermarkets. Duck, rabbit and guinea fowl are available at the local market, as well as the local delicacy, bush rat or agouti. Fresh fish, shrimp, lobster, mussels, hard-shell crabs and other seafood are sold in season either in the local market or in one supermarket.

Imported fresh foods arrive by air every week and some by ship every 2 weeks. These stocks include meat, cheese, fish, vegetables (artichokes, mushrooms, celery, endive, and lettuce), and fresh fruits. A limited variety of wines, herbs, and spices is imported, as are specialty items like canned Chinese and Lebanese foods. Prices for imported items are high. Imported frozen foods are available at several locations, include meats, poultry, fish, fruits, vegetables, prepared foods, and deserts.

Imported UHT and powdered milk are readily available, as are puddings and whipping cream. Local

milk products such as yoghurt and sour cream can be found in the supermarkets. A local Danish-run factory produces ice cream. Some better quality, but very high-priced, imported brands are also available in supermarkets. Good French breads and fair pastries are made in Lome.

Coca-Cola, Sprite, Fanta, soda water, tonic and a variety of other local soft drinks is bottled here. A good beer is also bottled by a German-established factory.

Most Americans do their shopping at one or more of the three modern supermarkets in Lome. In the heart of the business district is a lively congested Grand Marche, a three-story, open-air market where Togolese sell their fresh produce, fish and other foodstuffs. Clothes, household items, glass beads, wax cloths, and an endless variety of goods can be found. Many intriguing items can be discovered on a walking tour of the central business area, which abounds in small shops selling a wide diversity of items. Every "quartier" has its own open market. Many small provision stores, mostly run by members of the Indian community, are located around town. Necessary items are rarely all available in one place and sometimes not at the expected place, so shopping requires several trips and lots of time.

Clothing

Men: Dress is less formal than in Washington. Safari suits or slacks and shirt combinations may be worn during office hours. Formal clothing (light-weight dinner jacket and black dress trousers) is optional. Sport shirts and slacks or safari suits suffice for most social engagements. Cotton or cotton polyester blend slacks and short-sleeved shirts are advisable for road travel. All clothes should be light-weight and washable since dry cleaning services are expensive and limited. Clothing wears out quickly due to frequent washing. All synthetic fabrics are less comfortable in the heat and humidity than cotton, linen or cotton-blend fabrics.

Women: Warm-weather washable dresses, blouses, and slacks or skirts are the norm. Simple dresses are worn at daytime and evening affairs. Cocktail dresses are often worn, and more formal long gowns are worn on few occasions. A light wrap or shawl may be useful at night during the cooler rainy season. Outdoor clothing and sometimes a sweater are convenient.

A limited supply of imported dress materials, as well as extensive supply of African-style cotton prints, both imported and locally manufactured, are available in the market area. Dressmakers do adequate work with supervision. A few expensive boutiques carry dresses and fancy dresses and accessories. Hats, gloves, and stockings are seldom worn. Lingerie in cotton or the cooler synthetic fabrics is usually not available. Walking on Lome's sandy streets is easier with sensible shoes. Several pairs of sandals are suggested.

Children: Bring a good supply of outdoor, hot-weather washable children's clothes, underwear, and shoes. Some sandals, underwear, and clothes are sold locally. Local seamstresses do a fair job making children's clothing.

Bring plenty of suitable sportswear and equipment for the entire family, including tennis or golf clothes and equipment as these are either expensive or not available locally.

Supplies and Services

Supplies: Consider bringing your own brand of toiletries, cosmetics, medicines, etc., as many American brand products are not available.

Basic Services: In general, community services are not well developed, and materials are often not available.

Dry-cleaning is not recommended except at the Hotel 2 Fevrier or Sarakawa, and at one dry-cleaning shop in town. Several beauty shops are recommended, as are several barbers in Lome. Some Togolese

barbers will come to your home for a moderate fee. Shoe repair is satisfactory, but the materials used are usually of poor quality. Tailors or dressmakers do adequate-to-good work. Wicker and wooden furniture can be made locally and wears well in the humid climate. Due to high humidity, mildew is a problem.

Religious Activities

Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, Roman Catholic, Church of Christ, Islamic, Lutheran, Protestant, Pentecostal and Methodist places of worship can be found in Lome. Most services are in French and Ewe and occasional Protestant services are in English. An English-language non-denominational Christian service meets every Sunday at the Hotel 2 Fevrier and an English-Language Roman Catholic mass is celebrated each Sunday at the cathedral in Lome.

Education

The American International School in Lome, established in 1967, follows the general academic curriculum for American schools. The private, coeducational international school, encompassing pre-school through eighth grade, is currently applying for accreditation. The school year extends from September to June. The school day begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 1:00 p.m. Instruction is in English. The school is housed in a large two-story building, and has a library, science room, and music room. In addition to basic academic subjects, AIS's curriculum includes French, art, music, drama, P.E. and health.

None of the several Togolese primary and secondary schools in Lome are recommended. Lome has one very good French Government supported lycee. The school ranges from kindergarten through the end of secondary school and prepares students for the French university entrance examination. The school program is identical to that of schools in France. Instruction is conducted in French; inability to speak the language presents a major drawback for all levels except grade 1. Several privately-run

French-language nursery schools for 2–5 year olds are open most of the year.

In addition to the American and French schools, the privately-owned International Primary School offers an accredited American-based curriculum in English for children 2–12. The British school of Lome offers 3–16 year olds instruction in English following the British system.

Recreation and Social Life

Lome is a generally pleasant place and offers the opportunity for year-round sports activities. Many Americans enjoy touring in-country and taking short trips to the several neighboring countries which can be easily and quickly reached by road.

Sports

Swimming is possible in hotel pools. Due to the heavy surf and a dangerous undertow, saltwater swimming is limited to certain beaches. The sea and lagoons offer limited fishing. Lac Togo, located about 20 minutes from Lome, has sailing, windsurfing, and pedal boating.

Several tennis clubs, including hotel clubs that Americans can join, are available, as well as volleyball, badminton, and table tennis facilities. The golf club has a nine-hole course about 8 miles from Lome. There is a riding club at the Hotel Sarakawa, and another near the airport. There are several fitness centers offering karate, weight lifting, body building, aerobics, and sports therapy massage.

Soccer is the principal spectator sport. Tennis, basketball, volleyball, and handball are other sports that are enjoyed by both Americans and Togolese. Sporting stores are few and merchandise that is available is expensive.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

In Lome itself, tourist attractions include the National Museum and the Village Artisanal Center where handcrafts are made and sold.

Outside of Lome, you may join tours of Togo and Benin arranged by hotels for their guests or by the Bureau of Tourism. Most in-country touring is done individually by private car. A main road extends from Lome northward to the Burkina Faso border. The road is paved and suitable for motoring, but the driver must be alert for animals and people on the road. Daylight travel is best.

The paved coastal road from the Ghana to Benin borders provides a continuous view of beaches, coconut palms, and small, scattered fishing villages. About 18 miles east of Lome and a short distance inland is Lac Togo, a lagoon with a hotel, restaurant, bar, swimming pool, and boat dock next door. Residents visit the Lac for a mild change in scenery; visitors from neighboring countries appreciate its French cuisine. On the hillside bordering the lake is Togoville, a small village that was the first permanent German settlement in Togo. It can be reached by car or pirogue.

An automobile trip to Kpalime and its environs can include the Centre Artisanal in Kloto, the Blind school and the Chateau Viale, which offers a mountain view and an occasional glimpse of Lake Volta.

Two hours beyond Kpalime brings you to the Akowa waterfall, just 7 miles from Badou. The Akowa waterfall, 35 meters high, descends vertically from an underground spring. It is accessible to the reasonably hardy. Following an animal trail, under vines and over rotting logs, one must hike for nearly one half hour before reaching the allegedly therapeutic falls. The scenery is beautiful. Guides must be hired at the village. The trip can be made in one long day, or visitors can stay at a hotel in Badou.

North of Atakpame, you journey more deeply into Togo's traditional culture. Acceptable but very modest hotels at Atakpame and Sokode provide overnight lodging. Many visit the game park at Fazao in central Togo, which suffers from a lack of

wildlife at present, however. The hotel at Lama-Kara offers good accommodations and a swimming pool. Further north, the traditional African-architecture accommodations in the Keran reserve are adequate.

Places of interest in the neighboring country of Benin (also French-speaking) are within easy driving distance from Lome and include: Ouidah, the center of voodoo and the site of an old Portuguese fortress whose museum houses relics of the slave trade and illustrates cultural exchanges between Brazil and Africa; Cotonou, Benin's capital and major city; the villages of Lac Nakous and Ganvie, built on stilts in the middle of the lake; Porto Novo, 19 miles from Cotonou, which has a museum of handicrafts; and Abomey, a day's drive from Lome and the seat of the ancient kingdom of Abomey (1600–1900), with an interesting historical museum in a former palace.

Entertainment

For those who like to dine out, Lome has a number of good restaurants offering French cuisine as well as Chinese, German, Italian, Lebanese, Ethiopian, Vietnamese, and traditional Togolese dishes. Restaurants are comparable to those in U.S. cities. Lome has many night clubs and discotheques, including those at the major hotels. Saturdays are disco nights in Lome, and discos are generally crowded and lively, with a variety of music and atmosphere. The Hotel Palm Beach, the Sarakawa, the 2 Fevrier, and the Hotel de la Paix all have casinos with tables for Blackjack and Roulette.

The German, French, and American Cultural Centers are active in Lome, offering scheduled monthly activities, as well as occasional special programs such as jazz and classical music concerts, art exhibits, and other cultural offerings.

Foreign films and a few American films (with the soundtrack dubbed in French) are shown at the cinemas. Sound equipment, projectors,



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Going to market in Togo

seats and overall cleanliness could be better at some.

The USIS library, available to the public, is well stocked with American periodicals, books in French and English, and some recordings of American music. The German Cultural Center has books available for public use. The British School has a large book and video (PAL system) library available for those who have children enrolled in their school or otherwise sponsored. Bookshops in Lome are well supplied with French books and periodicals but quite limited in English-language periodicals and books. Avid readers should bring a supply of reading material and arrange to receive subsequent mailings from one or two book clubs.

Other activities available in Lome include dance classes and lessons and the International Choir.

Since both Accra and Cotonou are within 2 1/2 hours of Lome, Americans often visit these cities for a day or weekend of shopping and sight-seeing.

Social Activities

Among Americans: The home is the center of evening activities such as cocktail parties, barbecues, and card games. Other social activities may also include one or two dances a year, occasional concerts, and national day celebrations.

International Contacts: Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Nigeria, Libya, North Korea and Zaire have embassies in Lome, and several countries are represented by Honorary Consuls. The U.N. has a resident representative and personnel from various nations working in Togo. The European Union is represented. Several nations have technical assistance

teams. Rotary, Lions, Zonta and Soroptomist Clubs are active. A newly formed International Women's Association provides opportunities to make friends quickly with women of other nationalities and engage in charitable work.

OTHER CITIES

ANÉHO, 26 miles east of Lomé, dates to the slave-trade period. Later, the Germans and French made the town Togo's capital. Aného is an important intellectual center for Togo, although it hasn't grown as rapidly as other cities in Togo. Still standing are many of the thick-walled colonial homes built by the Germans. The current population is about 25,000.

The town of **ATAKPAMÉ** was settled in the nineteenth century by the Ewe and Yoruba peoples. It is situated in an important cotton-growing area, and serves as a major trading center for cocoa and coffee. The current population is 62,000.

Situated in northern Togo, **DAPANG** is renowned for its temperate climate. People from all over Togo and Burkina Faso come to this city of 30,000 for the festive marketplaces and local dances.

KPALIMÉ (often written Palime) is Togo's cocoa city, about 65 miles northwest of Lomé. Coffee and oil palms are cultivated here. Kpalimé is a major center for commercial trade in Togo. Scenic areas surround Kpalimé, including the massive Mount Aghou and Kpime and Kolme waterfalls. The Pottery Centre is a haven for ceramics lovers. The population is about 72,000 (2002).

Inhabited by the Anoufo people, **MANGO** is on the Oti River in northern Togo. It is the center for the cattle and peanut trade in the region and currently has a population of 23,000.

In the central region lies **SOKODÉ**, the nation's second largest city. Because of its location in the middle of the forest, hunting is popular. The city is a major commercial trade center for the country's northern regions. Industrial activities include cotton ginning and sugar processing. Muslim holidays are celebrated in Sokodé, especially *Adossa*, or Festival of the Knives. The population is approximately 82,000 (2002).

Located 20 miles (32 kilometers) north of Lomé **TSÉVIÉ** is home to the Ewe people. The town is an important palm oil processing center and a major commercial trading area. In 2002, Tsévié had a population of roughly 36,000.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Togo, a narrow country of 21,853 square miles, about the size of West Virginia, stretches 370 miles from north to south and averages 56 miles in width. It is bounded on the west by Ghana, on the east by Benin, on the north by Burkina Faso, and on the south by the Bight of Benin on the Atlantic Ocean.

Brackish lagoons cross the country to the southeast, separating the mile-wide sandbar along the Bight of Benin from the geographical mainland. To the southwest a low plateau gradually rises, followed by a southwest-northeast mountain range that is from 2,300 to 3,300 feet high. Another plateau lies to the north of the mountain chain. An open savanna then unfolds and extends to the Burkina Faso border.

Togo is mostly flat. Much of the land lies at an altitude of less than 660 feet; scarcely one-sixth of the land exceeds 1,300 feet. Togo has no navigable rivers, but several rivers have the potential for irrigation, which the Togolese are beginning to exploit. The country's most fertile areas are in and around the mountain range; the northern savannas are the poorest.

Savanna-type vegetation dominates. Large trees, including the baobab, common in the south, are rarer in the north. Mangrove and reed swamps dot the coastal region, and coconut plantations grow along the sea.

Some deer, antelope, buffalo, wart hogs, and hippopotamuses roam the north. Togo's most common animal life includes monkeys, snakes, lizards, and birds. Chickens, sheep, goats, and a few other domestic animals are kept in the city as well as the rural areas.

There are protected forest game reserves at Fazao and Keran, in the central and savanna regions.

The country is divided climatically into southern and northern zones. The southern tropical temperatures fluctuate between 70°F and 89°F, with February and March the hottest months, and June, July, and August the coolest. Humidity is high (80%–90%) most of the year. The major dry season extends from the end of November to the end of March; August and early September are also sometimes quite dry. The two wet seasons are from the end of March to July, with maximum rainfall in June, and from September to mid-November, with the greatest rainfall in October. The coastal area receives the least rainfall; the region of Kpalime, about 65 miles inland, receives the most. Equatorial conditions in the mountains of Togo support the country's only rain forest.

Northern temperatures fluctuate between 65°F and over 100°F, and humidity is less severe than in the south. The northern zone has one rainy and one dry season. In December–January, a cool, dry, dust-laden “harmattan” wind from the Sahara sweeps across the land.

Population

The population of Togo was estimated at 5.2 million persons in 2001. Lomé, the capital city, has a population of about 727,000. Other major population centers are Sokode, 82,000; Kara, 49,000; Atakpame, 62,000; Kpalime, 72,000; Tsévié, 36,000; Dapaong, 30,000; Bassar, 30,000; Aneho, 25,000; and Mango, 23,000.

In Togo, 59 percent of the population are animists; 29 percent are Christians; and 12 percent are Muslims. In the south, most of the Ewe, Guen, Ouatchi, Akposso, and Ife-Ana ethnic groups are Catholics and Protestants. In the north, most of the Kabiye, Losso, and Lamba are Catholics and Protestants, but the Cotocoli, Bassar, Konkomba,

Tchamba, Anoufo, and Moba are primarily Muslims.

Although Togo has some 37 different ethnic groups, three major ethnic groups dominate the population. These are the Ewe, the Kabiye, and the Mina groups. The Ewe group includes the subgroups of Ouatchi and Guen. They live in the Maritime region and a large part of the plateau region. The Kabiye group includes the Cotocoli and Losso groups. The Kabiye are mostly located in the Kara region. The Mina group is dominated by the Moba, followed by the Gourma, the Bassar, and the Konkomba groups. The home area of these groups is the savanna region.

Togo's prehistory and early history were marked by the migrations of various African peoples: prehistoric Sangoan hunting and gathering tribes who settled in central and southern Togo; people from the Sudan-Nile region who came to the north in the 10th–13th centuries; and the Ewes and other tribes from Nigeria who migrated between the 14th and 16th centuries; the Mina and other peoples from Ghana; and the Cotocoli and other ethnic groups from Burkina Faso who came in the 17th century. The boundaries of these kingdoms extended beyond present-day Togo.

The Portuguese, the first Europeans to explore the Togolese coast, came in the late 1400s. Between 1600 and 1800, Brazilian, British, and other slave traders raided the coast and later the interior, and Togo became part of what was known as the Slave Coast. German traders and missionaries reached Togo in the mid-1800s. In 1884, Germany set up a small coastal protectorate, gradually moved inland, and developed the social and economic infrastructure so successfully that Togo became its sole self-supporting colony. From 1885 to 1914, Lome was the administrative and commercial center of German Togo (called Togoland), which included what is now Togo and the Volta region (now part of Ghana). In 1914, Britain and France jointly invaded and took con-

trol of Togo. After World War I, Togo came under a League of Nations mandate and was divided into British and French Togo. The U.N. took over the mandate in 1946. Social and economic repercussions of the British-French trusteeship continue to be felt, particularly the splitting of the Ewe and other tribes and their territories.

In late 1956, French Togo voted for status as an autonomous republic within the French Union; the British-ruled people of the Volta region opted to join Ghana, which became independent in 1957. On April 27, 1960, French Togo gained full independence from France.

Although Western contact has affected the life and outlook in the towns, much of the countryside remains less affected. Traditional animist culture, and the customs peculiar to it, continues to strongly influence the Westernized population. Polygamy is widely practiced in rural areas and even in Lome and other towns. As in the rest of Africa, Togolese life centers on the extended family, which includes those far from the immediate family circle. Loyalties reach out beyond the family to the tribe. Traditional mud-brick homes and communal wells give way, in urban areas, to more modern housing and facilities. However, walled courtyards as centers of family life, cooking with charcoal or wood fires, and communal piped-water taps with the customary social life they create, are still common. Complex traditional women's hairstyles and dress for both men and women provide interesting contrasts to European fashions.

Western culture and Christianity have had the greatest influence in the south, the area that has been the source of most government officials, teachers, journalists, office workers, artisans, and traders. Recently, however, more northerners have become civil servants and professionals through an active government program to rectify past disparities.

The literacy rate in Togo is 51 percent. There are about 50 African dialects spoken. French is the official language, as well as the language of commerce. Some people also speak English or German. The government has a policy of developing two national languages—Kabiye and Ewe—as languages of instruction. Some broadcasting (both radio and TV) is done in these languages, and one page in the daily newspaper is devoted to news in each of these languages. The principal native languages are Ewe and Mina in the South, and Kabiye and Hausa in the North.

Public Institutions

Togo's first President, Sylvanus Olympio, was overthrown and killed in a coup d'état on January 13, 1963, in which the current President, General Gnassingbe Eyadema, participated. After 4 years of rule under civilian President Grunitsky, Togolese President Eyadema came to power as a result of a bloodless coup d'état staged on January 13, 1967. The country's constitution and National Assembly were abolished, and the President ruled by decree. In 1969, the *Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais* (RPT) was founded as the sole political party, with Eyadema as its President and founder. However, beginning in late 1990, strike actions and demonstrations led by students and taxi drivers began a movement that demonstrated the Togolese wish for a more democratic form of government.

A transitional government was named in August 1991 to lead Togo through constitutional, local, legislative, and presidential elections. The transition process was not smooth. Demonstrations, an opposition-sponsored political general strike from November 1992 through July 1993 that severely shocked the economy, and sporadic outbreaks of violence from elements of the security forces and others created an unsettled atmosphere for much of 1991 through 1994.

Progress toward free elections and installation of a definitive government was slow and painful. A new, democratic constitution was approved in a referendum in September 1992. In seriously flawed presidential elections in August 1993 and again in 1998, President Eyadema was reinstated for a 5-year term. However, these elections were boycotted by the major opposition parties and a majority of the voters and therefore did not resolve underlying divisions between the opposition and pro-Eyadema factions of Togolese society. After extensive negotiations between the opposition and the presidential side, legislative elections were held in February 1994. The parties opposed to Eyadema won a slim majority in a poll that was generally held to have been free and fair. The 1999 parliamentary elections were boycotted by the major opposition parties, allowing the RPT to gain control of 79 of the 81 seats.

The constitution requires the president to name the prime minister from among the parliamentary majority. President Eyadema selected Agbeyome Messan Kodjo to be Prime Minister, and his government was installed in August 2000. Overall, the government, while faced by severe economic difficulties, shares the generally free-market, pro-Western orientation of previous governments and has declared its intention to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law but faces a major challenge fulfilling its promises of political and economic betterment.

Arts, Science, and Education

All public education in Togo is free. In principle, all children must begin school at the age of 6, but attendance is not compulsory. The attendance situation varies from region to region. In almost all villages, there are primary schools, and in the administrative districts, some junior secondary schools and lycee (secondary schools). Educational institutions, whether primary, sec-

ondary or technical, are either government affiliated or are associated with the Catholic church, Christian missionaries, or private institutions.

The Universite du Benin, founded in 1970, has a faculty of sciences and letters, schools of law, medicine, agronomy and science, and an advanced Institute for Industrial Engineering. Many Togolese go abroad to study, usually to France. Some also study in Germany and the U.S.

Paul Ahyi, sculptor, muralist, and painter, is the country's best known artist. Many of his works are publicly displayed in Lome. Several other artists occasionally exhibit works at Lome's hotels, the Palais du Congres, or the American, French, or German Cultural centers.

Many bronze, wood, ivory, and semi-precious stone artifacts are peddled by the ubiquitous traders in Lome and in other cities. Handicraft making has been boosted by the creation of a crafts center in Kloto, about a 30-minute drive from the capital. Craftsmen fashion batiks, hand-carve wood, weave cloth, and produce glazed pottery. Jewelers, sandal-makers, embroiderers, cloth and basket weavers, and workers in wood, ivory, and bone can be found in major cities.

Folklore remains an integral part of Togolese life, particularly in the villages, where you will find spontaneous plays and community singing and dancing. Traditional regional festivals are celebrated throughout the year.

Commerce and Industry

Togo is a small country on the coast of West Africa. Its economy depends heavily upon agriculture, phosphate mining, and regional trade. Togo had a per capita income of \$1,500 and GDP of \$7.3 billion in 2000. The majority of the population depends on subsistence agriculture. The

agricultural sector accounts for 42 percent of the GDP and employs over 65 percent of the population. Principal food crops include yams, cassava, millet, corn, sorghum and groundnuts. Agricultural production rose to a record high in 1993 due to political disturbances and an 8-month general strike (1992–93) that forced many unpaid civil servants to migrate from Lome to rural areas and farms. Coffee, cotton, and cocoa are the major cash crops produced for export and account for approximately 40% of export earnings. Some attempts are being made to export pineapples, houseplants, vegetables, and palm oil. There has been a greater emphasis in cotton production in the last decade, leading to major growth in exports. Cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs are also raised.

Phosphate mining is the most important industrial activity. Togo has an estimated 130 million tons of phosphate reserves, and the government-owned Togolese Phosphates Office (OTP) has a production capacity of 3.25 million tons a year.

Industry plays a growing role in the Togolese economy, accounting for 21 percent of the GDP. Much of Togo's industrial base dates back to the government's industrialization program in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which resulted in a number of poorly run parastatals. Demands for higher wages have had a particularly negative impact on domestic industry. The government has liquidated some parastatals, privatized others, and improved the management of many of those remaining under state control. The government's privatization campaign has brought foreign investment in several former state-owned companies, including a steel mill, a dairy factory, a cookie factory, a pasta factory, a brewery, a flour mill, a detergent factory, and an edible oil refinery. In 1989, Togo created an export processing zone to encourage foreign investment and an export-led economic growth. Growth has been limited by Togo's political troubles.

Togo has few energy resources of its own and relies heavily on hydroelectric power from Ghana for its electrical needs. Togo's energy production capacity, however, increased with the completion of the Nangbeto hydroelectric dam, which was built on the Mono River in central Togo, near the Togo/Benin border. Electricity supplies in Lome and in several smaller cities are generally reliable, but wide fluctuations are common.

Regional trade is a very important component of the economy of Togo. In fact, commerce is the single most important economic activity in Togo, after traditional agriculture, and Lome has long been known as an important regional trading center. The commercial sector is dominated by five major trading companies, which control roughly half of the registered import activity. There are also many smaller registered commercial enterprises. Togo has a well-developed banking sector, with five full-service commercial banks. Lome's position as a regional banking center, however, has been reduced because of the political and economic difficulties of the early 1990s.

The modern and autonomous port of Lome, an extensive paved road network, and an improving telecommunications system all help to make Togo's infrastructure one of the best in the region. The country has over 2,250 miles of paved roads, the most important of which are the north-south road from Lome to the Burkina Faso border and the coastal road linking Ghana and Benin. The port of Lome, which was inaugurated in 1968 and expanded in 1984, has piers capable of handling a large variety of ships. The port operates daily and has extensive transit and storage facilities. It has a 173-acre free port area and an additional 1,581-acre industrial park, making it an attractive regional base. Warehousing, assembling, and manufacturing operations can receive customs exoneration on imported raw materials and exported finished exports. Togo's good infrastructure has made Togo

an important transshipment center, particularly for goods going to Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

Togo's relative advantages as a regional trading center have eroded in recent years due to improvements in the business climates in neighboring countries and the political instability in Togo. The decline in regional trade was accelerated from late 1990 to 1993, due to political unrest. Trade through the port of Lome has dropped.

Capital and consumer goods in Togo are imported mainly from France, Germany, the Netherlands, Lebanon and China. Some 60 percent of the imports consist of consumer goods, one-third of which are foodstuffs and beverages.

In the past the Togolese Government had put a high priority on developing the country's tourist trade. Lome has 5 modern European-style hotels and many smaller tourist hotels. There is one nice, government-owned hotel in Kara, 430 kilometers north of Lome. The tourist industry has been badly affected by the long period of political instability and periodic violence.

Transportation

Local

In-town taxis provide inexpensive transportation to any point within central Lome, although vehicles are often in poor condition. Tipping is not expected. Taxis can be easily obtained during business hours. American drivers should exercise extreme caution while driving. Personnel should wear seat belts and have car seats for infants and small children. The condition of motor vehicles on the road is quite poor, so defensive driving is very important. The majority of Lome's population walks or cycles and frequently ignores traffic rules. Sheep, goats, chickens, and dogs wander the streets freely.

Cars can be rented with or without a chauffeur from a car rental firm, but prices are high.

Bicycles, motorscooters, and motorcycles are numerous on already congested streets. Limited brands/models of bicycles, motorscooters, and motorcycles (Yamaha, Honda, etc.) can be obtained locally. Togolese law requires the wearing of helmets, however, many cyclists do not wear them or wear inadequate protection.

Avoid night driving whenever possible. Many roads are full of large potholes and most are without street lights, additionally, many cars do not have proper headlights or taillights.

Most police vehicles are blue and white. Fire department vehicles are red. Official government vehicles are generally black. It is common practice to stop or reroute traffic if a VIP is going to pass. Everyone is required to obey either police or military persons directing traffic.

Most Americans travel by privately owned vehicle, although taxis and mini-buses provide regular (if crowded and not very safe) transportation to all towns. A railroad provides limited service from Lome to Blitta and Kpalime.

Regional

Togo's air-conditioned airport officially opened in 1988. Air services to and from neighboring countries are available although delays are common. Air Afrique flies three times weekly between Paris and Lome, making stopovers in other African cities. KLM offers two flights a week between Lome and Amsterdam, with connections to New York. Sabena airlines also offers two flights a week between Lome and Brussels, with connections to New York. Air France has a weekly flight between Lome and Paris. No American carriers serve Lome.

Togo has limited rail transport, but the two-lane macadam roads to Cotonou, Benin and Accra, Ghana permit automobile travel. All driving

within the west African region is done on the right-hand side of the road. Cotonou and Accra are both about 3 hours by car from Lome; Lagos, Nigeria is approximately two hours beyond Cotonou, but road travel is not recommended to Lagos for safety reasons. It is also possible to drive to Burkina Faso via a serviceable paved road completed to Togo's northern border in 1980.

Togo's roads are not in good condition, with many potholes and bad stretches of road. Most country roads are dirt or sand routes. four-wheel drive vehicles are popular among the American community.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

France Cable operates a satellite communications system linking Lome, Europe and the U.S., 24 hours daily. Service is reliable and efficient (especially on weekends) but expensive. Phone connections to cities in Francophone Africa, such as Cotonou and Abidjan, can be made without too much delay, but calls to other African cities are difficult and sometimes impossible to make in a day.

PTT Lome, in conjunction with France Cable, provides commercial telegraph service 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Saturday, and 8:00 am to noon, Sundays and holidays.

Telex service to all parts of the world is fair.

Radio and TV

Radio Lome broadcasts from 5:00 a.m. to midnight daily, with news broadcast in French and local languages. Radio Kara, in northern Togo, broadcasts 97 hours per week. Radio France International (RFI) has received approval to set up an FM transmitter in Togo. Privately-owned Radio Kanal Plus, the station most listened to by English-speaking expatriates, plays an eclectic selection of music, ranging from European classical to rap. The Voice of America (VOA) and the British Broadcasting Corporation

(BBC) transmit shortwave English-language broadcasts to West Africa.

Government-owned TV Togo (one station, one channel) was officially inaugurated in 1973. Programming is in color. Broadcasts are generally in French from 6:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. weekdays, and from noon to 11:30 p.m. on weekends. There is a prime-time newscast in French at 8:00 p.m., which is repeated at 10:00 p.m. TV fare features movies, music videos, documentaries, and some American TV situation comedy reruns dubbed into French.

The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC-TV) can be received with an outside antenna and booster. GBC-TV offers a wider variety of programs than TV Togo. Most programs are in English. They transmit from 5:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. on weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. on weekends and holidays. Prime-time news is shown at 7:00 p.m. and retransmitted at 10:00 p.m. CNN International is featured from midnight to 1:00 a.m. American TV sitcom reruns are shown, as well as feature films.

There is a cable company in Lome that offers access to CNN International and Canal France International for those with special antennas. The company is currently negotiating with several other cable operators, including BET International.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The government-owned *Togo Presse* is published six days a week. Most of the paper is in French with one page (half-page each) in Ewe and Kabiye, the major Togolese languages. Several independent French-language weeklies can be bought from street hawkers or local bookstores, which also carry the French dailies *Le Monde* and *L'Express*, and other French and European magazines. European editions of *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *International Herald Tribune* are available. Air subscriptions of these publications are available, but they

are expensive and arrive with delays.

English-language books can be found on rare occasions in some local shops. Those who have children enrolled at the British School can borrow English-language books from their well-stocked library.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

Bring eye-glass prescriptions with you in case you need emergency replacement. Bring any cleaning solution/equipment for contact lenses with you as you won't be able to find these in Lome.

Local dental care is adequate for routine care, such as fillings and cleaning, but you should complete any special treatment (endodontal, periodontal, crowns, or oral surgical problems) before coming.

The Lome city hospital is below American standards and is not used for health care by the American community. A small missionary hospital staffed by American surgeons is situated 2 1/2 hours north of Lome. The hospital has an adequate laboratory, x-ray unit and a clean, well-equipped operating room.

Lome's physicians, both generalists and specialists, are European or locally trained, and are called in for consultation on occasion. Obstetrical and diagnostic services are extremely limited. Prenatal care is substandard, and expatriates must be medevaced for delivery. Pregnant women are at increased risk from malaria.

Community Health

The level of sanitation in Lome, while good by African standards, is far below that of cities in developed countries. Water from the public system is contaminated and must be boiled and filtered. Most of the city is not served by a sewer system. Waste and contaminated water are discharged on the beaches. Garbage and trash are collected irregularly.

Local government funds for food inspection, insect control, and disease prevention are extremely limited. Therefore, locally butchered meat must be thoroughly cooked, and fruits and vegetables should be soaked in a suitable disinfecting solution.

Many diseases unknown in the United States are present in Togo. These include malaria, dysentery, typhoid fever, leprosy, Guinea worm, Schistosomiasis, skin diseases, and various intestinal parasites, to name a few. For expatriates living in Lome and observing ordinary sanitary precautions, most of these illnesses are not a hazard. Rabies is present in Togo and care must be taken to avoid infected animals. Childhood diseases such as measles, diphtheria, polio, and strep infections are common. With the advent of chloroquine-resistant *Falciparum* malaria to West Africa, malaria has been a major concern for expatriates. Malaria in Togo is a pervasive, year round disease. The mortality rate among the Togolese is high. Expatriates are extremely susceptible to the disease and constant attention to preventive medications and mosquito control is necessary.

Preventive Measures

Most Americans remain remarkably well in Lome by following a number of preventive measures that soon become routine:

Bring water to a rolling boil for 3 minutes and then filter.

Wash fresh fruits and vegetables well, and soak in chlorine or iodine solution for 30 minutes, then rinse with boiled water.

Maintain a clean kitchen; foods spoil quickly here—refrigerate and store foods carefully; ensure that servants are not disease carriers by obtaining a pre-employment medical exam; periodic follow up tests for parasites every 6 months, and chest X-rays every 2 years; also ensure that servants are carefully instructed in sanitary working habits.

Be sure that the entire family has received, and remains up-to-date on, recommended inoculations. Yellow fever is required for entry into Togo. Inoculations recommended include: measles, mumps, German measles, polio, hemophilus, meningitis, hepatitis, tetanus, rabies, and typhoid.

Teach children basic health and hygiene practices. Contact with infected soil causes hookworm infestation and larva migrate. Contaminated food and carriers can be the source of several intestinal parasites.

Machine dry or iron all clothes to prevent larval infestation of the skin.

Do not swim in or drink from bodies of water or streams of fresh water anywhere in Togo. Schistosomiasis due to infected snails is prevalent and enters through the skin. Guinea worm is contracted by drinking contaminated water.

The State Department's Office of Medical Services recommends that all Americans take mefloquine to prevent malaria. Mefloquine is an effective prophylaxis regimen in Togo and most other areas where there is chloroquine resistance. Mefloquine is safe and well tolerated when given weekly. Doxycycline has comparable effectiveness. However, those unable to take mefloquine or doxycycline should take chloroquine in combination with paludrine to prevent malaria.

Dosages for the prevention of malaria should begin 2 weeks before arrival, continue while in Togo and 4 weeks after you leave. While in Togo, screen houses, use mosquito nets at night; use repellents and aerosol sprays as necessary; and control local mosquito breeding areas. Malaria is a life-threatening disease.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Air travel to Lome is the only feasible transportation for visitors coming long distances.

Visas for Togo are issued by the French consular officers in the countries with no Togolese diplomatic mission. Americans may enter Togo without a visa and obtain a resident visa after arrival.

Dogs and cats being imported into to Togo must have a current rabies vaccination and a certificate of good health issued within 48 hours of departure. With the exception of Accra, which allows dogs to accompany visitors, entering British or former British areas en route to Togo requires special permits, which are difficult to arrange. If possible, avoid such areas and bring dogs and cats by air directly to Lome. Although available locally, pet supplies are very expensive.

Togo's currency is the CFA franc (Communaute Financiere Africaine) which is fixed to the euro. The exchange is about 656 CFA to one euro, and in January 2001 was 699 CFA to the U.S. dollar.

Commercial banks in Togo include: Ecobank, Union Togolaise de Banque (UTB), Banque Internationale pour l'Afrique Occidentale (BIAO), and Banque Togolaise pour le Commerce et l'Industrie (BTIC).

Commercial banks provide checking facilities, sell travelers checks, and will accept currency, drafts, and travelers and personal checks. Banks charge for service when a deposit in dollars is made to a franc account and do not return cancelled checks with periodic statements. While some larger hotels and restaurants may accept credit cards, not all types are accepted.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

No ceiling is imposed on the amount of CFA francs you can legally import. However, permission must be obtained from the Togolese Government to convert CFA into dollars, except in the case of official personnel to whom the privilege is extended automatically.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Jan. 13 | Liberation Day |
| Jan. 24 | Economic Liberation Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| Apr. 27 | Independence Day |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| May/June | Ascension Day* |
| May/June | Pentecost* |
| May/June | Pentecost Monday* |
| Aug. 15 | Assumption Day |
| Nov. 1 | All Saints' Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| | Id al-Adah* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-Fitr* |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

Few specific descriptions of Togo in English are available to the public. Most public libraries have the standard selection of recent books on formerly British Africa that may have some pertinence to Togo. Writings on formerly French African territories often contain a section on Togo. The French Embassy and Information Services have published excellent pamphlets.

Consult the American Association of Foreign Service Women (AAFSW) in the Foreign Service Lounge and the Overseas Briefing Center at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

Articles in various news magazines, such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The Economist* have carried the events of the past few years.

Aithnard, K.M. *Some Aspects of Cultural Policy in Togo*. UNESCO: Studies and the Documents on Cultural Policies, 1976.

Carey, Joyce. *Mr. Johnston*. Harper & Row: New York. An English administrator's frustration and a young Nigerian employee's bewilderment and disappointment on a bush road development scheme.

Carpenter, Allan and James Frostman. *Togo*. PLB: Enchantment of Africa Series, 1977.

Conton, William. *The African*. This novel, by a Sierra Leonean, depicts the path from village hut to dominant politician's villa.

Cornevin, Robert. *Histoire du Togo*. Editions Berger-Levtault: Paris, 1969. General history of Togo with interesting chapters on early Togolese history, a long selection on the colonial period, and details of colonial administration.

Crowder, Michael. *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*. Hutchinson & Co., Ltd.: London, 1970. Africa in the mid-19th century, subsequent imposition of colonial rule, and local efforts to resist various colonial powers. Includes a section on Togo.

Decalo, Samuel. *Army Rule in Africa: Studies in Military History*. Yale University Press: New Haven.

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Francois, Yvonne. *Le Togo*, Karthala, Paris, 1993.

Gess, Denise. *Togo*. Places & Peoples of the World Series. New York: Chelsea House, 1988.

July, Robert W. *A History of the African People*. Faber & Faber: London, 1970. A well-written, accurate, and up-to-date history of Africa with good maps, pic-

tures, and excellent bibliographies.

Knoll, Arthur J. *Togo Under Imperial Germany, 1884–1914*. Hoover Institute Press: Stanford, 1978.

Laye, Camara. *The African Child*. (L'Enfant Noir, also The Dark Child). Fontana Press. A warm and moving autobiography of the youth of a well-educated Guinean under French colonial rule.

Levtzion, Nehemia. *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1968. The Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gonja areas of northern Ghana, the Chokossi State centered around Mango in northern Togo, and another part of the Kotokoli of north-central Togo.

Oliver, Roland and J.D. Fage. *A Short History of Africa*. Penguin African Library: Baltimore, 1966. Paperback. Excellent introduction to African history.

Packer, George. *The Village of Waiting*. New York: Vintage Books, 1988.

Piroux, Maurice. *Togo Today*. Editions Jeune Afrique: Paris, 1977. Good touristic summary. Many photos, maps, and suggested road tour itineraries.

Reindorf, Carl Christian. *The History of Gold Coast and Asante*. Panther House: New York. Early Togolese history including the arrival of the Mina to the Aneho area.

Stoecker, H., ed. *German Imperialism in Africa: From the Beginnings until the Second World War*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1986.

Stride, G.T. and D. Ifeka. *Peoples and Empires of West Africa: West Africa in History 1000–1800*. Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd.: London, 1971. Paperback. One of the best books on pre-colonial African history. Excellent maps and detailed discussions on the various empires and states in West Africa including Ghana, Mali,

Songhai, Kanem-Bornu, Hausa, Benin, and Ashanti.

Unger, Sanford J. *Anger*. Simon & Shuster: New York, 1985. Discusses the complexity, beauty, tragedy, importance and fascination of the whole of Africa. It is a journey through virtually all the African nations and their bursting cities. He traces the emergence of the second largest continent from its post-colonial era. Includes section on Togo.

Winslow, Zachery. *Togo*. New York: Chelsea House, 1988.

Yagla, Wen'saa Ogma. *l'Edification de la Nation Togolaise*. Librairie-Editions l'Harmattan: Paris, 1978.

Magazines

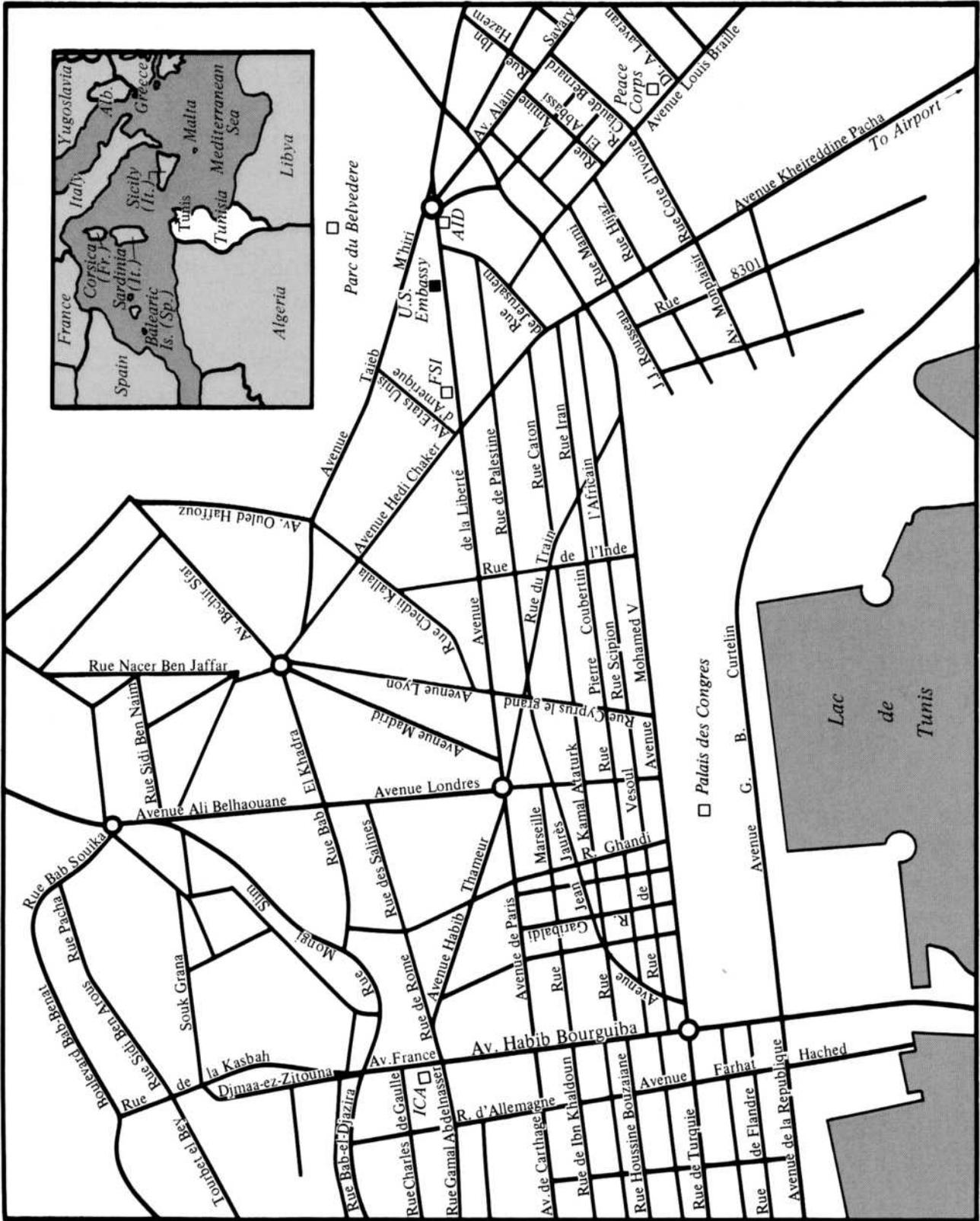
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Tunis, Tunisia

TUNISIA

Republic of Tunisia

Major Cities:

Tunis, Monastir, Kairouan

Other Cities:

Béja, Bizerta, Gabès, Hammamet, La Goulette, Mahdia, Menzil-bourguiba, Moknine, Nabeul, Qafsa, Sfax, Sousse

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated August 1994. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

TUNISIA is a land abounding in contrasts. It is not the stereotypical African desert country, even though it is enveloped by a large percentage of arid land. In fact, it was once called "the green land," describing the days when it served as a granary of Rome, and the wheat, wine, and olives introduced by the Phoenicians were sent north across the Mediterranean. Tunisia is Mediterranean in its affinity for the inland seas and in its proximity, both culturally and politically, to southern Europe. The countryside west of the capital city of Tunis is decidedly more European than African. The tree-lined roads are reminiscent of southern France, and the resort areas on the Gulf of Hammamet,

which include 700 miles of white sand beaches, are similar to those of the Côte d'Azur.

Historically, Tunisia has been at the crossroads between Europe and the Middle East. Bathed in centuries of Phoenician, Roman, and Arab civilizations, it was then westernized by several decades of French presence. The legacies left behind have helped to shape this land into the most modern and sophisticated country in North Africa. History still abounds in the ruins of Carthage, Utica, and Dougga, as well as in the modern cities of Tunis and Kairouan.

To a generation of Americans and British, Tunisia is the memory of major battles fought during World War II in North Africa. In the quiet greenery of its military cemeteries and scattered burial plots lie thousands of victims of the battles of El Alamein, Kasserine, Long Stop Hill, and Hill 609. However, the intervening years have softened the image, and new generations of Westerners are converging on Tunisia. Its closeness to Europe makes Tunisia even more attractive, for, in a short time, one can change continents, culture, and civilization.

MAJOR CITIES

Tunis

Tunis is built on the west bank of a shallow salt lake on Tunisia's northeastern Mediterranean coast. Originally a Phoenician trading post, it has been the capital of what is now Tunisia since the 13th century. It comprises two adjacent districts, widely different in character—the old Arab town (the *medina*) with its narrow, shop-lined streets, and the new French-influenced city of wide avenues and tall buildings. The *souks*, where anything from handwoven rugs to used buttons can be found, the famous Zitouna Mosque, old residences noted for their tiles and blue grillwork, and narrow alleys that twist and turn are some of the memorable sights in the *medina*. The new city, developed during the French Protectorate of 1881 to 1956, resembles a typical western Mediterranean metropolis, and surrounds the old section.

Greater Tunis covers an area of more than 1,600 square miles. It has a population of 1.64 million, of whom perhaps 30,000 are Europeans, mainly French and Italian. French and Arabic are spoken; little English is heard.

Tunis has four seasons, with spring and fall the most pleasant. Summers are hot and dry, although sea breezes moderate the heat. Winters are rainy and damp, with days of brilliant sunshine intervening. Except at the highest altitudes, the temperature rarely drops below 40°F.

Agriculture remains a major source of income. Olives and cereals are the principal crops grown. There are several manufacturing companies in Tunis that produce carpets, cement, textiles and clothing.

Tunis is the center of government, and an active commercial center and seaport. The large international airport, Tunis-Carthage, is five miles from the city and, although there are many large, good hotels in town, the beach resorts on the outskirts attract most of the European visitors. Car rental agencies operate both in the city and at the airport. Detailed information about tours and hotel accommodations is available from Office National de Tourisme Tunisien at avenue Mohammed V, Tunis.

Currently, more than 60 countries maintain resident diplomatic missions in Tunis. The city has been the site of the Arab League's international headquarters since 1979.

Education

In Tunis, the American Cooperative School, designated as a U.S. Government-sponsored institution and established in 1959, has facilities for 160 children from kindergarten through tenth grade.

The teachers at American Cooperative are qualified members of the U.S. and international communities. Instruction is in English, although French is taught in all grades. The curriculum is similar to, and compares favorably with, those in U.S. schools.

Almost all American children in Tunis attend American Cooperative.

Girl Scout, Brownie, Boy Scout, and Cub Scout troops are very active. The groups hold weekly meetings after class hours. American Cooperative plans periodic activities for children, such as sporting events and dances. It also has an active Hyper Club for students in grades five through nine; activities have included a bowling night, ski trip, beach parties, and a sight-seeing trip to Roman ruins. Other extracurricular activities include computer training, choral and instrumental music, and school yearbook.

Public schools and private Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim schools are available at all levels, including high school. A few private French nurseries operate in the city and its suburbs.

Tunisian schools are similar to those in France. From an American point of view, they have a rigid curriculum and long hours of class work. Fluency in French is imperative, and some classes are conducted in Arabic.

Americans have sent their children, with mixed results, to one of the three French *lycées* operating in Tunis and La Marsa. The tuition is considerably less than at the American Cooperative School, but parents must pay for textbooks and supplies. Uniforms are required.

Many junior and senior high school children attend schools in Morocco, Italy, Spain. The U.S. Torrejon American High School in Spain is operated by the U.S. Department of Defense. It is a coeducational institution, with instruction in English.

Notre Dame International School in Rome, conducted by the Brothers of the Holy Cross, provides a liberal education in accordance with American tradition. The faculty is mainly American, and instruction is in English. Classes are for grades four through high school. Its sister school for girls is the Marymount International School. The faculty consists mostly of nuns of the Order of the Sacred Heart of Mary.

St. Stephen's School is a four-year coeducational school emphasizing college preparatory work. It is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

Recreation

Tunis and its environs offer good facilities for tennis, golf, hunting, scuba diving, and some fishing. Swimming, sailing, and windsurfing are also popular, but the beaches close to and in Tunis used for swimming have been found from time to time to be contaminated and unsafe. Americans should check with the U.S. Embassy Medical Unit before going to the beach. Tunis has three municipal swimming pools, two of which are heated in winter; the weather is suitable for outdoor swimming from June through September.

Public tennis courts are available in most of the suburbs, and private courts can be found in several places around the city and at resorts. In Tunisia, white is still worn on the court, but is not mandatory everywhere. Tennis balls should be brought from home; local ones are expensive and of poor quality.

Some Americans play golf on the 18-hole course at La Soukra, about seven miles from Tunis. The course is good from October to June, but very dry in summer. The greens are a mixture of sand, crushed olive pits, and crude oil—a new experience for most American golfers. Lunch and dinner are served in the clubhouse, which may also be used for large receptions. Annual dues are high, but nonmembers can play at daily or weekly rates. The magnificent new 18-hole course at the resort of Port El Kantaoui in northern Sousse, about a three-hour drive from Tunis, is good for a golf weekend. Created by eminent golf-scape architects, the course is star-shaped and covers four miles and 170 acres. Each of the 18 holes is on a different kind of terrain. There is a luxurious clubhouse and equipment to rent.

Softball games and jogging programs are enjoyed by the American community. In addition, bowling is



V-shaped office building in Tunis, Tunisia

Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

available at a standard six-lane alley at La Baie des Singes Hotel in a northern suburb of Tunis.

Saltwater fishing and scuba diving are popular sports. Little freshwater fishing exists in Tunisia because only one river flows year round. Motorboats may be rented, but no facilities are available for chartering boats for offshore fishing. Spearfishing with scuba equipment is prohibited, but is permitted while using snorkeling gear. No facilities currently exist for refilling scuba bottles.

Wild game is in season from September to June. A shotgun can be used for small-game hunting. Open-season dates vary only slightly each year and are published each August. Quail, duck, woodcock, snipe, partridge, and wild boar are the most common game. The latter is found in the mountainous regions close to the Algerian border. Hunt-

ers are limited exclusively to shotguns in the pursuit of game, and 12-gauge is the most common. Rifled slugs are required for boar hunting; buckshot is prohibited. Hunters must have a permit for the weapon, a hunting license, and insurance.

Camping is popular among Americans. Many undeveloped and a few developed campsites exist in the countryside. All equipment should be brought from home, as it is both scarce and expensive in Tunisia.

Kasr Sa'id, known as one of the most beautiful racetracks in North Africa, is about five miles from Tunis. The racing season begins October 1 and lasts through May. Purebred Arab and English racehorses—some locally bred and some imported—and imported trotters compete for the purses. Kasr Sa'id has a riding club; another is in La Soukra.

Sailing centers around the yacht clubs at La Goulette and at Sidi-bou-Sa'id, the exquisite artists' village near Tunis. Various types of boats, including cruisers, sailboats, sloops, and ketches are available. There is no single racing class of boats in Tunisia.

The visitor can make endless sight-seeing and picnic trips to the Roman, Punic, and Byzantine ruins scattered throughout Tunisia. Le Bardo Museum in Tunis contains the largest and most beautiful collection of Roman mosaics in the world, as well as Roman and Punic statues, coins, jewelry, and other interesting exhibits.

Tunisia's main places of interest are all within easy driving distance of Tunis, and are connected by good blacktopped roads. The port city of Bizerta is 40 miles to the north through pleasant countryside. The ruins of ancient Utica may be vis-



Cory Langley. Reproduced by permission.

Seaside complex on the Mediterranean in Tunis, Tunisia

ited just off the Bizerta highway. Sousse (87 miles from Tunis) and Sfax (166 miles) are central Tunisian seaports. The old Arab sections of both cities are still encircled by ancient ramparts and watchtowers. Sousse, a popular tourist attraction because of its beautiful beaches, has a small, excellent museum devoted to Roman and early Christian mosaics. Nearby are catacombs as extensive as those in Rome. Just north of Sousse is the huge new complex called Port El Kantaoui, with its 18-hole golf course, magnificent harbor, luxury hotels, villas, riding school, tennis courts, pools, and beaches.

Many other smaller resorts and tourist centers can be visited. Tunisia is continuing an extensive program to improve tourist facilities throughout the country, including attractive modern hotels ranging from first class to economy. Ain Dra-

ham, in the cork and oak forests of the Kroumirie Mountains 110 miles west of Tunis, offers a change of scene and climate. At an altitude of 2,600 feet, Ain Draham is pleasantly cool in summer and often has snow in winter. It offers excellent boar hunting. About an hour south of Tunis are the picturesque seaside towns of Hammamet and Nabeul where one can swim off broad sandy beaches. At Nabeul, Tunisian artisans work on rugs, baskets, and their famous pottery.

About 350 miles south of Tunis is Djerba, a palm-covered white sand island, which retains much of the original Arab architecture. According to local tradition, it was the home of the indolent, dreamy *lotophagi* (lotus eaters) of Homer's *Odyssey*. On the island is a Jewish colony, which may antedate the Diaspora. Its beautiful synagogue at Hara Kebira is well worth a visit.

The oases of Tozeur and Nefta, which produce fine dates, are 310 and 350 miles, respectively, southwest of Tunis on the Algerian Sahara border and on the edge of the extensive Chott Djerid, a dry salt lake. Tozeur has, perhaps, the most luxurious oasis. Its 200 springs feed thousands of the best date palms. Tozeur's buildings are built with unfired yellow bricks; the town can be toured on donkey or camel. Nefta's oasis resembles a bowl. The town, made up of sand-colored homes and holy places, is situated on a plateau. A guide is needed for a trip through the oasis on donkey.

Motor trips to Djerba and the oasis country make pleasant four- or five-day journeys. The best time of year to visit these areas is from late fall to early spring. Daily flights to Djerba from Tunis are available all year.

Roman ruins are scattered throughout Tunisia. The ruins of Utica can be reached from Tunis or Bizerta. Utica was a Phoenician colony founded in 1100 B.C. After entering by a great arched gateway, the visitor will see the marble flooring of a mansion set in a garden. Mosaics depicting sea fish decorate a water basin and the pool of a former fountain. Remains of several other houses reveal decorated flooring of Phoenician, Roman, and Byzantine periods. Phoenician tombs contain interesting remains.

Carthage, historically the most famous ruins, is closest to Tunis—only 20 minutes by car. When the Romans, furious at humiliations inflicted upon them by the Carthaginians, conquered Carthage in 146 B.C., they razed and plowed it into the ground. Later they rebuilt the city, making it their provincial capital of North Africa. The Vandals further destroyed the city in 439.

More extensive ruins can be seen at Dougga (70 miles), Thuburbo Majus (32 miles), and Sbeitla (160 miles). Dougga was a major Roman city with paved streets. Its theater, built in A.D. 168 to seat 3,500, resounds again when classical plays and other performances are staged. El Djem, 125 miles south of Tunis, features a coliseum almost as large as the one in Rome.

Train and bus transportation is available to most sites, but public transportation may be uncomfortable or inconvenient for longer distances. It is an advantage to have a car for trips, although many local travel agencies and hotels now operate modern air-conditioned buses.

Entertainment

The theater season in Tunis is November through May. Two companies present a series of six to eight well-known French-language plays. The Tunis Symphony Orchestra gives monthly concerts from November through May, with guest soloists and touring groups appearing occasionally. Theater and symphony performances take place at

the Municipal Theater in downtown Tunis.

Tunis and its suburbs have about two dozen movie theaters that offer a wide selection of American and English films, with French dialogue dubbed in. Italian, Spanish, Mexican, and Egyptian films are also occasionally shown. Most films, however, are French produced. Cultural centers, notably the French and Tunisian, offer films at little or no charge to the public.

Many special occasions are celebrated in Tunisia. The Orange Festival of Cap Bon in January; the Festival of the Hawks in El Haouaria in April; music and dancing festivals in Hammamet, Djerba, Dougga, and Bizerta during the summer; the International Cultural Festival of Carthage in July; Monastir's Drama Festival in August; the spectacular Festival of the Sahara in November; and a number of other events which lure visitors from Tunis.

Restaurants in Tunis and environs are attractive and the food is very good. Among those recommended are the Strasbourg, the Hungaria, the Malouf, and Chez Slah. The national dish is *couscous*—semolina (a specially processed wheat) prepared with vegetables, meat, fowl, or fish, and a piquant sauce called *harissa* (hot red peppers). Another favorite local dish is *brik*, a thin, fried pastry envelope with an egg, meat, or tuna stuffing.

In the summer, outdoor dining and dancing places may be found along the coast. Many restaurants in the city are closed from mid-July to September, during the beach season.

The International Women's Club is an active organization providing services to the international communities. All American women and wives of U.S. citizens residing in Tunisia are eligible to join; one-third of the total membership is composed of people from other countries. The club eases the adjustment to life in Tunisia, and provides a

center for service projects and social activities.

Tunisians are kind and hospitable, and this is reflected in their warm style of entertaining. At nonofficial parties, informality is the keynote; meals are usually buffet style, with food always in great abundance. Tunisian Muslims generally do not eat pork, so alternatives must be provided when they are guests. Alcoholic beverages may be served, but soft drinks or fruit juices should also be offered.

Monastir

The seaport town of Monastir, the birthplace of former President Habib Bourguiba, is situated in northeast Tunisia, on the southernmost point of the Gulf of Hammamet. It is about 80 miles southeast of Tunis and just south of Sousse. A fort has existed on this point since the dawn of history, warding off invaders who threatened from the sea. Up until the end of the seventh century, Monastir—first as Rous Penna of the Carthaginians and later as the Roman Ruspina—has played an uninterrupted role as the defensive stronghold of the coastline. The area was further built up as a military fortification by the Aghlabites in the eighth century.

One building from this era—the *Ribat*—still stands today as a majestic reflection of the past. Built in the eighth century and then fortified and enlarged in the ninth and 11th centuries, the *Ribat* was originally a defensive fortress and a place for monastic seclusion. Today, the *Ribat* exudes the charm of a historical shrine. The Hall of Prayer, on the first floor, has been converted to a Museum of the Islamic Arts. A vast array of objects preserved from the past are displayed and carefully labelled.

Not only known as a military stronghold, Monastir was also a holy city from the 11th century onward. A number of sacred legends date from that era. One of the legends said that entry into heaven could be ensured with a three-day

stay in Monastir. Another legend, told by the Prophet himself, was that Monastir had the distinct privilege of containing a gate to heaven.

Monastir today uses its history and location to great advantage. As a seaside resort, it welcomes visitors to enjoy the sunshine and local curiosities. Since Tunisia's independence in 1956, the government has introduced an infrastructure that has rejuvenated the economy of Monastir. The Chraga quarter has been restored and a new roadway has been constructed. Located in the heart of Monastir, the Chraga offers craft shops (where the traditional arts of tapestry, pottery, basketwork, wrought iron work, and other decorative and practical items are displayed and sold), cafe terraces, and restaurants where visitors can try local specialties. The Habib Bourguiba Mosque, rebuilt recently at the edge of this quarter, is an example of classic religious architecture.

Nostalgia is found throughout Monastir. Leaving the *medina*, the visitor can't help but notice the high battlement walls flanked by square towers. These are the only parts of the 18th century ancient fortified enclosure that remain standing. The century-old streets also reveal ancient Monastir and its 12 gates. In contrast to the old parts of Monastir, the city is also proud of its modern buildings. Green areas, squares, and modern intersections adjoin the old areas. A convention center was recently built to house international meetings.

University life in Monastir is developing around schools of chemistry and dental surgery affiliated with the University of Tunis. There is also a residence hall for girls, a library, and a stadium that seats 20,000.

Monastir is becoming a favorite spot for the international film world. Franco Zeffirelli shot *Jesus of Nazareth* here, and, in 1981, a studio was constructed to film indoor scenes.

A number of festivals and cultural events are held in Monastir during the summer. From the end of July through the beginning of August, an international folk festival is held every other year. In the intervening years, there is an international theater festival. A fair and exhibition are held from August 1 through 15.

Hotels run along the coastline to the little fishing port between the two peninsulas. On Sidi Ghedamsi Island, linked to the coast by a causeway, is the tourist complex of Cap Monastir. The area boasts many different sporting facilities including a golf course, a marina, and a fishing port. Due to its proximity to the Skanes-Monastir airport, Cap Monastir is recognized as one of the area's most comprehensive tourist centers. Monastir's current population is 59,000.

North of Monastir, in a residential area, is the Presidential Palace of Skanes. The residence is richly decorated with Arabian ornaments, marble, and decorated earthenware. It is situated in the middle of an exotic park. Beyond the park lies the oasis of Dkhila, known for its palm wine. Hotels line the beaches of Dkhila, where numerous water sports may be enjoyed. Visitors can participate in windsurfing, water skiing, and sea excursions. Beginner's lessons in horseback riding, tennis, and other sports are given at the hotels by qualified instructors approved by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. At night, discotheques play the latest European and American hits, but the Tunisian folk customs of belly dancing and snake charming may also be enjoyed.

Kairouan

Kairouan is a city of 116,000, located 100 miles southwest of Tunis in the center of a vast plain. Kairouan is the third most holy city in the Islamic world, after Mecca and Medina. Founded in 670 by the warrior, Oqba Ibn Nafaa, it grew from a simple military outpost to the greatest cultural center of the Maghreb. During the Kharijite Revolt of 758-761, the city was pil-

laged, but restored during the Aghlabite Dynasty (800) on an even grander scale. The Aghlabites gave the city some of its most beautiful monuments. They developed all spheres of activity in Kairouan, and soon the city rivalled all other great civilization centers of the Mediterranean.

Kairouan (also spelled Qairawan) is comprised of an old city encircled by a high wall of uniform brick with many imposing doorways. The ramparts were built in 1052 by Al-Moezz, the Fatimite, and restored by the Husseinites in the 18th century. The modern city, on the other side of the ramparts, has conformed to an ancient architectural style evident in its recently completed cultural and commercial center.

Long a holy city to Muslims, Kairouan's religious vocation is evident everywhere. According to legend, seven visits to Kairouan equalled one to Mecca. The city is especially known for its mosques and tombs. Its Great Mosque is the most fascinating Islamic structure in Tunisia. Dating back to the eighth century, the mosque draws thousands of visitors in prayer and admiration. The Great Mosque is the focal point of the city's *medina*. The vast inner sanctuary stretches out like a fortified stronghold with its imposing architecture. From the entrance, one can see the marvelous archways and immense marble-laid courtyard. The columns, done in various architectural styles; the interior of the prayer hall; the bas-relief work; the floral and calligraphic designs; and the crystal chandeliers all make this mosque one of the most beautiful in the Muslim world. Kairouan is also endowed with 50 other mosques in its *medina*.

The proliferation of religious activities does not prevent the inhabitants of Kairouan from enjoying life. The joyous occasion of *Mouled* (or Mouloud), the Prophet's birthday, brings pilgrims from all around to the city to join in lighthearted celebration. In addition to the *makroudh*—small cakes made of hard

wheat paste stuffed with dates and soaked with honey—that are a year-round specialty of Kairouan, the city’s women also prepare *assida*—a sweet dish—to mark the beginning of the festivities.

Kairouan is also known for its handicrafts. Metal engraving, weaving, and saddle-making are all carried out in the city. But, the most important handicraft which, along with the Great Mosque, has made Kairouan famous, is the art of carpet-weaving. The National Office of Handicraft encourages the development and production of carpets and has set up a quality control system whereby each carpet is examined by specialists in the control center before being granted the official seal of approval. The National Office of Handicraft houses a Museum of Rugs; the Museum of Islamic Art is located opposite the Great Mosque.

Lodging in Kairouan is pleasant and reasonably priced. The deluxe Aghlabite Hotel, on the city’s outskirts, has a swimming pool, fine restaurant, and wooded grounds. Other hotels are located in the central city and play an important role in the activities of Kairouan. The range of restaurants in the city run from the deluxe to the corner cook-shop, giving the visitor a wide variety of local cuisine.

OTHER CITIES

BÉJA has a history dating to ancient times. Situated 65 miles west of Tunis in the Marjardah Valley, the city was the site of Vacca, a Punic town and Roman colony. Béja exports wheat and has been a major agricultural market since at least the first century B.C. Sugar refineries and an agricultural research station help employ the estimated 56,000 residents.

BIZERTA (also spelled Bizerte), on the Mediterranean, is Africa’s northernmost town. Once the Roman city of Hippo Zarytus, there are reminders throughout the area of the various civilizations that suc-

ceeded one another. Oil refining and fish canning are the two principal industries. A beach resort, Bizerta is also a major exporting area and seaport. Bizerta exports fish, phosphates, iron ore, and cereals. The town is connected to Tunis, 50 miles southeast, by road and rail. Visitors will find cooler weather in Bizerta during the summer season. Its population is approximately 112,000.

GABÈS, (also spelled Gabis) located in east central Tunisia on the Gulf of Gabès, is 200 miles south of Tunis. It is a fishing port and center of an oasis known for date palms and textile milling. Founded by the Romans, Gabès was one of the chief Tunisian headquarters for the French Saharan garrison. The economy of the city was focused entirely on the needs of the army. Since then, Gabès has developed an infrastructure and industry that has made the city important throughout the country. A power station and an oil refinery have been constructed here. A large port and a railroad terminus link Gabès with the rest of Tunisia. The current population of Gabès is about 109,000.

HAMMAMET is a small fishing village which attracts numerous tourists each year with its marvelous gardens, and its luxurious hotels concealed behind orange trees, palm trees, bougainvilleas, and a thousand other perfumed plants. Located in northeastern Tunisia on the Gulf of Hammamet, at the southern base of the peninsula ending in Cap Bon, Hammamet is about 30 miles southeast of Tunis. The city’s fort, built on the sea in the 15th century, has long arched passages, galleries, and square towers. In the main courtyard of the fort, there is a small museum of traditional costumes. During World War II, Hammamet served as the headquarters for the German general Erwin Rommel. Hammamet has an International Cultural Center where, during summer, there is an open-air theater and an International Cultural Festival. Hotels in Hammamet are built to blend in with the natural surroundings; there is an agreed maximum height

for buildings so as to not overshadow the natural beauty. Hammamet boasts clean beaches and a wide variety of leisure activities, including swimming, tennis, golf, and horseback riding. There are also terrace cafes, restaurants, shops, and two art galleries. Hammamet’s population was about 51,000 in 2002.

LA GOULETTE (also called Halq al-Wādī and Goletta) is the port of Tunis, seven miles from the capital. Its harbor manages most of the country’s imports and roughly half the exports, principally fruits, vegetables, iron ore, and phosphates. The city is a renowned bathing resort and residential area of Tunis. La Goulette boasts remnants of Hispano-Turkish battlements nearby. About 79,000 people live in the city.

MAHDIA, (also spelled al-Mahdiah) a fishing port and resort town, is 30 miles south of Monastir. The all-powerful Obaid Allah, known as the Mahdi, developed the town in the 10th century as a stronghold and capital of the Fatimite dynasty. Economic activities center around olive cultivation, olive-oil production, fishing, fish canning, and a thriving handicrafts industry. The population of Mahdia is about 44,000.

Ten miles southwest of Bizerta lies **MENZIL-BOURGUIBA** (also spelled Manzil Bū Rugaybah and formerly known as Ferryville). Named after Tunisia’s president, Habib Bourguiba, the town is a modern one. Much of its growth took place during the French Protectorate (1881–1956) with the development of adjacent Sidi Abdallah’s naval base and dockyard. Today Menzil-Bourguiba is a heavy industry center. Roads and a railway link the town with Bizerta. The population is about 49,000.

MOKNINE is a market town of 49,000, located 13 miles south of Monastir. Part of its population is Jewish, and the traditional jewelry items they make are among the exhibits in the town’s small folk museum.



Jason Laure. Reproduced by permission.

Modern Carthage

NABEUL (also spelled Nabul) is the administrative capital of Cap Bon, located at the southern end of the base of Cap Bon Peninsula, about 40 miles southeast of Tunis. Ancient Phoenician ruins are found along the shore; the Romans destroyed the Phoenician settlement in 146 B.C., later rebuilding it as Neapolis. Today, it is one of Tunisia's most important towns because of its special activities: ceramics, embroidery, and pottery; perfume distilleries using the oldest formulas; needlework and lace. Pottery is an art dating back to Roman times; there are hundreds of workshops in Nabeul producing both glazed and porous pottery. Functional utensils, curios, jars, and ornaments are made. The workshops of blacksmiths, weavers, embroiders, and lacemakers may also be visited. The city's weekly market—Le Vendredi—offers regional specialties, including tapestries, curios, agricultural products, and camels. The current population of Nabeul is 57,000.

QAFSAH (also spelled Gafsa) is a popular irrigated fruit-growing oasis, in the eastern part of the country, about 115 miles west of Sfax. The original town was destroyed by the Romans, rebuilt, and became a center of Byzantine, Arab, Berber, and Ottoman leaders. Today, Qafsah is a major shipping center for phosphates. The area is populated primarily by nomads and cultivators of olives, dates, and cereals. Qafsah's population is roughly 80,000.

SFAX (also called Sāfagis) is Tunisia's second largest city and a bustling commercial center. Situated in eastern Tunisia on the Gulf of Gabès, it is about 150 miles south of Tunis, and is the terminus of the Sfax-Gafsa railroad. The town was bombarded by the French in 1881 prior to their occupation of Tunisia and during World War II, when it was used as an Axis base until captured by the British in 1943. With Gabès farther south, the city serves

as a major port for the export of phosphates, olive oil, cereals, and sponges. Offshore oil has been discovered in the area. Once the site of Phoenician and Roman colonies, Sfax was briefly held by Sicily (1150) and by the Spanish (16th century), and was later a stronghold of Barbary pirates. The current population of Sfax is 266,000.

Fishing and tourism provide the economic mainstays of **SOUSSE** (also spelled Sūsah and Sousa), located in a convenient central position on the eastern coast 75 miles south of Tunis. Once the ancient Phoenician trading post of Hadrumetum, Sousse has kept its ancient walled city in original form. The eighth century *Ribat* was built as one of the fortified monasteries defending North Africa from Christian attacks. Its watchtower gives a splendid view of the *medina*, as does the garden terrace of Sousse's museum. The city grew rapidly under the French Protectorate

(1881–1956), and today is a prominent trade area. Sousse is a popular resort, with beautiful sand beaches, opportunities for horse and camel riding, and many excellent hotels. It is an export point for olive oil, and its ancient remains include Christian catacombs. About 153,000 people live in Sousse.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

The Republic of Tunisia lies at the northernmost tip of Africa. Together with Morocco, Algeria, and northwestern Libya, it forms the Maghreb (the Arabic name for the northwest), a place of common history, language, ethnic groups, and culture.

The country's area of 63,378 square miles is slightly smaller than Missouri. Tunisia has 1,000 miles of Mediterranean coastline. Northern Tunisia is the most heavily populated part of the country, and is mountainous and relatively fertile, although elevations rarely reach 3,000 feet. The north also claims Tunisia's one major river, the Majardah. The central section of the country is semiarid highland with poor soil, little rainfall, and scant population. The south is arid and barren, except for occasional oases, as it merges with the Sahara. The desert makes up about half of Tunisia's total square miles.

Tunisia's climate is temperate, with mild winters and hot summers. The countryside becomes dry and brown in summer and quite green in winter. Summers in Tunis, the capital, are characterized by high temperatures and low humidity; evenings are pleasant. Winters are short, rainy, humid, and chilly. The temperature rarely is below freezing. Snow occurs in the northwestern mountain region. From mid-May until mid-October, the sky is usually cloudless and little rain falls. In an

average year, only 120 days have any rainfall.

Population

Tunisia's population is estimated at 9.7 million; 98 percent are a mixture of Berber and Arab origin, and about one percent are European. The French comprise the largest foreign community, and the influence of the French language and culture is still quite strong. The population is young and increasingly urban.

In the 15-year period following the country's independence in 1956, the Tunisian population increased by 45 percent. As jobs are sought in urban areas, there has been a decrease in the rural population of Tunisia; in 1995 that decrease was 38 percent.

Islam is the state religion, and nearly all Tunisians belong to the orthodox Sunni sect. Other religions are tolerated; Christian and Jewish denominations continue to exist.

In 1995, an estimated 67 percent of Tunisians age 15 and over could read and write. Tunisia's relatively high literacy rate is due in large part to the strong emphasis placed on universal education. The official language is Arabic, but French is widely spoken in urban areas and is used by the government as a second working language.

Government

After 75 years of French protectionism, Tunisia gained independence in 1956. Tunisians then voted to abolish the monarchy. Today, Tunisia has a republican form of government with strong executive powers.

Habib Bourguiba, who had served as Tunisia's president since 1957, was ousted from power on November 7, 1987. The new president, Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, instituted a number of political reforms to curb the excesses of his predecessor and calm domestic unrest. One of the most significant political reforms

was the legalization of opposition political parties in 1988. The president is elected to five-year terms and appoints the prime minister, the cabinet, and 23 provincial governors. In 1994 and in 1999, President Ben Ali was reelected without opposition. The Constitutional Democratic Party is the dominant political party of Tunisia.

Legislative authority is vested in a 182-member Chamber of Deputies. Elections to this legislative body are held every five years. In 1994 the government changed the electoral code to guarantee that the opposition would be able to win seats.

The former religious tribunals have been integrated into secular courts to form a single three-level judiciary: first-instance courts; courts of appeal; and the highest judicial body, the Court of Cassation, which ultimately resolves cases not solved in the lower courts. All judicial proceedings are in Arabic. In addition to the existing auditing court, there is also an administrative jurisdiction.

Women share equal rights with men on the basis of a personal-status code established shortly after independence. This code is considered a model for Arab and developing Third-World countries. Polygamy is illegal.

The Tunisian flag is red, with a central white disc containing a red crescent and a red star.

Arts, Science, Education

Tunisia's cultural and artistic heritage is a blending of Phoenician, Roman, Arab, Turkish, French, and Berber influence. Museums have magnificent collections of Roman mosaics and statues, Phoenician coins and jewelry, and early Arab manuscripts. Archaeological sites scattered through the country are constant reminders of the abundance of Tunisia's legacy. Remains of Punic ports; a Roman coliseum, aqueduct, numerous temples, and

villas; and Turkish forts are all part of the country's living past.

The University of Tunis was established in 1960 under the Ministry of National Education. Entry requires passing the baccalaureate and is very selective. Most of the faculties are in the Tunis metropolitan area; others are in Sousse (medicine), Sfax (medicine), and Monastir (science). Institutes affiliated with the university also provide advanced study in public administration, management, press and communications, commerce, languages, and education.

The university, however, only represents the pinnacle of an educational system that has expanded rapidly since independence. Today, more than a million students, almost 90 percent of school-age children, attend public schools. To earn the high school baccalaureate degree they must attend at least 13 years of school and pass the qualifying exams. This achievement-oriented system results in a high literacy rate (67 percent). Concurrently, with the expansion of education, the government promoted the Arabization of instruction. Thus, many students who do not continue their educations beyond the primary level are literate in Arabic rather than French.

Commerce and Industry

The Tunisian Government has prepared a series of economic development plans aimed at raising the standard of living, diversifying agriculture, and promoting industry. Economic planning is centered on resolving Tunisia's persistent unemployment and trade deficit problems.

The largest economic sector is services, accounting for about 54 percent of GDP. Tourism, the largest source of foreign exchange, was severely affected by the Gulf War in 1991, but has since recovered. The manufacturing and industry sectors

comprise 32 percent of GDP. Agriculture comprises about 14 percent.

Oil exports provide Tunisia with a large source of foreign exchange earnings. National oil production from existing fields peaked at 5.4 million tons in 1981 and now remains roughly at 3.4 million tons. Oil exploration is currently being conducted throughout the country, and involves several American firms. In 1967, the oil field at El Borma, in southern Tunisia, was established. It has 55 million tons of recoverable reserves and currently produces over three million tons. The offshore Ashtart field, in the Gulf of Gabès, produces more than 20 percent of Tunisia's annual crude oil production.

Since 1981, there have been new finds at Zarzis and El Franig-Sabria. Natural gas production is limited at present, but royalties from Algerian gas flowing through Tunisia and possible future production from the large offshore field at Miskar and several recently discovered fields promise substantial quantities of natural gas, as well as some oil.

Phosphates and some iron, fluoride, barite, lead, and zinc are also exploited. The government-owned phosphate company is the largest company in Tunisia in both number of employees and capital investment.

New industries, including textiles; paper pulp manufacture from esparto grass; a steel mill; an oil refinery; assembly plants for trucks, automobiles, and tractors; as well as the production of enriched phosphate fertilizers, have been created. An industrial complex has been developed at Gabès, based on a phosphoric acid plant, and a new port was established there in 1972. Additional fertilizer and chemical plants are being planned for the Gabès area.

Tourism is also an important foreign exchange earner for Tunisia, providing the largest source of foreign exchange earnings. Large

investments in this sector from other Arab countries have led to rapid expansion of tourism infrastructure. Over 3.8 million tourists visit Tunisia annually, spending over \$1 billion.

Tunisian artisans, under the leadership of L'Office National de l'Artisanat, are striving to preserve their traditional crafts, including rug making, pottery, jewelry, and ironwork.

Tunisia is meeting the challenges of economic problems and population pressures with a determination that has attracted interest from many aid-giving countries. Other than from the U.S., which has been an important source of such aid, there has been active interest in Tunisian development from Germany, Kuwait, France, Italy, Canada, Sweden, Norway, the former U.S.S.R., the People's Republic of China, Bulgaria, Belgium, and many others.

The Chambre de Commerce is at rue des Entrepreneurs, 1000 Tunis.

Transportation

Tunis Air and Air France fly daily direct flights to Paris. Daily flights to Rome are provided by Tunis Air and Alitalia. Most of these flights can be coordinated with flights from Paris or Rome to New York or Washington. KLM flies weekly to Amsterdam, and Tunis Air flies there twice weekly. Several flights to Frankfurt are available on either Lufthansa or Tunis Air, and there are six weekly flights to Casablanca. Five international airports provide service—Tunis/Carthage, Monastir, Jerba, Sfax, and Tozeur.

Personal air travel from Tunis may be paid for in Tunisian dinars which have been purchased at a bank with foreign exchange. In this case, the official exchange attestation must accompany the dinar payment. Tickets may also be purchased with a check from a convertible dinar account. All airlines accept the American Express card. Some travel agencies and airlines accept other credit cards as well. Costs for

short trips are about 30 percent higher than for longer flights. No direct sea transportation is available from Tunis to the U.S., but weekly sailings of large, comfortable ferries to Naples, Genoa, and Marseille are possible on Italian (Tirrenia), and Tunisian lines. Crossings take 22 to 24 hours, and reservations must be made months in advance if a vehicle is involved. Those interested can contact NAVI-TOUR, 8 rue d'Alger, Tunis, for information on the Italian and Tunisian lines.

Local transportation is crowded and only marginally satisfactory because of overcrowding and unreliable schedules and equipment. Buses travel the more heavily populated sections of Tunis, and electric trains and buses serve the outlying suburbs. Service to most areas ends by midnight.

Taxis are plentiful in Tunis but, can be almost impossible to find at certain hours and in some areas. They carry a maximum of three passengers. Fares are metered and inexpensive within the city. For a trip to the suburbs, the price should be predetermined. All the larger Tunisian cities are connected by well-kept, hardtop roads. The railroad system covers almost 1,400 miles, and serves all of the large cities; long-distance bus service also exists.

Communications

Local and long-distance telephone service is good, although occasional interruptions occur. Direct dialing is available for many international calls. Overseas calls are expensive when initiated in Tunisia, but are only about half the price if the call is made from the U.S. Telegraph service is worldwide, and also expensive. Transit time for international mail is 10 to 14 days.

Local radio stations broadcast in both French and Arabic on standard AM frequencies. There are local FM stations; one broadcasts in Arabic, another in French. A shortwave radio offers wider reception, with

broadcasts from Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and the Armed Forces Radio Service.

A few television channels broadcast in Tunisia. A domestic channel features programs mainly in Arabic. A second TV channel features 90 percent of its programming in French, following a cooperative agreement which was signed with the France II TV channel. Most of the programs are in color. An Italian channel, RAI 1, offers programming relayed from Italy. Both the Arabic-language channel and the Italian channel operate daily from the afternoon through late evening. The French-language international channel operates from 11:00 a.m. until midnight, except on weekends when it begins in the afternoon.

Only sets incorporating the PAL/SECAM system are suitable. They may be purchased locally or in Europe.

The *International Herald Tribune* arrives in Tunis from Paris late on the same day of publication, and is available at newsstands or by subscription. International editions of *Time* and *Newsweek* may be purchased within a few days of publication. Several French- and Arabic-language dailies are published in Tunis; daily newspapers from France are also available. The U.S. Embassy library is open to all, and facilities at the British Embassy, United States Information Service (USIS), and American Cooperative School may be used with permission.

Health

Tunisian physicians represent almost all medical specialties. Most have received all or part of their training in France. Many do not speak English. Small private hospitals (clinics) and laboratory and X-ray facilities are available in Tunis. Many American women have their babies in Tunisia, although *primiparas* (first pregnancy/delivery) are strongly discouraged from delivering in Tunis.

Local pharmacies stock a wide range of French products. A number of dentists provide adequate general dental services. Currently, no orthodontists or periodontists practice in Tunis. There are no facilities for handicapped individuals. Public sanitation standards, although constantly improving, are still somewhat lower than in Western Europe. Trash and garbage are picked up daily, including Sunday, in Tunis and its suburbs. A municipal sewage system has been enlarged and made more efficient. Drinking water should be boiled.

Americans generally maintain good health in Tunisia, but diseases such as tuberculosis, intestinal infections, intestinal parasites, hepatitis, and schistosomiasis require some precautions. Raw fruits and vegetables must be properly cleaned, and raw shellfish avoided.

Malaria is present only in certain remote areas, and malaria suppressants, in most cases, are not required.

Mandatory inoculations include those for yellow fever (within six days of traveling from infected area). Recommended immunizations are for polio and diphtheria-tetanus, plus gamma globulin for hepatitis. Rabies pre-exposure immunization is also advised.

Clothing and Services

A normal Mid-Atlantic wardrobe is suitable for Tunis. Lightweight, washable clothing is worn from May through October; light woollens are recommended for the rest of the year. Winters are cold, damp, rainy, and windy, making raincoats with zip-out linings very practical. An umbrella and rain boots are also useful.

Clothing can be purchased locally, but the choice is limited and the prices are high, especially for imported clothes. French and British materials are good, and available most of the time. Although

there are good seamstresses and tailors in Tunis, their work is expensive. Locally made sandals and summer shoes are comfortable and inexpensive, but not durable.

Children need few heavy winter garments. Sweaters and warm jackets are the most practical choices. A substantial wardrobe (especially of shoes) is advised.

Meat, poultry, fish, excellent fresh vegetables, and fruit are available year round. Tunisia has no commercial frozen food industry yet, so fruits and vegetables are available only in season. Prices are set by the government and posted in the marketplace. With the exception of bread and some dairy products, which are subsidized by the government, food is as expensive as in Washington.

Pasteurized and sterilized milk, eggs, and other dairy products are available, but occasional shortages occur. Tunisian and Italian brands of sterilized milk are good and have a long shelf life. Few imported foods are sold locally; they are expensive, and supply is sporadic.

The colorful central market in downtown Tunis has hundreds of stalls where produce, meat, fish, and dairy products are sold. Pork can be purchased there and at a few other locations in the Tunis area. Smaller central markets are found in most neighborhoods. Several large chain stores offer self-service grocery facilities.

Most services are available in Tunis. Shoe repair, dry cleaning, beauty care, radio repair, etc., all are easily obtained, but some services are not up to American standards. Dry cleaning is expensive and, occasionally, clothes are damaged in the process. Few commercial laundries exist.

Domestic Help

Domestic services are available and inexpensive. Most servants speak French; few have any knowledge of English. The employer sometimes

provides food, lodging, and uniforms. Local customs require additional expenses, such as daily transportation costs and holiday gratuities.

Domestics are not included in the Tunisian government's social security system, but some customs must be respected; e.g., provision for one free day a week for full-time help, and 12 days, paid vacation after one year of employment. No regulation exists for separation pay, although it is usual to give a week's salary for each year of employment.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

No nonstop or direct flights are available between North America and Tunis. Air travel from the U.S. to Tunis is via Frankfurt, Paris, or Rome. Sea travel is via Marseille or Naples.

Valid passports are required for all visitors arriving in Tunisia; visas are not required for a stay of four months or less, or for nationals of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, the U.S., and certain other countries.

There are no restrictions on the importation of pets but, to avoid administrative delays, pets should accompany owners when possible. Owners of dogs and cats must provide a good health certificate, a rabies vaccination dated more than one month and less than six months before the entry date and (for dogs) a distemper certificate. Adequate veterinarian services are available in Tunis.

Religious denominations represented in Tunis are Muslim, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Jewish, and Greek and Russian Orthodox. Catholic and Protestant services are in French and English. Mass is said in English at St. Jeanne d'Arc Church, located near the U.S. Embassy. St. George's Church, in the *medina*, is Anglican and holds Sunday services

in English. Jewish services are conducted every Friday and Saturday at the Grand Synagogue, 43 avenue de la Liberté.

The time in Tunisia is Greenwich Mean Time plus one hour. The official currency is the dinar, divided into 1,000 millimes. Among the foreign banks represented by branches are Bank of America and Citibank. Tunis is the main financial center. The metric system of weights and measures is used.

Special Note: Visitors to Tunisia will find no restrictions on travel within the country, but care must be exercised in visiting certain frontier regions.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | | |
|---------|-------|------------------|
| Jan. 1 | ..... | New Year's Day |
| Jan. 18 | ..... | Revolution Day |
| Mar. 20 | ..... | Independence Day |
| Mar. 21 | ..... | Youth Day |
| Apr. 9 | ..... | Martyr's Day |
| May 1 | ..... | Labor Day |
| July 25 | ..... | Republic Day |
| Aug. 13 | ..... | Women's Day |
| Oct. 15 | ..... | Evacuation Day |
| Nov. 7 | ..... | Commemoration |
|  | ..... | Hijra New Year* |
|  | ..... | Id al-Adah* |
|  | ..... | Ramadan* |
|  | ..... | Id al-Fitr* |
|  | ..... | Mawlid an Nabi* |

*variable

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

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Kampala, Uganda

UGANDA

Republic of Uganda

Major Cities:

Kampala, Entebbe

Other Cities:

Jinja, Kabale, Kisoro, Masaka, Mbale, Mbarara, Moroto, Tororo

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated July 1996. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

UGANDA, once called the "Pearl of Africa," is a nation that has, in little more than two decades, been battered into near ruin by rampant military violence and blatant abuses of the most basic human rights. It has suffered a succession of brutal, dictatorial regimes, widespread atrocities, and crushing starvation and disease.

Raging terrorism affected every segment of society until finally, in January 1986, rebel forces overthrew those in power and a new leader, Yoweri Museveni, promised the formation of a non-aligned government committed to the restoration of peace and stability. Museveni's National Resistance Movement

largely put an end to the human rights abuses of earlier governments and initiated substantial political and economic reforms. A new constitution was ratified in 1995 by a popularly elected constituent assembly.

The United Kingdom, which had established hegemony over Uganda in the 1890s, granted full internal self government to the country in March 1962. Political struggles soon began, and were intensified during the turbulent rule of the infamous Idi Amin (1971–1979). Both Great Britain and the United States severed diplomatic relations with Uganda, following open threats and brazen incidents of human rights violations. The U.S. Embassy was reopened in the capital city of Kampala in 1981, but tough American criticism of continuing abuses in Uganda created mounting tension. With a new government in place, a calmer atmosphere prevails.

Insurgent groups, with support from Sudan, harass government forces and murder and kidnap civilians in the north and west. Due to Sudanese support of various guerrilla movements, Uganda cut off diplomatic relations with Sudan in 1995.

MAJOR CITIES

Kampala

Kampala began as a settlement near the palace of the *kabaka* (the former absolute monarch of the Baganda) at Mengo, and in the 20th century developed into the largest town in Uganda, dominating the country's political and economic life. It was granted city status during the nation's independence celebrations in October 1962. An estimated 774,000 people live in the metropolitan area.

Kampala lies on the shores of Lake Victoria, about 20 miles north of the equator, at an altitude of close to 4,500 feet. It is built on a number of low-lying hills, surrounded by green, rolling countryside dotted with small farms. These farms grow mostly plantains, the main subsistence crop and staple food.

Along Kampala's central streets, modern stores and office buildings—many of them multi-storied—mix with old-style shops. On Janan Luwum Street and Nkurumah Road, near the main market, are many small shops that trade in a variety of goods. On the other side of the main street, called variously along its length Bombo, Kampala,



Street in Kampala, Uganda

Jason Laure. Reproduced by permission.

or Jinja Road, are large government structures, the most important of which is the Parliament building with its Independence Arch.

Residential areas, located on a series of hills surrounding downtown, had made Kampala one of Africa's most attractive capitals, but more than two decades of neglect is sadly apparent. Some effort has been made to restore the city to its once verdant beauty. Within the city are Kololo Hill (easily recognized by the tall television mast), and other hills such as Nakasero, Makindye, Makerere (the home of Makerere University), Mulago, Mbuya, and Muyenga. Outside of Kampala, still more hills are dominated by Namirembe Cathedral (Anglican), Rubaga Cathedral (Roman Catholic), the Baha'i Temple, the former *kabaka's* palace, and Kibuli Mosque.

Education

The Lincoln International School, assisted by the U.S. Department of

State's Overseas Schools Program, serves the international community. It follows the American curriculum for kindergarten through the twelfth grade. The school is coeducational.

Extracurricular activities include drama, yearbook, choir, field trips, swimming, soccer, softball, basketball, and volleyball. The school also offers numerous clubs.

Most children of expatriates (in upper grades) attend schools in the U.S., Europe, or Kenya.

Recreation

Club membership is necessary in Kampala to use facilities for tennis or golf, but such membership is inexpensive and available. There is an 18-hole course at the Kampala Golf Club.

The Kampala Club has good facilities for tennis and squash, and also has a swimming pool which is gen-

erally in usable condition. Swimming in Lake Victoria is dangerous because of the likelihood of contracting bilharzia, a debilitating parasitic disease.

The Nyanza Sailing Club sails from two locations in the Kampala area on Sunday afternoons and holidays.

Soccer is a national sport and attracts large crowds for weekend matches.

The Kenya Highlands to the east and the mountains of southwestern Uganda provide a change from the weather of Kampala. Cold-weather gear for an extended trek to the higher altitudes may be useful. These are both six-to-eight-hour drives. The accommodations in Uganda are not good at present, but rehabilitation is going on. In Kenya, pleasant country hotels offer modest facilities for rest and relaxation. The capital city of Nairobi provides an opportunity to enjoy excellent

shopping for foodstuffs, household items, African handicrafts, as well as offering night life and other diversions. Nairobi is nine to 10 hours by road and 90 minutes by plane.

Uganda is the home of three of the best game parks in Africa. All are open and operating, and extensive repairs are in progress. Some animals are beginning to return to Kabalega National Park from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (the former Zaire) and other nearby areas where they took refuge during the 1979 Liberation War. Poaching is still a problem and the animals are quite shy. The game park also offers the opportunity of seeing a spectacular cataract in which the Nile forces its way through a 19-foot cleft in the rocks. Chobe is the nearest operating game lodge and it offers comfortable lodgings. No scheduled launches go to the falls, but arrangements can generally be made at Paraa Lodge.

Kidepo Park in northeastern Uganda contains land of great beauty, and also some animals which are not observable anywhere else in Uganda. It is, however, remote and difficult to reach. Rwenzori National Park in the west still has some surviving large animals.

Mombasa (Kenya), on the Indian Ocean, is two-to-three days' travel by road. It has pleasant beach accommodations and many tourist attractions. The islands of Madagascar, Mauritius, and the Seychelles are also nice places to visit. Frequent air service from Nairobi reaches the coastal resort areas as well as the islands.

Entertainment

Entertainment is limited in Kampala. The Alliance Française offers French films with English subtitles on Saturdays, and the French Cultural Center has educational programs. Amateur theatricals in English and in local languages are shown at the National Theater.

The British High Commission Social Club sponsors an active

Darts League that meets on Fridays during the equivalent of "happy hour." A rugby club meets twice a week on a pitch near the stadium. Golf, tennis, fishing, and sailing are common entertainments for Americans and Europeans as well as for many Ugandans.

A small, but good, museum is a must for newcomers. It portrays the history, culture, and economy of Uganda.

Kampala's active professional soccer league plays daily games from January through May at Nakivubo Stadium.

Entebbe

Entebbe, situated on the equator 22 miles south of Kampala, is Uganda's other principal city, but its population (43,000) is lower than that of other centers. It was administrative capital of the country from 1894 to 1962 and, although most government offices have moved to the capital, the State House (residence and office of the president) remains at Entebbe. It is the center of a region that produces bananas, coffee, and cotton.

Several attractions are located in Entebbe, among them botanical gardens, a veterinary research laboratory, and a virus research institute. The city is a transportation hub for eastern Africa, with an international airport and shipping connections to Kenya, Tanzania, and other parts of Uganda via Lake Victoria.

Entebbe figured prominently in international news in July 1976, when the passengers and crew of a hijacked airliner were rescued in a dramatic Israeli commando raid on Entebbe Airport. An elderly British citizen died, and it was at this time that the United Kingdom broke diplomatic relations with Uganda. Gen. Idi Amin Dada, now in exile in the Middle East, was president and dictator at that time.

OTHER CITIES

JINJA, 50 miles east of Kampala, is Uganda's second largest city, with about 65,000 residents. Built around the Owens Falls dam and power station, it is the country's chief industrial region. Jinja is home to several industries, including the first steel-rolling mill in eastern Africa, a copper smelter, a brewery, tannery, textile factory, and large sugar plantations. The city is a major transportation center for railroads and lake steamers.

KABALE, the highest town in the nation at 6,600 feet above sea level, is 200 miles southwest of Kampala. Trips to nearby lakes, especially to Lake Bunyonyi, are considered worthwhile for tourists. The current population is 29,000.

KISORO, in the Mitumba Mountain range of the extreme southwest, is a popular tourist spot. The city of 10,000 is the starting point for expeditions to Mounts Muhavura and Mgahinga. Numerous lakes and Ruwenzori Park are in the area.

Historic Fort Mosaka is in **MASAKA**, 80 miles southwest of Kampala. A market town and commercial center, the city produces processed meat and fish, beverages, footwear, bakery products, furniture, clay products, and glass. It is a critical commercial area for the surrounding coffee growing region. The population is approximately 50,000.

Mount Elgon dominates **MBALE**, the country's third largest city and the hub of the eastern region. Round trips to the mountain, an extinct volcano, take about three days; climbs in the rainy season may be difficult. Mbale is an agricultural trading center and the site of one of Uganda's principal dairies. The current population is about 54,000.

MBARARA is a center of cattle ranching in the southwestern region of Uganda. The famous Ankole cattle are raised in the area.

The city is the headquarters of a large army camp and base for the Lake Mbuho Game Reserve. Located 167 miles southwest of Kampala, Mbarara is noted for its woodcarving, weaving, and pottery-making. Industries produce soap, oils and fats, textiles, beverages, processed food, rope and twine, and plywood. It has approximately 41,000 residents.

MOROTO, in the extreme northeast near the Kenyan border, is the home of the Karamojong people. Cattle are vital here, and disputes with Kenyan border tribes over cattle raiding are common. The proud, traditional Karamojong should be approached with care, ideally with a knowledgeable guide. The Karamojong produce various crafts including pottery, woodworking, weaving, and clay products. The current population is 14,000.

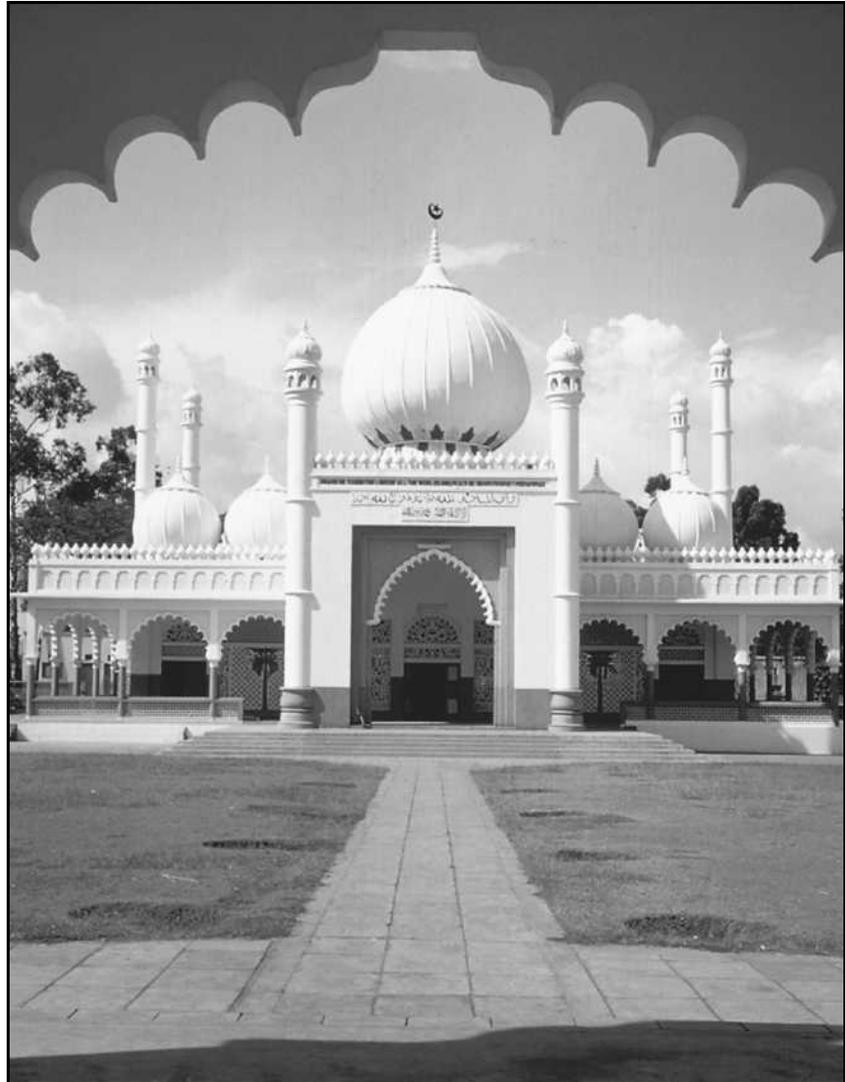
TORORO is a major road and rail junction in the far eastern region, near the border with Kenya. This town of 44,000 lies at the base of a hill that dominates the area.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Uganda occupies a fertile plateau in the center of Africa at an average altitude of 4,000 feet. The plateau's edges are turned up on the east by Mt. Elgon (14,178 feet) and the Kenya highlands, and on the west by the Rwenzori Mountains (16,791 feet). The country is crossed diagonally from southeast to northwest by the Nile River, which begins its journey to the Mediterranean near the city of Jinja on Lake Victoria, about 50 miles from Kampala. With an area of 91,000 square miles, Uganda is roughly the size of Oregon.

The temperature ranges from a high of 80°F to 85°F at noon to 60°F to 65°F at night. A greater range of



Mosque in Kampala, Uganda

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temperature change occurs during the course of the day than between seasons. The hottest interval is generally from October through March, and the temperature is usually hot in the sun from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. anytime of the year.

Annual rainfall averages 63.9 inches. During the rainy seasons—March/April and September/October—the weather is cool and overcast. Frequently heavy thunderstorms last 30 minutes to an hour. It seldom rains for an entire day, even during the so-called rainy seasons. Wind gusts accompanying downpours are sometimes strong, yet seldom damaging. Red murrain dust can be a problem dur-

ing dry periods, but this affects city dwellers primarily when they venture beyond the town and leave the asphalt roads.

Virtually every residence has insects of various sizes, but the ever-present lizards provide “exterminator” service.

Population

The population of Uganda is 24 million. Africans of four racial groups—Bantu, Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic, and Sudanic—constitute most of the populace. Of the four, the Bantu are the most numerous and include the Baganda, the largest single ethnic group, with more than 3.5 million

members. The Iteso constitute the second largest group, followed by the Basoga, Banyankore, and Banyaruanda, all with populations of more than 500,000.

At one time, the Indo-Pakistani comprised a large part of the population. Most were deported during Amin's rule, but some returned as skilled laborers and office workers. Many Europeans also fled the country during Amin's rule and, after the Liberation War, they too began to return, although political turmoil kept their numbers at a minimum.

English is the official language. It is spoken by almost the entire European community, most of the Asian community, and all of the educated Africans in Kampala.

Elementary Swahili is useful in the Kampala area for talking to servants and to African tradesmen and craftsmen. Outside of Kampala and the Buganda region, Swahili is used as the lingua franca among many people who do not speak English, in addition to their maternal tongues.

Most members of the Baganda tribe, however, prefer not to speak Swahili. They use their own language, Luganda, which is spoken or understood by at least four million people.

The religious work begun in 1877 by missionaries was successful, and today some 66 percent of the Ugandan population is Christian, divided equally between Protestants and Catholics. The rest is made up of Muslims (16 percent) and animists (18 percent).

History

When British explorers, searching for the headwaters of the Nile, first arrived in Uganda in 1862, they found the northern shores of Lake Victoria controlled by the Baganda, a people who had developed a complex agricultural society ruled over by an absolute monarch called the *kabaka*. Christian missionaries entered the area in 1877 and, by 1892, British authority was established through a series of treaties of

protection with Buganda and the other kingdoms of Uganda. These kingdoms had already well-developed political institutions dating back several centuries.

As a result of the decision by the early British administrators to govern indirectly through the chiefs and rulers, and because of their beliefs that the area was unsuited to European settlement, the country was developed from the beginning primarily as an African territory. Land ownership was reserved for Africans at an early date, so that there is now almost no Asian or European rural settlement group.

Government

When the bloody dictatorship of Idi Amin Dada came to an end in 1979, Dr. A. Milton Obote, who had been overthrown by Amin's army coup eight years earlier, was restored to power. Continued abuses of human rights, however, led to the ousting by rebel troops of Obote and his government. The rebel troops, calling themselves the National Resistance Movement, selected Yoweri Kaguta Museveni as chairman of the National Resistance Council. The National Resistance Council (NRC) is the legislative branch of the National Resistance Movement. Under the NRM system, local resistance councils at the village, parish, subcounty, county, and district level elect representatives to the next level in the pyramidal structure.

The main thrust of the present government is to rebuild the seriously damaged economy. Food production is the area of greatest concentration.

A number of philanthropic and social organizations thrive here. The YMCA, YWCA, Lions, and Rotary are active and play an important role in charitable affairs. In addition, the Uganda Red Cross, which has ties to International Red Cross groups, and the Uganda Foundation for the Blind are active. Youth programs are organized by the National Council of Sports. The National Union of Youth Organiza-

tions sponsors a sports club program. In addition to the above, youth programs are organized through the school system.

The Ugandan flag consists of repeated bands of black, gold, and red. In the center is a white disc with an emblem of a crested crane.

Arts, Science, Education

In the arts, the National Theatre once again is flourishing with performances in drama, dance, and song every weekend throughout the year by groups coming to Kampala from all over Uganda. Several popular rock groups entertain regularly. The Uganda Museum, presents a comprehensive insight into the area's history. There are regional museums at Saroti and Kabale. The Nommo Gallery, a parastatal institution, features mostly *batiks*, but is striving to reestablish its collection in diverse art forms. Many individual *batik* artists ply their trade within the country. Although radio and television have some technical problems, they do a commendable job in theatrical and musical presentations.

Interest in the sciences is beginning to form again. Individual Ugandans are still invited to international science conferences, but are often unable to attend for lack of foreign currency.

A strong public and private secondary school system exists. Only the most promising primary school students are enrolled. For more than a decade, almost nothing was done to develop and nourish higher education. Makerere University, once the premier institution of higher learning in East Africa, is on the rise again but faces many difficulties because of lack of sufficient funds. Shortages range from lack of housing for faculty and students to insufficient textbooks, scientific journals, and laboratory equipment. Despite its problems, Makerere continues to educate a student body in various disciplines. Other higher educa-

tional institutions are the National Teachers College, Institute of Teacher's Education, Uganda Polytechnic, the National College of Commerce, and the Institute for Public Administration.

Commerce and Industry

Uganda has substantial economic resources, among them fertile soil, regular rainfall, and abundant reserves of cobalt and copper. However, commerce and industry were seriously disrupted under both Amin's and Obote's rule, and by the looting that followed the countless civil disturbances. Government and private businesses, with foreign assistance, are making progress rebuilding the industrial sector. Manufacturing began recovering in the 1980s, and by the mid-1990s Uganda's industrial production was three times larger than it was in the late 1980s. Most facilities are still trying to rebuild, however, and the industrial sector still operates at only 40 percent or less of capacity.

Agriculture is Uganda's principal economic sector, employing 82 percent of the labor force. Coffee, cotton, tea, beans, corn, and tobacco are the main export crops; sugar and cocoa also are important. The main food crops are cassava, millet, corn, sweet potatoes, beans, and cereals. The chief industries are those for the processing of the food crops and for textiles, soap, cement, brewing, metal products, vehicle assembly, and steel. Rehabilitation of the sugar, textiles, paper, and steel industries is underway, mainly funded by international aid agencies.

The tourist industry, very important as a foreign exchange earner, is slowly beginning to recover. Several lodges are being rehabilitated for the public, and animals are becoming more evident in game parks, although many have been killed by poachers. Uganda's principal attractions for tourists are the forests, lakes, and wildlife. In the late 1980s, Uganda launched a program

to create new national parks and build new hotels.

The National Chamber of Commerce and Industry is at 17-19 Jinja Road, P.O. Box 3809, Kampala.

Transportation

Air traffic into Uganda is being used increasingly. Entebbe Airport is only 20 miles from the capital over an asphalt road, but there is a scarcity of public or private transportation available between the cities. Kenya Airways and Uganda Airlines operate flights between Entebbe Airport and Nairobi several times a week. Air Tanzania also has one flight per week between Uganda and Tanzania. Buses travel to the Kenya border where bus connections to Kisumu and Nairobi can be made. The Uganda Railways Corporation operates train service between some rural towns and Kampala.

In Kampala, public transportation is poor. The few available buses are overcrowded and do not follow any schedule. Local taxis are, in reality, private cars that crowd in as many passengers as possible, and charge as much as those passengers will pay. The taxis are unsafe and unreliable. Most Americans do not use public transportation.

In general, private automobiles are a necessity. Those planning a stay in Uganda should either bring a car to the country or purchase one in neighboring Kenya. Autos can be bought locally, but selection is limited, and the cost is many times the actual value.

While large cars are more comfortable for long trips, small vehicles are easier to handle on Uganda's narrow roads. A Ugandan driver's license is required and, unless the applicant has a valid Kenyan or Tanzanian license, both oral and road examinations are necessary. Americans who have, or who can show that they have held, a driver's license from an East African or British Commonwealth country, can obtain a permit without testing.

All automobile owners are required by law to carry minimum third-party insurance, but rates are low. However, comprehensive coverage is quite costly because of the high incidence of auto thefts. The prospect of easy money from the sale of stolen vehicles makes owning a car a risky prospect in Uganda. Gasoline, at about five dollars a gallon, is usually available. Traffic moves on the left.

Communications

Telephone service is only fair. International calls to the U.S. and Europe are sometimes difficult to place, but reception is generally good, since there is a satellite station in Kenya. Overseas telegraph facilities are available, but not always reliable. Service for local calls within Uganda is often reliable.

International airmail to and from the U.S. is slow, taking roughly 10-15 days. Delivery is fairly reliable for letters. However, packages should be sent through international mail.

Special note: The typewritten stamps of Uganda, issued before the country owned a printing press, are among the most unusual in the world. They were prepared by Rev. E. Miller of the Church Missionary Society in 1895, and are very valuable today.

The government-operated radio system, Radio Uganda, broadcasts in many different languages, divided into the following linguistic groups: the Bantu spoken in the south by three-fifths of the population; Nilotic or Nilo-Hamitic found in the north and northeast; the Sudanic found in the northwest; and English, French, and Arabic. English-language news is broadcast six times daily. Ordinary radios in Kampala are limited to local-station reception. In order to receive a variety of shortwave broadcasts, a good set is required. Reliable shortwave sets can pick up Voice of America (VOA), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and the U.S. Armed

Forces Radio Service. Commercial FM radio stations began broadcasting in the mid-1990s; these carry VOA and BBC news and play a wide variety of contemporary music.

Local and foreign-produced television programs consisting of news, entertainment, movies, and sports are shown in the evenings. Most shows are in English, but there is some Swahili and Luganda programming. Television is transmitted by the British and European PAL system. American television sets are not compatible with this system. A multi-system receiver should be purchased. Television sets purchased in Nairobi are compatible with the system in Uganda.

Uganda's freedom of press has given rise to several daily and weekly newspapers in both English and Luganda. *New Visions*, *The Star*, *Monitor*, and *The East African* are some of the major newspapers. There are several weeklies and periodicals. A number of newspapers have editions in the Luganda language, and are widely read in the Kampala area. Some American or international newspapers or magazines are available.

Bookstores typically carry a fair selection of academic books but stock very little fiction. The Makerere University Library has a rather large collection, especially of East African and Ugandan history, but lack of tight control and inadequate air conditioning have resulted in theft and the deterioration of the collection. Uganda maintains no public lending libraries. However, United States Information Services (USIS) has a small public library, with a selection of current magazines and back issues of U.S. newspapers and the *International Herald Tribune*.

Health

Mulago Hospital is a government-owned hospital, but there have been problems with lack of personnel and supplies. Several missionary hospitals, which are well staffed, provide adequate services. Nsambya Hospi-

tal is run by the Franciscan Sisters and staffed by Irish nuns who are physicians and nurses. It has its own training school for general nursing and midwifery. The hospital has an adequate laboratory, X-ray unit, and blood bank. The operating room is clean and well equipped.

A British general practitioner who runs a competent private practice is under contract to the U.S. Embassy, and is recommended highly. He has a small laboratory and uses hospital X-ray facilities when needed. He is available at night and on weekends, and he makes house calls. Westerners with serious medical problems go to Nairobi for treatment.

In Kampala, public sanitation is quite good, and a waterborne sewage disposal system serves 90 percent of the municipal area. However, immediately outside the city limits, public sanitation is completely lacking. A large portion of the population are afflicted with intestinal parasites; health inspections of food are not stringent. The city sporadically collects garbage around some of the market areas.

For those who wash fresh fruits and vegetables well, boil and filter all drinking water, and take an antimalarial drug regularly, health hazards are not great within Kampala's residential areas. Allergy diseases (hay fever, asthma, sinus), colds, diarrhea, influenza, and several unidentifiable viruses constitute most maladies.

All water must be filtered because of the silt content, regardless of the purification process. Drinking water must also be boiled; as an alternative, treatment with iodine or chlorine is acceptable. Bottled water is not available. A household bleach or iodine solution should be used to disinfect fresh fruits and vegetables.

Malaria is widespread in Uganda. Four different parasites of *Plasmodia* cause four types of malaria. The type most common in Uganda is falciparum, which the old textbooks called "malignant malaria," since its

frequent complications involve the brains and kidneys, and often cause death. No mosquito-control inspection or spraying is currently taking place. A regular regime of antimalarial drugs is advised, starting two weeks before arrival in Uganda and continuing for four weeks after leaving. Chloroquine (Aralen or Nivaquin) and Fansidar are the drugs commonly used by Americans.

There is a significant AIDS risk in Uganda. Visitors and expatriates are urged to use extreme caution in order to avoid infection. Contracting tuberculosis is a risk if one is exposed over a lengthy period.

Most houses in residential areas are equipped with modern plumbing facilities. Nevertheless, ants, cockroaches, mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks are a constant, if minor, problem. Sanitation standards are not high in the market area, and food bought there should be carefully inspected and washed.

Clothing and Services

Summer-weight clothing is needed all year in Uganda. Very little is available to suit Westerners' tastes, except for the cotton prints in African designs which are always in the marketplace in Nairobi (Kenya), and sometimes in Kampala. Clothing and shoes for the entire family sometimes can be bought in local stores, but they are expensive.

Men find that tropical safari suits are the most comfortable and satisfactory. Often they wear either suits or sports shirts and slacks to work. Women need sweaters and stoles for cool evenings and during the daytime in the rainy season. Women usually wear slacks, jeans, cotton blouses, and skirts during the day.

Several dry cleaners do business in Kampala, but most laundry is done at home. A few reputable hair salons in Kampala serve both men and women, but their prices are extremely high. Of the handful of shoe repair shops, one is good; the

two or three others are mediocre. Some automobiles and radios can be repaired locally.

Fresh fruits and vegetables abound in the markets around Kampala. Fresh vegetables, such as green peppers, lettuce, carrots, potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, eggplant, and cucumbers, are always in stock. Most tropical fruits also are available and in good condition. Pears, peaches, and apples are not found in Kampala. Beef, poultry, and eggs are plentiful, but prices are high compared to those in the U.S. Good quality, fresh, lake fish is available. Pork, sausages, bacon, and frozen fish sometimes can be found in butcher shops.

Packaged pasteurized milk made by Uganda Dairy Corporation is sometimes available. Fresh milk can be bought from farmers by prior arrangement, and instant powdered milk and evaporated milk are available. Canned margarine, butter, imported coffee, and salt, though usually available, are expensive. High quality Ugandan coffee and tea are in plentiful supply. Cooking oil, which can be adulterated, is not always available and is extremely expensive. Baby foods, dried fruits, soy sauces, spices, and salad dressings are not usually sold in local markets. Several bakeries make bread and a variety of pastries.

There is a great shortage of goods. Most medicines and toiletries are both expensive and difficult to find. Toys and books must be brought from home.

Domestic Help

As good servants are scarce, constant supervision is necessary to see that work is done properly and theft is kept to a minimum. Breakage of china and glassware and some disappearance of food must be expected. These problems can be controlled with proper supervision. Both male and female servants are available for cooking and housecleaning. *Ayahs*, or nursemaids, can be hired to care for small children.

There are no European or Asian servants.

The minimum wage prescribed by the Ugandan government is very low. If servants provide their own food, they get an allowance. The average American household has a combination cook/houseboy, a gardener (if house and plot are occupied), and an *ayah* if there are small children. Single people living in apartments usually need only one servant. Most servants live in semi-detached or detached servants quarters. Day and night guards are necessary.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Jan.1 | New Year's Day |
| Jan. 26 | Victory Day |
| Mar. | |
| (2nd Mon) | Commonwealth Day |
| Mar. 8 | Women's Day |
| Mar/Apr. | Good Friday* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter* |
| Mar/Apr. | Easter Monday* |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| June 3 | Martyrs' Day |
| June 9 | Heroes' Day |
| Oct. 9 | Independence Day |
| Dec. 25 | Christmas Day |
| Dec. 26 | Boxing Day |
| | Id al-Adah* |
| | Ramadan* |
| | Id al-fitr* |

* Variable

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

The required entry visa can be obtained at either the Ugandan Embassy in Washington, D.C., or the diplomatic offices in New York. Incoming travelers must also possess cholera and yellow fever immunization certificates on the World Health Organization's standard form. It is wise, once in Uganda, to renew visas for multiple entry.

Because of rebel and bandit activity and fighting in the area along the Sudanese border, travel in the northern part of Uganda is dangerous. The area affected encompasses Apac, Gulu, Kitgum, Kotido, Lira, Moroto, Moyo, Nebbi, and Soroti Districts. The inability of the Ugandan government to ensure the safety of visitors makes any travel in the area unwise. Vehicles have been stopped and destroyed; passengers have been robbed and/or killed. There have been at least two land mine explosions on the roads north of Gulu. Additionally, random acts of violence involving American and other tourists have occurred in northern Uganda, such as a grenade attack at a tourist hotel in Arua. Bomb attacks have occurred in Kampala at various public places, all travelers should exercise extreme caution.

Travel to Murchison Falls National Park is unsafe. Three Americans were robbed in a violent attack by armed men in March 1997 near the southern entrance to the park. In addition, rebels have operated inside the park on the northern side of the Nile River. Visitors should consult U.S. Embassy officials about travel plans to Murchison Falls National Park.

Travel to western Uganda is unsafe. The Ugandan military is pursuing rebel groups in the Rwenzori Mountains, Queen Elizabeth National Park, and in portions of Kasese, Bushenyi and Rukunguri Districts. In March 1999, tourists were kidnapped and murdered in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. Travel to the southwestern corner of Uganda near the Zaire and Rwanda borders can also be risky. There have been attacks by bands of armed men in and near Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, as well as the abduction of American tourists. Visitors should consult U.S. Embassy officials about travel plans to western Uganda.

The Government of Uganda is expected to maintain laws forbidding the importation of firearms

and ammunition. Updated information should be sought.

Pets bought into Uganda must have valid health and rabies vaccination certificates. Pets will not be quarantined if they are accompanied by these certificates.

Many religions (Baha'i, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, and animist) are represented in Kampala and its environs. Christian churches include Baptist, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Seventh-Day Adventist, and Church of God. Services are usually conducted in English.

The time in Uganda is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus three hours.

Uganda uses a decimal currency of shillings and cents.

The metric system of weights and measures is used.

U.S. citizens are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Kampala and to obtain updated information on travel and security in Uganda. The U.S. Embassy

address is: P.O. Box 7007, 10-12 Parliament Avenue, Kampala; telephone: 256-41-259-792/3/5.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country:

Berg-Schlosser, D. *Political Stability and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Kenya, Tanzania, & Uganda*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990.

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Decalo, Samuel. *Psychoses of Power: African Personal Dictatorships*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988.

Dodge, Cole P., and Magne Raundalen, eds. *War, Violence & Children in Uganda*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

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Hansen, Holger Bernt, and Michael Twaddle. *Changing Uganda: The Dilemmas of Structural Adjustment & Revolutionary Change*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1991.

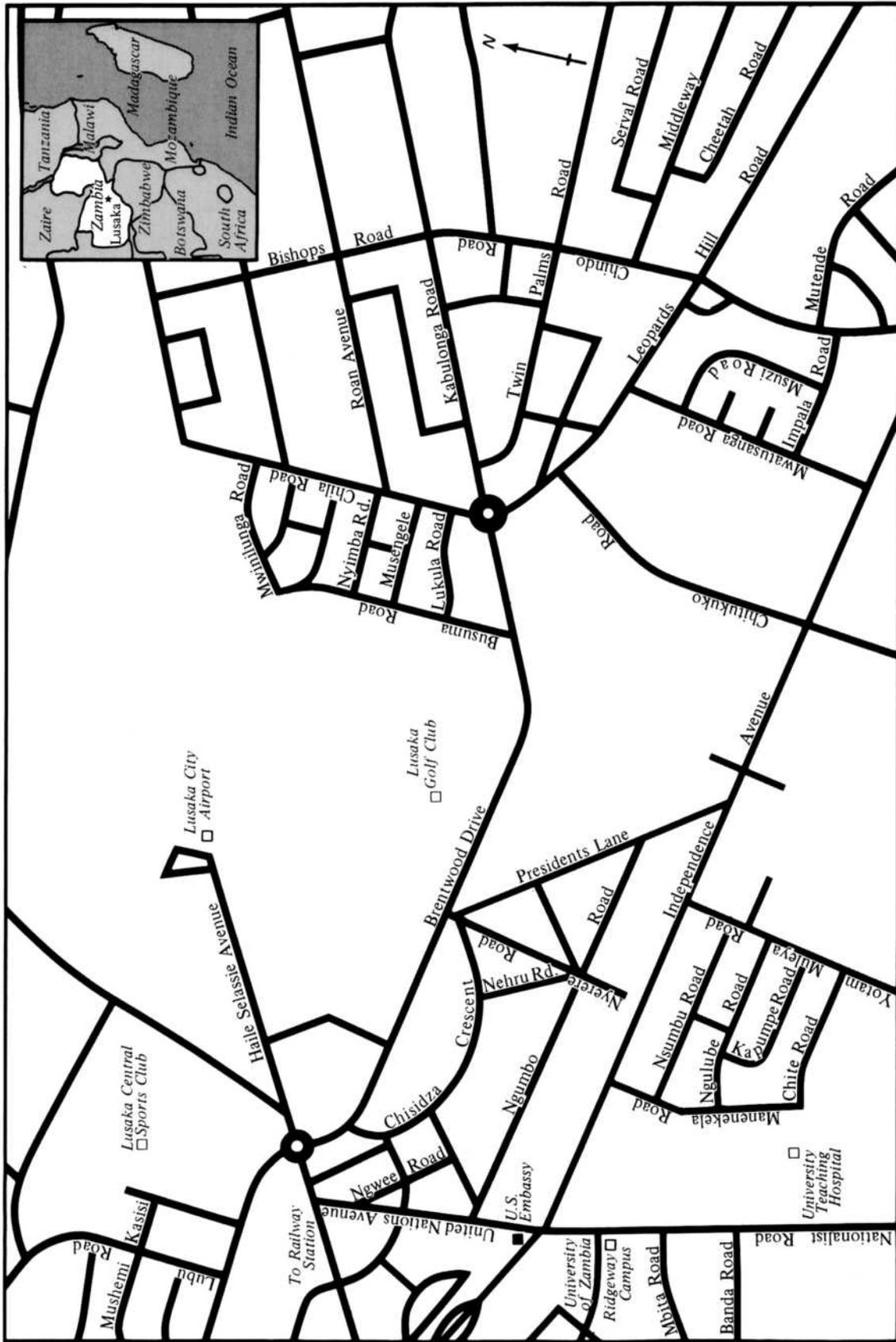
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Kisubi, Alfred. *Time Winds: Poems*. Kansas City, MO: BkMk Press—UMKC College of Arts & Sciences, 1988.

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Rupesinghe, Kumar, ed. *Conflict Resolution in Uganda*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1989.

Wiebe, Paul D., and Cole P. Dode, eds. *Beyond Crisis: Development Issues in Uganda*. Atlanta, GA: African Studies Assn., 1987.



Lusaka, Zambia

ZAMBIA

Republic of Zambia

Major Cities:

Lusaka

Other Cities:

Chingola, Kabwe, Kitwe, Livingstone, Luanshya, Mbala, Mongu, Mufulira, Ndola

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report dated February 1997. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The best thing about Lusaka is the climate—it's wonderful. If you enjoy outdoor activities, i.e., horseback riding, golf, camping, etc. this is the place to be. It is also within reasonable driving distance of Victoria Falls, several game parks and Harare.

ZAMBIA is one of the continent's newer, developing nations. Its intense concern over minority rule in southern Africa, its relative affluence, and its prestige among non-aligned nations worldwide accord it a singular measure of importance.

Formerly known as Northern Rhodesia, Zambia was a British protectorate from 1923 until 1953, when it

became one of the three territories of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. On October 24, 1964, the country achieved independence as the Republic of Zambia, 75 years after first coming under the administration of the British South Africa Company.

MAJOR CITIES

Lusaka

Lusaka, with a population of almost 1.7 million, lies 4,200 feet above sea level and spreads across a rolling plain. The city is well planned and landscaped. Several wide boulevards planted with trees and shrubs divide the city into sections. In the most affluent residential areas, large and comfortable ranch-style houses preside over wide lawns and gardens. In other parts of the city, the City Council has constructed substantial, modest-income housing. Shanty towns exist on Lusaka's outskirts, and the city itself has areas of squalor and congestion like many other African capitals.

Lusaka's main shopping area is a boulevard called Cairo Road. Adjacent to this boulevard are several streets of Asian and African general stores that sell traditional African

staples: blankets, cooking utensils, kerosene lamps, cornmeal, clothes and shoes. An industrial park lies at the northwestern end of town. Smaller shopping areas are scattered throughout the city.

Food

A fairly wide variety of fresh produce is available in local markets. In addition to tropical fruits, you can buy oranges, apples, pineapple, strawberries, grapefruit, and lemons in season. Vegetables abound: potatoes, onions, tomatoes, carrots, mushrooms, spinach, lettuce, cabbage, green beans, peas, broccoli, garlic, celery, beets, green and red peppers, cucumbers, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, pumpkin, and squash. Some shops even offer Chinese cabbage and bean sprouts.

On the economy, one can buy sugar, molasses, jam, coffee, tea, condiments and spices (curry powder, cinnamon, coriander, cloves, nutmeg). Supermarkets stock flour, pasta, sunflower oil, household laundry soap and cleaning products. Keep in mind that these are made in Zambia, South Africa or Zimbabwe and may not be exactly the same as American products. Imported goods in local stores are expensive.

Lusaka butcher shops sell good quality chicken, beef and pork, including sausages and bacon, at

reasonable prices. Baby food and formula are sometimes available on the economy, but most people find these unsatisfactory. Dietetic and diabetic foods are not generally stocked.

Clothing

Summer clothing is worn eight months of the year. Moderately heavy clothing is necessary during the cooler winter months. Remember the seasons are the reverse of those in the U.S. Lusaka nighttime temperatures can get as low as 40–50 degrees fahrenheit from mid-May to mid-August. Those arriving are advised to pack some light wool or wool-blend clothing in their suitcases. The rainy season (November through April) requires lightweight raincoats (rain boots for children) and umbrellas. Include a good supply of clothes in your shipment. Local shops are not a reliable source due to sporadic availability, poor quality and high prices.

Bring a sufficient supply of shoes, as those locally manufactured are of poor quality. Imported shoes are rarely available and are expensive. Fabric shops offer a variety of cotton, rayon and polyester fabrics suitable for clothing and home furnishings.

Men: Men customarily wear lightweight tropical-worsted or dacron blended suits at the office and official functions, although at least one wool, informal suit is a good idea. During the hot summer months, many men wear slacks with a shirt and tie. For restaurant dining and unofficial events, sport shirts and slacks (without ties) or safari suits are acceptable. Golfers who prefer to wear shorts are required to also wear knee-high socks.

Women: Women wear short-sleeved or sleeveless cotton, linen or lightweight fabric dresses, cotton and linen skirts, or tailored trousers and blouses for the office. Sweaters or lightweight jackets are also needed during winter months. Informal long and short dresses are normally worn to cocktail parties and dinners. For barbecues, pool

side, and patio parties, women often wear long or short sundresses, jeans, slacks, skirts, pantsuits, or shorts with casual tops, depending on the season and time of day. For cooler evenings, sweaters or lightweight wraps or shawls may be required.

Children: Bring a good supply of all children's lightweight summer clothing, swimwear, tennis and sandal-type shoes, and sweaters. Children wear mostly cotton dresses, shorts, jeans and T-shirts.

Supplies And Services

Supplies: U.S. brands deodorants and other toiletries, cosmetics, feminine supplies, medicines and over-the-counter drug items, laundry detergent and cleansers, paper supplies, and other common household items are not generally available. Those found on the economy are usually not up to American standards and/or very expensive.

Basic Services: People who have found good tailors and dressmakers in Lusaka are happy to recommend them to newcomers. Many tailors and dressmakers can copy ready-made garments as well as follow printed patterns. Dry-cleaners are of mixed reliability. Haircuts, perms, manicures and pedicures are available.

Religious Activities

Religions represented in Zambia include but are not limited to (in alphabetical order): Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baha'i, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Science, Church of Christ, Greek Orthodox, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist, and various independent Pentecostals.

Education

American Embassy School of Lusaka (AESL), founded in 1986, offers a curriculum designed to meet or exceed the standards of better public schools in the U.S. The school enrolls children aged 2 to 14 years, starting with preschool for 2–4 year

olds and ending with grade 8 for 13–14 year olds. Class size is restricted to 10–16 children in a class with one teacher and 17–19 children in a class with two instructional staff (a teacher and an assistant teacher). AESL is accredited in the U.S., as well as Europe, and is sponsored by the United States State Department. The school's curriculum emphasizes the academic subjects of English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies and includes art, music, physical education, computers and information technology, and library skills. Children in grades 1-8 have daily French lessons. Throughout the curriculum there is an emphasis on helping children learn about and appreciate Zambia's people, culture and environment. Special programs are provided for children who are learning English as a second language and for children with learning disabilities.

The school has moved into a new, purpose-built facility on a 15 acre campus with spacious classrooms, a well-stocked library media center with video and computer areas, specialized rooms for art, music, and science, and extensive sports facilities, including playgrounds with equipment for younger children, soccer/softball fields, tennis courts, a running track, a covered basketball court and a large swimming pool with changing rooms. The parent community is encouraged to use the school's sports facilities.

A few other schools in Lusaka enroll children of expatriates. In its primary section, the International School of Lusaka uses American materials, but all other schools are based on the British, South African, or Zambian systems of education. These include Nkhwazi School, Baobab Trust School, Lusaka International Community School and Lake Road School.

Sports

Zambia's most popular spectator sport is soccer. Throughout the country, teams compete in various leagues.

Facilities are available both in Lusaka and in the Copperbelt for cricket, field hockey, golf, tennis, squash, bowling (on the greens), and swimming. The Municipal Council operates an Olympic-sized public swimming pool in Lusaka near the International School. Entrance fees are nominal. The Lusaka Sports Club, which is quite run-down, maintains several clay tennis courts, a billiards room, squash courts, a swimming pool and a children's wading pool. It also sponsors soccer, cricket, field hockey, badminton, squash, and tennis teams.

Golf is quite popular in Zambia among both expatriates and Zambians. Three golf clubs in Lusaka have excellent courses: the Lusaka Golf Club and the Chainama Hills Golf Club (both 18 holes) and the Chilinga Golf Club (9 holes). A polo club sponsors periodic horse shows. The Lusaka Flying Club, located at the Lusaka City Airport, provides flying lessons.

All sports items cost more than in the U.S. Zambia boasts vast wildlife resources and hunting is popular. Hunting licenses for small game are inexpensive, but difficult to obtain. Licenses for large game are expensive and more difficult to obtain. Game is available for the enthusiast who has a rugged disposition and the necessary equipment, including a four-wheel-drive vehicle. A hunting safari can be costly, but photo safaris are quite reasonable.

Foreigners and Zambians enjoy fishing and many Zambians depend on fish as their chief protein source. About 35 miles from Lusaka is the Kafue River, which offers fair-to-good angling for bream, barbel (a type of catfish), and a variety of large mouth perch. Also, within 30 miles of Lusaka are many small man-made ponds that offer bream and barbel. Although fishing is generally possible throughout the year, the best time is between April and November. The Zambezi River offers perhaps the best tiger fishing grounds in Africa. Kasaba Bay on Lake Tanganyika is renowned for

its Nile perch and nkupi (yellow-bellied bream). Other good fishing grounds are Lakes Kariba, Samfya and Kalabo.

Horseback riding is popular. Several stables are here. The Lusaka Gymkhana Club and the Lusaka Pony Club sponsor periodic horse shows. At the Lusaka Polo and Hunt Club, polo is played every weekend from March to October. Membership fees and dues for these clubs are reasonable. The cost of purchasing and stabling horses in Lusaka is less than in the U.S. Tack and riding apparel are not available locally. Riding instruction for children is available, although the quality varies.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

As a tourist center, Lusaka is ideally situated. It lies at the junction of the main highways to the north, east, south and west. Lusaka has an international airport with convenient airlinks to the tourist attractions of Luangwa Valley and Victoria Falls. Zambia's natural heritage offers unequalled opportunities for the tourist to view waterfalls, rivers, lakes and vast wildlife sanctuaries. In recent years, the Zambia National Tourist Board has made a determined effort to improve tourist facilities.

Victoria Falls, known by its ancient name of "Mosi-o-Tunya" (The Smoke That Thunders), is a must stop for all visitors to Zambia. The falls (twice as high and half again as wide as Niagara) are 295 miles, or a six-hour drive, from Lusaka near the border town of Livingstone. Accommodations range in cost and comfort from the Intercontinental Hotel to rustic cottages. Just outside of Livingstone is a small drive through park with 1,300 varieties of animals, reptiles and birds, including lion, giraffe, zebra, white rhino, antelope, warthog and bush pig. Other attractions near Victoria Falls are the National Museum, which houses many cultural and anthropological exhibits; the Maramba Cultural Village; and

white water rafting trips organized by the American Company Sobek.

Zambian game viewing, walking safaris and hunting safaris are unparalleled. South Luangwa National Park is outstanding, comparable to the famous parks of East Africa in variety of game present. Kafue and Lochinvar National Parks offer conducted walking or Land Rover safaris, where visitors can get quite close to most wildlife. Luangwa and Kafue have inexpensive self-catering cottages with kitchens, as well as numerous full-service lodges. Each park is approachable by road, but visitors to Luangwa usually prefer to fly because of the long distance and poor roads (400 miles northeast of Lusaka).

Lake Tanganyika is accessible by road but nearly 700 miles from Lusaka. Lake Kariba, conveniently situated 93 miles south of the capital is a favorite weekend resort for Lusaka residents. Here you can stay on the Zambia side or cross into Zimbabwe. The area offers boating, fishing, water sports and swimming. Another option at Lake Kariba is spending your time on a house boat and cruising the lake.

Entertainment

Most Americans entertain in their homes. There are several movie houses in Lusaka; few non-Zambians attend them.

Lusaka restaurants are in the moderate to expensive range; dining quality ranges from fair to good. The Intercontinental Hotel has a coffee shop, barbecue grill and an expensive restaurant. The Pamodzi Hotel also has a coffee shop, an a-la-carte restaurant, and a poolside snack bar. Other restaurants offering both lunch and dinner are: Arabian Nights (Pakistani/steak); Danny's (Persian/Asian); Golden Spur, Holiday Inn (steak/mixture); Gringo's Grill (steak); Jayline (steak/Creole); Lilayi Lodge (buffet/a-la-carte); Marco Polo (Italian); Polo Grill (steak); and Shenai (Indian/Chinese). The Intercontinental has a casino.



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University buildings in Lusaka, Zambia

Social Activities

Among Americans: The largest American get-togethers occur at Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The American-Canadian Women's Club is open to all American and Canadian women and wives of Americans and Canadians. Activities include monthly afternoon meetings at the homes of members featuring guest speakers and refreshments. The Club runs special holiday events for children and evening parties for members and their partners.

International Contacts: Official representatives of 89 nations and 30 international agencies are accredited to Zambia. Of these, 74 are resident in Lusaka. Also present are many international business visitors interested in the copper industry, government contracts, and development opportunities. Another source of international contact is

among the expatriates: professors, doctors, engineers, missionaries and other professionals who come to Zambia from around the world to assist in development projects.

OTHER CITIES

CHINGOLA, 30 miles northwest of Kitwe, is a large city which has expanded with the growth of the copper-mining industry. It has a current population of 186,000.

KABWE (formerly called Broken Hill/Kabwe), 50 miles north of Lusaka on the Great North Road, is a city of historic prominence. In the early 1900s, the Broken Hill mine was opened, introducing Zambia to foreign mining interests. One of Africa's first hydroelectric power plants began operations here in 1924 to supply power to the mines. Archaeologists found human and animal fossils in the mines in 1921,

leading to the discovery of the "Rhodesian man." Kabwe is also the home of Zambia Railways and of a major trucking firm. The city is surrounded by large, fertile farming areas. Corn and tobacco are cultivated in the large farming areas surrounding the town. The population is approximately 210,000.

KITWE, with a population of 439,000, is about 175 miles north of Lusaka. Several small international communities of business representatives are in the area. Express and local trains from Lusaka serve Kitwe, and many amenities (although not equal to those in Lusaka) are available. The Edinburgh and Nkama Hotels are both modern and convenient. Taxis or car hire are easily obtained. Kitwe is Zambia's second largest city and is connected by rail, air, and road with major cities of central and southern Africa. The city has a large European population.

LIVINGSTONE, a marketing, distribution, and tourist center in southern Zambia, is close to Victoria Falls. This city of 108,000 was the capital of Northern Rhodesia from 1907 to 1935. It has several good hotels, among them the Intercontinental and the North-Western, the latter a favorite gathering spot for expatriates. Frequent buses from Lusaka serve Livingstone. The city is a major distribution point for agricultural products and timber. Livingstone has several nearby tourist spots, including Victoria Falls, Lake Kariba, Livingstone Game Park, and Kafue and Wankie National Parks. The Livingstone Museum has a collection of ethnological, historical, and archaeological exhibits, including those related to the explorer-missionary David Livingstone. The population in 1988 was 98,000.

Known as “the garden town of the copper belt,” **LUANSHYA** is a city of 125,000, about 150 miles north of Lusaka. It is the terminus of a rail branch from Ndola and is linked to other cities in the province. In addition to mining, there are also machine shops and factories in Luanshya.

MBALA is a city of 16,000 in the extreme north, off Lake Tanganyika. Hills provide a majestic backdrop for the town, with the Kalambo Falls—nesting place of the maribou stork—nearby.

MONGU is a fascinating tourist stop located in the Western Province, some 300 miles west of Lusaka. Two noteworthy ceremonies performed here are the *Kuomboka* in March and the *Kufulehela* in July. These correspond to the rainy season, so actual dates fluctuate. Lozi basketwork and carvings are on display in the town’s curio shop. A thermal power station at Mongu supplies electricity to the area. An airfield is located in Mongu. The current population is approximately 37,000.

MUFULIRA is a principal copper-mining center in north-central Zambia, southeast of the Zaire border.

Smelting and refining of copper as well as an explosives plant are the city’s surface industries. Mufulira’s population is close to 131,000.

NDOLA, 175 miles north of Lusaka on the Zaire border, is Zambia’s second largest city. It is linked by rail to the capital, Lusaka. Its more than 348,000 residents work in copper and sugar refineries, tire and car factories, and service industries. Educational opportunities in Ndola include the National Technical College and the Ndola campus of the University of Zambia.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography And Climate

Zambia, in central southern Africa, is mostly on a high, level plateau, 3,000-5,000 feet above sea level. Lusaka is one of the higher points in the country. Zambia, bordered by Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Angola and Zaire, has an area of 290,586 square miles (a little larger than Texas).

All of Zambia lies within 18 degrees of the Equator. The climate is pleasant and rivals that of southern California. Humidity is quite low except during the rainy season (November-April), and the temperature rarely exceeds 95 degrees Fahrenheit; it can get into the 40s during the winter months (June and July). Summer clothing is worn mid-August to mid-May. Light woens are useful in winter (mid-May to mid-August). Generally, summer evenings are cool and winter days are sunny and warm.

Annual rainfall during the rainy season averages 34 inches. At the season’s beginning and end, showers are brief. During January, however, heavier rains punctuated by thunderstorms often occur.

Population

Zambia’s estimated population in 2001 was 9.8 million. Expatriates, mostly British or South African, live mainly in Lusaka and in the Copperbelt in Northern Zambia. There are about some Americans living in Zambia, most of whom are missionaries. Zambia also has a small but economically important Asian population, most of whom are Indians. The annual growth rate is 1.93 percent.

There are more than 70 tribal groups; English is the official language, with about 70 local languages and dialects. The principal ones are Bemba, Tonga, Nyanja, Lozi, Luvale, Ndembu (Lundu) and Kaonde. Some tribes are small, and only two have enough people to constitute at least 10 percent of the population. The predominant religion is a blend of traditional beliefs and Christianity.

The major cities are the capital - Lusaka (population 1.2 million), Ndola (348,000), Kitwe (305,000), and Kabwe (213,000).

Like many African countries, Zambia’s new African elite consists of high government officials and successful business representatives. Next in salary status are lesser officials and urban managerial employees. Mine workers, factory laborers, and clerical and manual employees form a third social stratum in Lusaka, Livingstone and on the Copperbelt. Most Zambians in rural areas are subsistence farmers growing corn, soybeans, cotton, sugar, sunflower seeds, wheat, sorghum, millet, cassava, tobacco and various vegetable and fruit crops.

Public Institutions

After 27 years of one party rule, Zambia experienced a dramatic transformation in October 1991. After a vigorous multi-party campaign, the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) won a resounding victory and established a new government committed to democracy, respect for human

rights, and economic reform. The President of Zambia, currently Levy Patrick Mwanasa, has executive power and appoints a 23-member Cabinet. The 150-member National Assembly has legislative powers. The President can veto legislation enacted by the National Assembly, and the Assembly can overrule the veto by a two-thirds vote. The judiciary is independent.

Arts, Science And Education

Artistic and intellectual activity in Lusaka is usually an informal affair with people gathering at one another's homes. A few organized societies for the arts exist, prominent among which is the Lusaka Musical Society that offers several professional performances annually.

Zambia requires seven years of compulsory education but attendance is less than 50 percent of those eligible for grades 1-7. Less than 20 percent of primary school graduates are admitted to secondary school. The literacy rate is 78 percent.

The University of Zambia, founded in 1966, is the educational center of Lusaka. The University maintains a library, sponsors lectures and seminars, and hosts cultural events of variable quality.

Copperbelt University, established first as a regional branch of the University of Zambia in 1977 and opened as a separate institution in 1989, includes the schools of Business, Environmental Studies, and Technology. Teachers' training colleges, Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Commerce, and other primarily vocational-technical schools complete the picture of Zambian tertiary educational institutions.

The fine arts in Zambia are still in the developmental stage, but a few painters and printmakers have achieved recognition beyond Zambia's borders.

The Zambia Cultural Services maintains a handicrafts shop with objects drawn from rural areas throughout Zambia and offers occasional outdoor performances by the national Dance Troupe at Kabwata Cultural Village. The National Collection, housed in Lusaka's Mulungushi Hall, is an interesting exhibition of works of Zambian artists. The nation's best museums are the Livingstone Museum in Southern Province, Mbala's Moto-moto Museum in Northern Province, and the Choma Museum (on the way to Livingstone).

Commerce And Industry

Zambia is one of Sub-Saharan Africa's most highly urbanized countries. About half of the country's 9.8 million people are concentrated in a few urban zones strung along the major transportation corridors, while rural areas are underpopulated. Unemployment and underemployment are serious. Per capita annual incomes are lower than their levels at independence, and at \$880 place the country among the world's poorest nations. Social indicators continue to decline, particularly in measurements of life expectancy at birth, currently only 37 years, and maternal and infant mortality. The high population growth rate, near 2 percent per annum, makes it difficult for per capita income to increase. The country's rate of economic growth can support neither rapid population growth, nor the debilitating effects on maternal and child health resulting from it. Inflation is extremely high, at 27.3%.

Agriculture provides the main livelihood for 80% of Zambia's population. Maize (corn) is the principal cash crop as well as the staple food. Other important crops include soybeans, cotton, sugar, sunflower seeds, wheat, sorghum, millet, cassava, tobacco and various vegetable and fruit crops. Zambia has the potential for significantly increasing its agricultural output, as cur-

rently less than 20 percent of its arable land is cultivated.

The Zambian economy has historically been based on the copper mining industry, which has accounted for a significant portion of the gross domestic product (GDP), from one-third to one-half of government revenues, and more than 75 percent of Zambia's foreign exchange earnings. Due to a decline in world copper prices starting in the mid-1970s, lack of investment to increase productivity and output, nationalization and mismanagement, and socialist economic policies, the copper mining base of the economy has eroded over time.

Beginning in the 1970s, Zambia relied heavily on socialist-style planning and administrative controls to manage its economy; on the public sector - especially parastatal enterprises - to undertake investment and generate economic growth and employment; and on international borrowing to finance public sector investments and to support levels of consumption that proved to be unsustainable. As a result, in late 1991, the Zambian economy faced many problems: basic goods and services were in short supply; the money supply was growing rapidly because of the manner in which the government's domestic debt was financed; military expenditures were rising while social sector expenditures were declining; tax compliance was low, the budget deficit was large and increasing; many parastatal companies were heavily indebted and suffered crippling losses; private investment had collapsed; business and consumer confidence had eroded; external debt was not being serviced; a parallel market in foreign exchange was flourishing; asset holders were transferring their capital out of the country and switching to foreign currency for local transactions; the country's physical infrastructure was rapidly deteriorating; and Zambia had neither food reserves nor the financial resources to deal with natural disasters and emergencies.

The present government came to power after democratic, multi-party elections in November 1991, committed to an economic recovery program. Since these economic reforms began, Zambia has suffered droughts (three years out of the five) and falling copper production.

Although growth has been slow, positive effects are emerging. All domestic and external trade, except petroleum products, has been left to the private sector, resulting in a greatly improved availability of consumer and producer products in the market.

Transportation

Local

Buses are generally unsuitable and unsafe for commuter travel. Taxis and rental cars are expensive (Avis is available). Taxis tend to be unsafe.

Regional

Paved roads lead from Lusaka to the Copperbelt, Livingstone, Tunduma (on the Tanzanian border), Mongu (near Angola to the west), and to the Malawi border. Dirt or gravel roads connect the capital with other parts of the country. Paved roads usually have potholes.

Lusaka has an international airport, with flights to Europe, the United States and other cities in Africa originating with either British Airlines, KLM or South African Air. Aero Zambia and Zambian Express fly to points in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Ndola and Livingstone in Zambia. Eastern Air flies to Chipata, Mfuwe (Luangwa Game Park) and Kasama. Flights are often full during British and South African school holiday times and travelers should make reservations well in advance.

Zambia Railways offers domestic passenger service, but because passenger service is unreliable and unsafe and rail travel is generally slower than travel by car, few foreigners travel by rail. TAZARA Railway operates to Dar es Salaam

several times a week. It is a fascinating (albeit very long) trip for those who do not expect European train travel standards. First class approximates European second class coaches. At the southern end of the line of rail, Zambia Railways ties into the Zimbabwean rail system connecting with the Mozambique Railroad coming up from the Indian Ocean port of Beira, and with the South African railway system. Bus service is also available to major points in Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as Johannesburg.

Zambia's distance from the capitals of the neighboring African states makes air travel the most comfortable, convenient and popular way to travel to and from Zambia.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Local service is adequate, but repair times can be lengthy. Direct dialing and trunk booking connect Zambia to the U.S. and many other locations in the world but can be extremely expensive. Obtain an AT&T calling card to take advantage of the AT&T USA Direct line, which offers much cheaper rates.

International cable service is generally good, but domestic service is still questionable.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

The principal papers are the daily *Times of Zambia*, *Daily Mail*, *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Mail*, *Post*, *Financial Mail*, *National Mirror*, and *Sun*.

Lusaka has several commercial bookstores. None has a wide or dependable selection. The University of Zambia's bookstore usually offers numerous titles on Zambia and Africa.

Lusaka has several free libraries, including the Municipal Library in the main business area. The National Archives Library has a good collection of books on Africa. USIS and the British Council each

operates a library. Books are limited to American and British subject matter, respectively. The American Embassy School of Lusaka has a fine children's library.

Health And Medicine

Medical Facilities

In Zambia most hospitals and outpatient clinics are government subsidized, and care is provided at relatively low cost. Unfortunately, these clinics and hospitals are far below American standards, poorly staffed, with virtually no medicine available and limited testing capabilities.

Local dental facilities are adequate for routine care, such as fillings and cleaning, but complete any special treatment (i.e., crowns, periodontal or oral surgical procedures) before coming. Additional dental clinics will be opening with more capabilities such as crowns and partial dentures which are made in South Africa. Ophthalmologists are scarce. Several opticians practice in Lusaka, but glasses are expensive. Purchase contact lenses and glasses (including extra pairs) before arrival in the country. Bring eye prescriptions with you in case you need emergency replacement. Bring any cleaning solution/equipment for contact lenses with you since you won't be able to find these in Lusaka. Most medicines are difficult to find in Lusaka. If you take medicine routinely for any long-standing medical condition, be sure to bring adequate supplies with you.

Community Health

The sanitation level in Lusaka is fair. City tap water is not potable. Testing of water in many of the residences showed that the chlorine levels were far below what is needed to make the city or bore hole (well) water acceptable for drinking. The local water lacks fluoride. Cholera and other diarrhea diseases are also endemic but should not affect the U.S. community when water is filtered and proper food handling and hand-washing are practiced. Pas-

teurized milk is available and is considered safe to use.

Preventive Measures

Automobile accidents probably present the greatest risk to personnel. Therefore, it is particularly important to wear seat belts and to have car seats for infants and small children. The condition of other motor vehicles on the road is quite poor, so defensive driving is very important. Avoid night driving whenever possible, as most roads are without street lights, and many cars do not have proper headlights or taillights.

Malaria is a constantly changing and challenging disease. Malaria is endemic, and all personnel should begin taking malaria prophylaxis two weeks prior to arrival.

Other measures to prevent mosquito bites are very important.

Consider all bodies of water (lakes, rivers, dams) to be infested with bilharzia. Anyone swimming, wading or using these waters will be at risk for developing bilharzia. Use only treated pools for swimming.

A shot record is required for entry into Zambia. Although no vaccines are strictly required for entry, yellow fever is required if entering from an endemic area. It is valid for ten years. Immunizations for typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, rabies, hepatitis A and B, polio and meningitis are strongly recommended.

Wear protective clothing to protect against snake bites, especially for travel in rural areas.

Some well-staffed hospitals with limited medical supplies are in the rural areas, but the distances between them are often great.

AIDS and HIV

The most quoted figures for HIV prevalence in Zambia range between 25 to 30 percent, especially in urban areas such as Lusaka. HIV/AIDS continues to be a large and difficult health problem in Zambia in spite of many government

and donor-sponsored programs to supply information and prevention. The death rate due to AIDS and AIDS-related illnesses appears to still be escalating.

Since HIV/AIDS is not casually transmitted, this situation should pose minimal risk to Americans posted here. The health unit periodically checks any local clinic or dental clinic to whom American personnel may be referred with special emphasis on sterilization of equipment and single use of all disposable items.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage

Travelers, including Foreign Service personnel, temporary duty personnel, consultants, experts and any official or nonofficial visitors, must obtain visas from the Zambian Embassy in Washington, D.C., or at the Zambian Mission to the U.N. in New York. All travelers should also have a South African visa in the event a medical evacuation to that country is necessary.

Currency, Banking, And Weights And Measures

Zambia uses a decimal currency. The kwacha (which means dawn) is the main currency unit. Currency notes come in the following denominations: 10,000, 5,000, 1,000, 500, 100, 50 and 20. The exchange rate in January 2001 was 4,024.53 kwacha to one U.S. dollar.

Facilities

Banking facilities in Lusaka are satisfactory. A growing number of major commercial banks operate in Lusaka, including one American bank.

Travelers checks are easily cashed at banks and hotels, but not at all shops. Money cannot be withdrawn from automatic teller machines unless the traveler has an account set up in Zambia. American Express, Visa, MasterCard and other credit cards are accepted by some hotels, shops and restaurants in Zambia and surrounding countries.

Zambia follows the metric system for weights and measures.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan.1 New Year's Day
 Mar.
 (2nd Sat) Youth Day
 Mar.
 (2nd Mon) Commonwealth Day)
 Mar/Apr. Good Friday*
 Mar/Apr. Holy Saturday*
 Mar/Apr. Easter*
 Mar/Apr. Easter Monday*
 May 1 Labor Day
 May 25 Africa Day
 July
 (1st Mon) Heroes' Day
 July
 (After Heroes'
 Day) Unity Day
 Aug.
 (1st Mon) Farmer's Day
 Oct. 24 Independence Day
 Dec. 25 Christmas Day
 *variable

RECOMMENDED READING

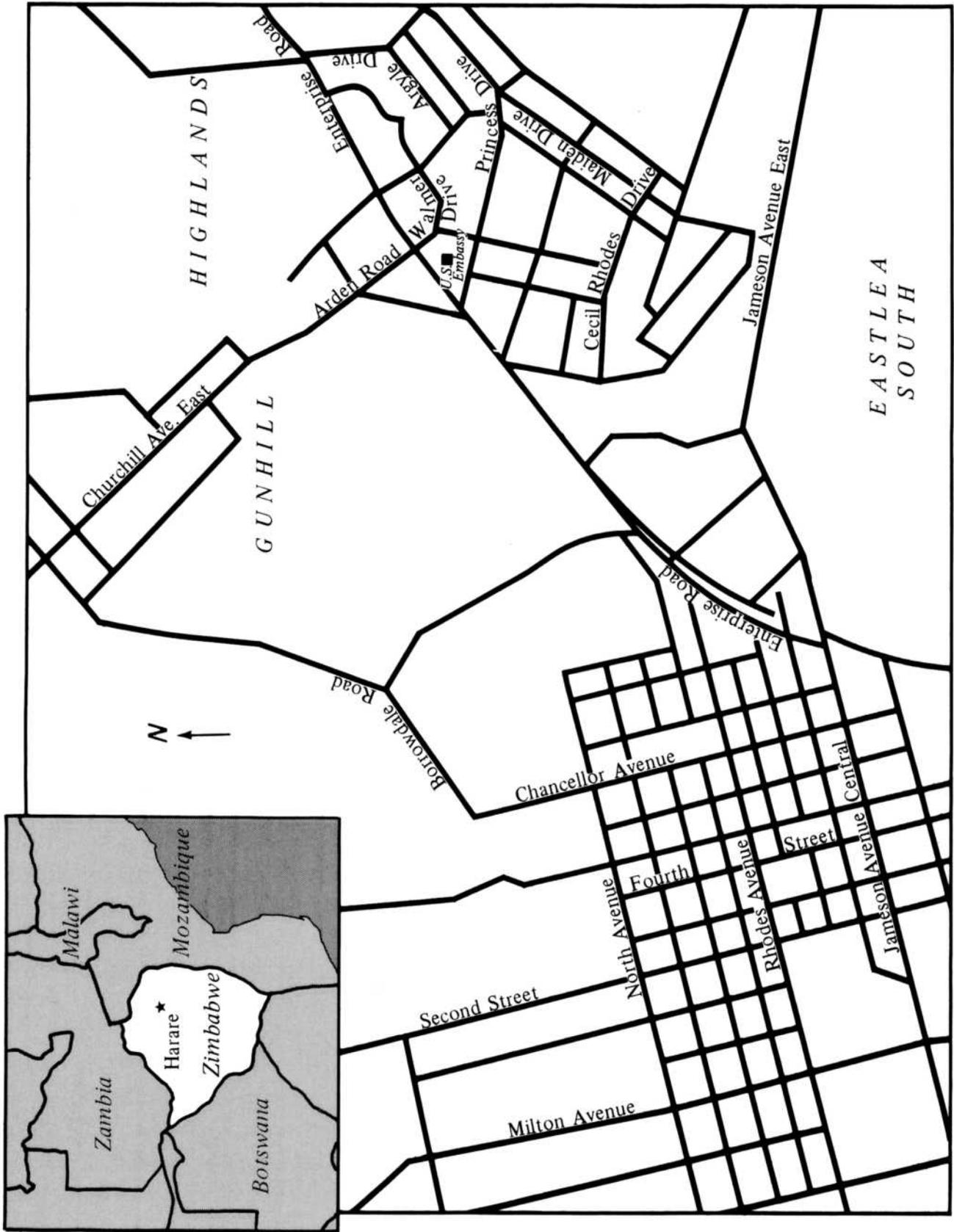
These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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In addition to the above books, the Wildlife Conservation Society of Zambia has a small selection of films available for loan. Particularly worth viewing is the documentary, "Last Kingdom of the Elephants," which was filmed in Zambia's Luangwa Valley and is narrated by the late Orson Welles.



Harare, Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE

Republic of Zimbabwe

Major Cities:

Harare, Bulawayo

Other Cities:

Gweru, Hwange, Kadoma, Kwe Kwe, Masvingo, Mutare, Nyanda

EDITOR'S NOTE

This chapter was adapted from the Department of State Post Report 2000 for Zimbabwe. Supplemental material has been added to increase coverage of minor cities, facts have been updated, and some material has been condensed. Readers are encouraged to visit the Department of State's web site at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most recent information available on travel to this country.

INTRODUCTION

The word "Zimbabwe" derives from the Shona *dzimba dza mabwe* (house of stones). It has been written that one of the most striking features of Zimbabwe is the depth of its historical roots; that the past of Zimbabwe can be followed, through both traditions and documents, as a continuous story for five centuries.

With more than a passing resemblance to a magazine's best-of issue cover, Zimbabwe is a beautiful country to visit. The cities are bright and well-organized havens; the hinterlands are positively bursting with gorgeousness, both four-legged and furry, wild and winged, spiky and splashy.

Bantu-speaking farmers were the first occupants of the Great Zimbabwe site in the south of the country. As early as the 11th century, some foundations and stonework were in place, and the settlement, generally regarded as the nascent Shona society, became the trading capital of the wealthiest and most powerful society in southeastern Africa. In the 19th century European gold seekers and ivory hunters were moving into Shona territory. The best known of these was Cecil John Rhodes who envisioned a corridor of British-style "civilization." Sanctioned by Queen Victoria, white settlers swarmed in, and by 1911 there were some 24,000 settlers.

Ian Smith became Rhodesian President in 1964 and began pressing for independence. When he realized that Britain's conditions for cutting the tether would not be accepted by Rhodesia's whites, he made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence, which the UN declared illegal. Increasingly fierce guerilla warfare ensued and whites began to abandon their homes and farms. Smith was forced to call a general nonracial election and finally had to hand over leadership. In 1980 Zimbabwe joined the ranks of Africa's independent nations.

In Zimbabwe traditional arts include pottery, basketry, textiles,

jewelry, and carving. Shona sculpture, a melding of African folklore with European artistic training, has been evolving over the past few decades.

Music has always been an important part of cultural life. Traditional musical instruments include the marimba, a richly toned wooden xylophone, and the mbira, a device more commonly known as a thumb piano.

English is the official language of Zimbabwe, but it is a first language for only about 2% of the population. The rest of the people are native speakers of Bantu languages, the two most prominent of which are Shona and Sindebele.

As one of the world's newest nations, Zimbabwe offers the rare combination of an exciting and evolving political and social scene and, in its capital of Harare, a pleasant living environment.

MAJOR CITIES

Harare

Harare is a pleasant city located in the north-central part of Zimbabwe. It is the seat of government and the



Aerial view of Harare, Zimbabwe

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country's cultural, transportation, and communications center. Harare was first established by British settlers in the 1890s and has a modern downtown and numerous attractive residential neighborhoods. The brilliant colors of the flowering trees contrast sharply with the city's modern architecture. Since independence, residential suburbs have become fully integrated, although a large percentage of the black population still reside in a number of surrounding high density suburbs.

Harare proper has several major hotels of international standard, a national art gallery/museum, 12 movie theaters, a choice of good restaurants, and a few nightclubs. Extensive parks and sports and recreational facilities, including thoroughbred racing, tennis, golf, trail riding, horseback riding lessons, squash, and swimming are available. Entertaining is often done in homes or private clubs. A car is essential, as residential areas are

spread out. Religious services are available for Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, and other denominations. Hobby, art, theater, dance, and musical groups are active.

Supermarkets and department stores provide shopping facilities comparable to a small American city, though with a much more limited selection of goods. Most necessities are locally produced and usually available. A wide variety of products are now available on the market. New and diversified shopping centers have been built in the northern suburbs, thereby decreasing the need for people residing in those areas to shop in the city center.

Utilities

Both electricity and water are generally reliable in Harare, although the local electricity company may occasionally practice a brief period of load shedding. Most houses have generators. All electrical current is

220, 50 cycles. Adapter plugs (to the Zimbabwean three square prongs) can be purchased locally. All appliances provided are electric, including cooking ranges. Most appliances can be purchased locally, but prices are considerably higher and quality often lower than comparable equipment in the U.S.

Food

Over the last couple of years Zimbabwe has seen tremendous changes with regard to the quantity and quality of items stocked in local stores. However, over the past two years, prices have more than doubled. There are local cheeses and you can buy processed cheese from South Africa. Cottage cheese, cream cheese, yogurt, and sour and fresh cream taste a bit different, but work well in recipes.

Most spices and basic gravy mixes and food colors are available (not pure essences though), as are French and English mustards, and

Heinz Ketchup. Hellmans Mayonnaise and Miracle Whip are now in most stores. You can get pickles though they don't taste like their American counterparts; Greek olives, bottled salad dressings are available (not as many varieties, and you cannot find Ranch). Vegetable oil is available as is olive oil. Occasionally, you can buy extra virgin olive oil, but if you use it a lot, bring it. Plain rice is plentiful; most baking products are available locally (baking powder, cream of tartar, baking soda, dry yeast, cooking chocolate and cocoa), however, you may find that they do not always taste exactly like U.S. brands. Supermarkets now carry Duncan Hines Cake Mixes. Most varieties of nuts are available (some expensive), but pecans and macadamias are locally grown and inexpensive. Local and imported cereals are available.

Tuna is available in brine and oil. Juices are available in boxes in a variety of brands. Most are quite good. Some Mexican and Chinese products are available, but expensive. Dry pastas are plentiful. Canned tomatoes, puree, and paste are available, but not tomato sauce. Canned kidney beans and other canned vegetables are available as well.

Formula and baby food are available, but you may not be able to find a special. Jars of baby food are available, but expensive (US \$1 a jar). Zimbabwe makes and imports baby cereals-compared to the U.S. there is not so much variety and the quality is not as good.

Good meats, vegetables and fruits are in abundance. Fresh fish, including some varieties of frozen freshwater and deep sea, is also available.

Local wines and beer, and imported wines, beers and spirits are available in Harare shops.

Several brands of local cigarettes are produced. Pipe and chewing tobacco are not available.

There is no cat litter in Zimbabwe, so owners should bring a large supply. Pet food is available, but inferior.

Clothing

Fashionable, Western-style clothing is popular in Harare with very little traditional African dress in evidence. Sweaters, jackets, and light coats are needed in June, July, and August, when the evening temperatures can drop below 40 °F. Since homes are not centrally heated, flannels and bathrobes are needed. Virtually all clothing products can be purchased locally, but style, quality, and prices differ from those in the U.S.

Evening wear is similar to that worn in the U.S. Men wear a suit or sport jacket.

Women tend to dress less casually here. Jeans, shorts, and T-shirts are reserved for home wear. Dresses and skirts are worn to the office more often than slacks. Pantyhose are available, but quality varies.

Supplies and Services

Both electricity and water are generally reliable in Harare, although the local electricity company may occasionally practice a brief period of load shedding.

Locally produced varieties of most household and personal supplies can be bought in Harare at moderate prices, though quality is often inferior to U.S.- or European-produced goods. U.S.-made items are not available. Hair care products are expensive and some items are not available, although an appointment at the hairdresser for a shampoo and dry is only US\$3-\$5.

Most basic services are available at a reasonable price in Harare. These include dry-cleaning, tailoring, hair and beauty treatment, shoe repair, and most small appliance repairs.

Domestic Help

Wages for domestic help are relatively low. The average wage for domestics (most of whom reside in staff quarters adjacent to the house)

is US \$50 a month, plus "rations." Rations vary from home to home. Many employers pay domestics cash in lieu of food supplies; others provide meat, tea, bread, sugar, cornmeal, toilet paper, and soap.

Employers are not required to pay social security or government contributions of any kind for domestic employees, but must respect minimum wages set by the Zimbabwean Government for domestic employees. Many enroll their domestic employees in a local health program.

Religious Activities

Harare's religious community encompasses virtually all major denominations. Services are in English and Shona, as well as in other languages. Consult the local newspaper for details of church services.

Sports

Because of Harare's moderate climate, outdoor sports opportunities abound. Local clubs play cricket, rugby, softball, and soccer. Golf courses and tennis courts (and instruction in both) are plentiful. Horseback riding is another recreational opportunity in Harare. Serious riders may consider bringing their own saddle and tack and can lease a horse at a local stable for a very reasonable rate.

Bring your own equipment, as local varieties are expensive and frequently unavailable. Tennis balls in particular are expensive.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

Zimbabwe has some of the most beautiful scenery in Africa. Lake Chivero Game Park, a 30-minute drive from Harare, offers fair game viewing in a relaxed atmosphere on a weekend afternoon. Also within a 30-minute drive from the city are the Ewanrigg Botanical Gardens with 24 hectares of landscaped gardens, a large collection of cactus, and many exotic trees; the Lion and Cheetah Park; a snake park; and the Larvon Bird Gardens, in which

are 400 species of local and exotic birds.

Several attractions within a 2-3 hour drive afford pleasant weekends. The Eastern Highlands (Nyanga, Troutbeck, Vumba) offer beautiful and serene surroundings and diverse recreational opportunities. The choice of accommodation is wide, ranging from self-contained cabins in the National Parks to a five-star hotel complete with a casino in Nyanga.

Destinations within the country for long weekends or short vacations are numerous. The Zimbabwe Ruins, described as "one of Africa's greatest mysteries," are fascinating, and a tour to this area is a must for any visitor to the country. Hwange National Game Park is Zimbabwe's largest game sanctuary, covering some 14,620 square kilometers (larger than Connecticut). Safari vehicles are designed to offer maximum opportunity to photograph and view the large variety of animals that abound there. Victoria Falls have been described as one of the seven natural wonders of the world. They are 1,690 meters in width and their mean height is 92 meters; their greatest recorded flow was 160 million gallons per minute; the gorges were cut over millions of years by the raging waters of the Zambezi River.

A leisurely cruise on Lake Kariba is very relaxing. The lake is the home of the tigerfish, the supreme challenge for any angler; and a sundowner cruise, which takes place in the cool of the evening, is a good way to unwind.

Other destinations include Lake Kyle, Chimanimani Mountains, Bumi Hills, and Spurwing and Fothergill Islands.

An elaborate network of roads is well paved and reasonable and attractive package tours are available by air. One can choose between a "full board" rate (all meals and transportation paid) or a "bed and breakfast" rate, which allows the

traveler to choose how to spend leisure time.

Hunting and fishing trips are plentiful and fruitful in Zimbabwe, though hunting licenses for big game are expensive. Facilities for camping, hiking, and boating are good and readily accessible.

No restrictions are imposed on travel in Zimbabwe except in some parts of the Matabeleland area (south), and the extreme eastern border with Mozambique. However, the unpredictability of fuel supplies makes travelling outside of Harare more restrictive.

Entertainment

First-run films are shown at Harare's many movie theaters. The films arrive about 2 months behind their release in the U.S. and can be censored. The local theater group, REPS, performs regularly. Several international special attractions also come to Harare each year, namely theater groups, comedy shows, and special fairs. The annual Harare Show is a week long festival that provides interesting exhibits and attractions. Symphony, ballet, and choral societies give occasional performances.

There are numerous video clubs in the Harare area, but the tapes are VHSm British PAL system, and therefore require a multisystem television and VCR.

Social Activities

Social life among the American community is generally casual, with most informal entertaining done at home, either around meals or cocktails or during an afternoon "braai" (cookout).

The American Women's Club, an active society composed primarily of private American citizens resident in Zimbabwe, sponsors dinners and other social events.

An informal crafts group meets occasionally to share ideas, plan field trips, and work on crafts projects.

Charitable organizations are abundant in Harare, including the SPCA, hospital aid societies, and local orphanages. These organizations provide excellent opportunities to meet Zimbabweans and other foreigners.

Bulawayo

Bulawayo, 240 miles southwest of Harare, is the second largest city in Zimbabwe, with a population of close to 414,000. It is the chief town of Matabeleland, and a rail and commercial center for the vast surrounding area. The city was founded toward the end of the last century, and has grown dramatically in size and importance. Breweries and flour mills are important industries here. Automobiles, tires, building materials, furniture, televisions, and textiles are produced here. Gold and coal deposits have been found close by. The good air, rail, and bus services are constantly expanding, and the city has many hotels and a variety of restaurants.

Nearby tourists attractions are the Khami Ruins, and the Rhodes tomb in the Rhodes Matopos National Park. A National Museum is located in the city.

Bulawayo has been the scene of intense dissident activity during the past 25 years. Joshua Nkomo, the guerrilla leader who helped free his country from white-minority rule, lives in a suburb south of the city.

OTHER CITIES

GWERU, which was called Gwelo until 1982, is in the southwest. Several industries are located in Gweru. Dairy products, footwear, textiles, and building materials are produced here. It is a mining center with a population over 120,000.

HWANGE (formerly called Wankie) is in far western Zimbabwe, about 300 miles west of Harare. Its 39,200 residents depend on coal mining for their economic base. Nearby Hwange National Park and local

safari areas add tourism to the economy. The city was founded about 1900 and named after a local chief, Whanga.

KADOMA (formerly called Gatooma) was named for nearby Kadoma Hill, in the central region, 75 miles southwest of Harare. It is a vital farming center, with both an agricultural research station and cotton pest research agency located in the city. Kadoma's population is about 44,600.

KWE KWE (formerly called Que Que) is situated in the center of the country, halfway between Harare and Bulawayo. It is an important processing and distribution point for products such as rails, chrome, and steel, as well as livestock and tobacco. Cotton textiles are manufactured near Kwe Kwe and nickel and pyrites are mined nearby. Cotton textiles are manufactured near Kwe Kwe and nickel and pyrites are mined nearby. Approximately 47,600 people live in Kwe Kwe.

MASVINGO, located near the Macheke and Mshangashe rivers, is a tourist center for the Kyle National Park, and the Great Zimbabwe ruins. Asbestos and gold are mined near the city. Masvingo is linked by road with Harare and Pretoria, South Africa.

MUTARE (formerly called Umtali) is a city of 85,000 in northeast Zimbabwe, on the Mozambique border. Great fields of tobacco are grown in the area. Gold, silver, copper, lead, and iron deposits are found throughout the adjoining region, for which Mutare is the trading center. Several industries are located here among them oil refining, automobile assembly, textiles, clothing, and leather goods manufacturing. Tourism in the nearby national parks is an important economic asset.

The city of **NYANDA** now uses a local name but, for 92 years, it was Fort Victoria, named in honor of the woman who was then England's queen. Located in an area of gold mines 190 miles south of Harare, it has a resident population of 25,000.

Nyanda is noted especially for its proximity to the famed Zimbabwe ruins.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography and Climate

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country between the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers of south-central Africa. Elevations range from below 2,000 feet in the river basins to over 7,000 feet in the Eastern Highlands. Harare and most population centers are located on the highveld, a savanna-covered plateau, some 4,000-5,000 feet above sea level.

Zimbabwe covers 150,000 square miles, about the size of Montana. It is bounded by Zambia on the north, Mozambique on the east, Botswana on the west, and South Africa on the south. The landscape varies from flat and rolling ranges, to farmland and mountains, all marked by granite outcroppings. Points of geographical and scenic interest include the magnificent Victoria Falls and man-made Lake Kariba on the Zambezi River; the mountainous Eastern Highlands along the Mozambique border; and the historically important ruins of Great Zimbabwe, the capital of the ancient civilization of Zimbabwe, located near Masvingo; and a number of game parks.

The climate on the central plateau is moderate in all seasons with warm days and cool nights. Homes do not have central heating or air-conditioning, although room heaters and fireplaces are used on winter nights (May-August). Annual rainfall averages about 28 inches on the highveld, more in the Eastern Highlands, and much less in the lowveld of the southeast and the Zambezi Valley. The sun shines nearly every day, even at the height of the warm rainy season (November-March). In Harare, the average low temperature in winter is 45°F at night,

though frost occasionally occurs. The average daily temperature in summer is 75°F, with temperatures seldom surpassing 90°F.

Population

Zimbabwe's population was 12.4 million in mid-1998 and has been growing at an annual rate of 3.1%. The population is 87% African. Of that group, some 71% belong to Shona-speaking tribes. The largest

Shona subgroups are the Karanga, the Zezuru, and the Manyika. The remaining 16% of the black population is Ndebelea tribe of Zulu origin inhabiting the southern and western part of Zimbabwe-or Kalanga, Deme, San, Shangaan, Swana, Tonga, and Venda. Whites, mainly of South African, British, and European ancestry, number about 70,000. Asians, of Indian ancestry, and Coloreds, people of mixed European-African origin, number about 30,000.

English is the official language. Shona and Sindebele are spoken in their respective areas. The literacy rate is estimated at 85%. A large majority of the population is formally or nominally Christian. Thousands of Zimbabweans have earned university degrees in their own country or in the U.S., U.K., or Europe, giving the country one of the most highly educated populations of any African state.

The Harare metropolitan area has a population of more than 1.6 million, including the municipality of Chitungwiza, which has an estimated population of between 350,000 and 800,000. Other major cities are Bulawayo (790,000), Mutare (170,000) Gweru (160,000), and Kwe Kwe (100,000). Most Zimbabweans live in communal lands, areas formally reserved for African settlement and covering nearly half the nation's territory. Some 40% of the population live in urban areas. Communal lands tend to be overcrowded and overgrazed, and inhabitants rely heavily on subsistence agriculture. About 4,000 mostly white-owned commercial farms occupy much of

the nation's most productive land and produce half of Zimbabwe's staple food crop, white corn, and the main export crops: tobacco, cotton, sugar, tea, and coffee. As a result, Zimbabwe possesses one of the highest inequality ratios in all of sub-Saharan Africa. Resettlement of blacks on government-purchased commercial farmland is a high priority of the administration, but the question of land distribution remains highly controversial.

Public Institutions

The Republic of Zimbabwe became independent on April 18, 1980, after a guerrilla war against the white colonial government that had announced its Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from the U.K. in 1965, in an effort to avoid the tide of majority rule which was then sweeping through Africa.

The African majority had fiercely resisted UDI, as it forestalled achievement of self-rule, and the first incidents of armed opposition against Prime Minister Ian Smith's regime began in the late 1960s, continuing at a low level through the early 1970s. The fall of the Portuguese Empire in 1974 led to the creation of an independent Mozambique in 1975. The outlawed Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), which had been in exile in distant Tanzania, was then permitted to operate from adjacent Mozambique, while the rival Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) continued its guerrilla operations from Zambia, resulting in an increase in the general level of fighting.

Various attempts at ending the "Rhodesian problem" through negotiation failed, as did the attempt to create a state under the joint rule of Ian Smith and Bishop Abel Muzorewa, known as "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia." A joint conference held at Lancaster House in London under British auspices between September and December 1979 led to agreement by Smith, Muzorewa, ZANU leader Robert Mugabe, ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, and

other factional leaders on a constitution and a plan which provided for a brief return to British rule, general elections open to all parties, and ultimate independence.

In the elections of late February 1980, which were monitored by international observers and considered to have been free and fair, Mugabe's ZANU-Patriotic Front won 57 of the seats in the 100-member House of Assembly; Nkomo's Patriotic Front-ZAPU won 20; Bishop Muzorewa's United African National Council (UNAC) won 3; and Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front (RF) won all 20 seats reserved for whites. Robert Mugabe was selected to be the country's first Prime Minister.

Once in office, Mugabe pursued a policy of national reconciliation with the country's small, but economically influential white community. He set up a government of national unity which included PFZAPU and some whites. Normally blessed by good rains and spurred by international aid and pent-up demands resulting from the 15 years of U.N.-imposed sanctions, the economy was very healthy and the internal political situation was positive in the first year of independence. However, the euphoria of independence wore off as the Government came to grips with the myriad of problems involved in running a country. Serious political differences developed between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU as the result of strife between excombatants of the two former guerrilla armies and the discovery of illegal arms that were cached on PF-ZAPU properties. As a result, Mugabe fired Nkomo and several of his close aides from the cabinet in 1981. A low level security problem-marked by serious human rights abuses by both the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) and the "dissidents" continued in the Ndebele-populated provinces of Matabeleland, where Nkomo's party was the strongest, until 1987. That year, ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU agreed to unite; the parliamentary seats reserved for whites were abolished, and Prime Minister Mugabe became

executive president, initially for a 3-year term. However, ethnic tension and the failure to redress the human rights issues remain an underlying point of stress in the so-called Unity Accords. ZANU-PF's dominance of Zimbabwe politics was confirmed again in 1990, when Mugabe was elected to a full 6-year term as President and led his party to victory in that year's Parliamentary elections for a new 150-member unicameral Parliament, consisting of 120 elected seats, 10 chiefs elected by their peers, 8 provincial governors, an attorney general, and 12 non-constituency MPs appointed by Mugabe, and a speaker of Parliament elected by parliament. Mugabe was re-elected to the presidency in 1996.

The constitution provides for protection of fundamental human rights as well as the independence of the judiciary. The central government is responsible for making and implementing policies on health, education, and social welfare throughout the country; however, city councils in the urban areas and rural councils in the countryside have increasing powers as the country implements a policy of decentralization and the central government's resource base shrinks. The civil service is set up along British lines; a nationwide police force is controlled from national headquarters in Harare.

The Government repealed the 25-year-old state of emergency in 1990. It announced plans to repeal the repressive Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA), but has since backtracked on these plans. Also in 1990, the ZANU-PF Central Committee formally abandoned the one party state, and other political parties were allowed to operate. In 2000 there were approximately 35 opposition parties. ZANU-PF also relaxed its Marxist/Socialist policies during the 1990s and has generally allowed the private sector to operate freely. Economic liberalization has been slow, however, and the Government still controls a wide array of inefficient and money-losing parast-

atals that continue to drain Government resources.

In 1999, leaders of the country's powerful labor union confederation, The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), formed the country's first major opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Capitalizing on a sluggish economy and growing dissatisfaction with the Government, the MDC quickly became the first serious challenge to the ruling ZANU-PE. In February 2000, the voters defeated the Government's proposed new constitution in the first electoral setback for the Government since independence, Veterans of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle and other ZANU-PF supporters embarked on a campaign of political violence designed to intimidate supporters of the opposition. Despite the intimidation campaign, the MDC won 57 of the 120 contested seats in June 2000 parliamentary elections-another setback for ZANU-PE which previously held 117 of the contested seats.

Zimbabwe is replete with civic and charitable organizations including the Red Cross, the Jairos Jiri Association and St. Giles Association (for the physically handicapped), the St. John's Ambulance Corps, Rotary, Island Hospice, Masons, Soroptimists, and numerous missionary organizations that welcome volunteer assistance.

The country enjoys a number of relatively strong nongovernmental organizations, including civil society organizations, human rights groups, and welfare organizations. Examples of civil society organizations which focus on good governance, accountability, and human rights include: Zim Rights, Transparency International, Amani Trust, Legal Resources Foundation, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Women's Action Group, Zimbabwe Women Lawyers' Association, and the National Constitutional Assembly.

Foreign Relations

Nearly 4,000 Zimbabweans studied in the U.S. during the UDI period. Now scattered throughout senior levels of both government and the private sector, they represent a substantial reservoir of good will toward the U.S.

The U.S., which played a behind-the-scenes role during the Lancaster House Conference, extended official diplomatic recognition to the new government immediately after independence, and a resident Embassy was established in Harare on Zimbabwe's Independence Day, April 18, 1980. The first U.S. Ambassador arrived and presented his credentials in June 1980. Until the arrival in 1983 of a resident Ambassador in Washington, Zimbabwe's relations with the U.S. were handled by its Ambassador to the United Nations (U.N.) in New York.

At the Zimbabwe Conference on Reconstruction and Development (ZIMCORD) held in Harare in 1981, the U.S. Government pledged US \$225 million over 3 years as the U.S. contribution to Zimbabwe's development needs. This goal was more than met; from independence to September 1998, the U.S. provided more than \$720 million in economic and development assistance to Zimbabwe, making it the largest bilateral aid donor. In addition, most of this assistance was in the form of direct grants and was used to help rebuild schools and clinics, train agricultural experts, build low cost housing, and get the national economy-suffering from the war and sanctions-back on its feet.

Agency for International Development (AID) assistance to Zimbabwe in the 1990s has focused on agriculture/food security, education, family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention, private sector development, low-income housing, micro-enterprise funding and democracy and governance programs, and emergency food aid.

Bilateral relations are generally good. A series of undiplomatic state-

ments by the Zimbabwe Government led to a suspension of most U.S. aid in 1986, but aid resumed in 1988. The collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union led Zimbabwean leaders to reexamine their world view, and Zimbabwe and the U.S. cooperated very closely during the former's latest tenure on the U.N. Security Council, 1991-92.

President Mugabe visited Washington informally in September 1980, and on official working visits in September 1983, July 1991, and in 1995, meeting with Presidents Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton respectively. He also led the Zimbabwean delegation to the U.N. in 1980, 1984, and 1991. Then Vice President, George Bush, visited Harare in November 1982 on a trip to several African countries.

Diplomatic relations with the West again soured in 1997 when President Mugabe announced plans to seize white owned farms without providing compensation. An agreement was reached between the Government and donors in 1998, whereby donors would provide funding to much needed land reform. The process broke down in 2000 when the Government again announced plans to seize white owned farms for the resettlement of landless Blacks in a "fast-track" resettlement program. The Government's program was implemented by war veterans occupying more than 1,000 farms. Many Western donors withdrew part or all of their aid until the Government took steps to restore law and order in the land reform process.

Historically, Zimbabwe's closest links have been with the U.K.; however, in the past 3 years, this relationship has been very strained. Britain has provided substantial aid as the result of a pledge made at ZIMCORD. A British Military Advisory and Training Team assisting the Zimbabwe Army. British investment in Zimbabwe remains the largest of any single nation. As with the U.S., thousands of Zimbabweans studied in the U.K., and private

links remain close; however, official relations at times are strained.

Other West European countries have also forged close ties with Zimbabwe. The Scandinavian countries share certain philosophical affinities and have provided much assistance as have France, Canada, and the Federal Republic of Germany. Portugal and Greece maintain links partly because of the sizable Portuguese and Greek communities in the country. Similar historical ties have led to the establishment of close relations with India and Pakistan, and to a lesser extent, with Bangladesh.

Zimbabwe maintains diplomatic relations with virtually every African country, although some ties are closer than others. African nations with embassies in Harare are Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, the Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zambia, and DRC.

Because of its "birth by armed guerrilla warfare," Zimbabwe developed and maintains close ties with a number of revolutionary states and organizations. Among these are the People's Republic of China, Cuba, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Yugoslavia, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Shortly after attaining independence, Zimbabwe was welcomed into the world community of nations and granted membership in many international organizations. Chief among these is the United Nations, which Zimbabwe joined just before the General Assembly convened in September 1980. In honor of its newest state, Africa chose Zimbabwe to hold one of its seats in the Security Council, which it did for the biennium 1983-84 and again in 1991-92. Zimbabwe participates in many bodies within the U.N. system. It is also a member of the Organization of African Unity, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Common-

wealth, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

Arts, Science, and Education

Zimbabwe's cultural life is diverse, with ample opportunities for foreigners to study, appreciate, and participate in both Western and African traditions.

The National Gallery of Zimbabwe offers a small collection of European art and a collection and workshop for African sculpture, mostly impressionistic soapstone works. The Queen Victoria Museum in Harare, located next to the College of Music, has ethnographic, geological, and natural history displays. The National Archives also has excellent permanent displays. The National Museum of Bulawayo has very good displays of Zimbabwe's wildlife and history. Harare and Bulawayo have several private art galleries which show interesting work.

Amateur theater groups welcome new participants. Professional or semi-professional theatrical performances are continually available. There are several choral groups and a few small orchestral ensembles. Several cinemas offer films (mostly American and British) a few months after their first run in the U.S. Video shops rent tapes of feature films, and there are occasional dance performances Zimbabwean, modern, and classical-by local groups. Performances by Zimbabwean popular musicians are numerous and inexpensive.

Performances by non-Zimbabwean artists and groups—whether of music, dance, or drama—are relatively rare.

There are scientific, cultural, hobby related, and artistic societies, with frequent meetings open to spectators and prospective members.

Several subscription libraries in Harare offer a fair selection of reading material. A decent selection of

new books is available in local bookstores.

The University of Zimbabwe is an important force in the community, and its courses, lectures, and library are open to foreign students. Universal primary education remains one of the state's goals. The government currently estimates that there are more than 2.5 million children in school in Zimbabwe, up from about 800,000 at independence. Educational opportunities have greatly increased, but unfortunately so has unemployment.

Commerce and Industry

At independence, Zimbabwe inherited one of the strongest and most complete industrial and financial infrastructures in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as rich mineral resources and a strong agricultural base. Most urban infrastructure is comparable to that in rural areas of the U.S., although much of it suffers from decades of insufficient investment and lack of maintenance. However, cellular service providers are rapidly filling the gap, albeit at much higher rates. Erratic electrical power is another periodic problem area.

Zimbabwe has been one of the few countries in sub-Saharan Africa able to consistently feed itself, although it is subject to periodic droughts with devastating effects (not just to the economy, but people, too). Locally produced fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy products, and processed fruits are usually available. Subsistence agriculture still provides the livelihood for a majority of Zimbabwe's farmers. Corn, called maize in Zimbabwe, is the staple crop. Export crops include tobacco, cotton, sugar, horticultural products, coffee, and tea.

Manufacturing is developed, largely as the result of international trade sanctions imposed during the UDI period. Privately owned factories grew to supply many consumer goods, although a large percentage

of these businesses grew inefficient over the decades as they remained highly protected from import competition as the Government of Zimbabwe pursued an import substitution economic growth model. The largest industries are iron, steel, metal products, food processing, chemicals, textiles, clothing, furniture and plastic goods. Tourism is very important as a foreign currency earner for the country.

Zimbabwe is endowed with rich mineral resources. Mining is largely in the hands of multinational companies. Exports of gold, asbestos, chrome, coal, nickel, and copper are foreign exchange earners. No commercial deposits of petroleum have been discovered, although the country is richly endowed with coal-bed methane gas that has yet to be exploited.

The Government is currently attempting a reorientation of the Zimbabwe economy, moving from the state-controlled socialist paradigm it espoused during the 1980s toward a more market-based, private sector-oriented model. The Government of Zimbabwe expressed an intent to attract foreign investment to complement what domestic business can generate and is in the process of liberalizing and eventually reducing many of the restrictions that served to deter investment in the past. It has decontrolled many prices and moved to eliminate the losses of several large parastatal companies. South Africa is still the predominant trading partner, though trade with Europe, Japan, the U.S., and neighboring African countries is considerable.

The giant Kariba Hydroelectric Dam on the Zambezi River, supplemented by several thermal generators and a coal-fired thermal plant recently established at Hwange supply the country's electric power. Without petroleum of its own, the country must depend on imports of gasoline and diesel for all transport needs. To stretch imported supplies,

gasoline is blended 85/15 with locally produced ethanol.

Zimbabwe's inflation rate at year-end 1999 was more than 55%. The per capita income is about US \$350. The country experienced rapid devaluation of the local dollar vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar in 1997/2000. The official exchange rate as of November 2000: US \$1 = Z\$55.

Transportation

Automobiles

Traffic moves on the left, British fashion, but although U.S. standard left-hand-drive cars can be used, they are not recommended for safety reasons.

Valid U.S. or foreign drivers licenses are acceptable for use in Zimbabwe, provided there is a photograph on the license.

Local auto insurance is required. All customary forms of automobile insurance are available. All Americans must purchase at least "third-party extended" insurance, which covers damage to other vehicles and injury to parties not in the insured car. The cost is minimal, less than US \$50 per year per vehicle. Comprehensive and collision insurance is highly recommended.

Parts are generally, but not always, available for domestically assembled vehicles. Delivery of parts from South Africa for other makes can take several weeks. Fuel shortages have become endemic since January 2000, with supplies sporadic and unpredictable. Gasoline, when available, at current exchange rates, costs about US \$3.00/gallon. This results in limited vehicular mobility.

Local

Taxis are readily available and inexpensive, but not up to U.S. standards. They are found at special stands in town and are available on call in the suburbs. Bus service within Harare is available, but buses are usually crowded and ser-

vice does not always keep to schedule.

A very good network of paved roads stretches across the countryside. Buses and passenger trains serve the larger towns. Air Zimbabwe and/or Zimbabwe Express run daily flights linking Harare, Bulawayo, Kariba, Victoria Falls, and other towns. An express bus service operates between Harare, Bulawayo, and Mutare.

Regional

International flights connect Zimbabwe with London, Amsterdam, Athens, Frankfurt, Lisbon, and Vienna in Europe; with Australia; and with numerous regional African cities. Other destinations are within easy reach via connections in neighboring African countries. Flights to and from Europe are generally overbooked and can be extremely difficult to reserve during the school holidays-December-January, April-May, and August-September.

In addition to Air Zimbabwe, the national airline, Harare is also served by British Airways, South African Airways, Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airways, Egypt Air, Ghana Airways, and Air Tanzania. There are also flights via regional African airlines.

Communications

Telephone and Telegraph

Harare's telephone system is being upgraded, but it is not always reliable, especially during the rainy season. Fortunately, several mobile phone companies have recently entered the market and service is beginning to improve. Calls made from a home phone that are not operator-assisted are charged by the unit. This includes local and long distance direct-dial calls, and unless a call is booked through an operator, which is more expensive, the individual charges are not listed on the phone bill.

A satellite ground station began operation in 1985, and direct dialing out of Zimbabwe is sometimes eas-

ier than reaching a local number. It is cheaper to call from the U.S. to Zimbabwe than vice-versa. Zimbabwe has direct telex and telegraph service through London to most countries. Internet service providers are available in Zimbabwe.

Mail

International airmail between Zimbabwe and the U.S. takes 5-21 days; sea mail sometimes takes several months.

Radio and TV

Radio and TV in Zimbabwe are government owned. The state TV system broadcasts from about 4 pm until 11:30 pm on two channels that feature a variety of shows, including many older British and American series. Some residents have opted for satellite TV and subscribe to the South African entertainment channel MNet which offers several movie channels, ESPN, CNN, BBC, MTV, VH-1, Cartoon Network, cooking stations, Discovery Channel, and more. The television system used in Zimbabwe is British PAL. A television set purchased in the U.S. will not work in Zimbabwe, except when used to play NTSC videotapes. Radio Zimbabwe transmits on two AM and four FM channels in Shona, Ndebele and English from early morning to late evening. One FM station broadcasts 24 hours daily. Shortwave reception for U.S. Armed Forces Radio, VOA, and BBC is generally good with the aid of an external antenna.

There are also numerous local video rental clubs around Harare, although the quality of the videos is sometimes somewhat less than that of U.S. videos. A multisystem or PAL system TV and VCR are necessary to play local tapes.

Newspapers, Magazines, and Technical Journals

There are two daily newspapers, at least three weekly and two Sunday papers in Harare, in addition to numerous local magazines on a variety of subjects. A limited selection of international publications is available. U.S. magazines found in

bookstores include Newsweek and Time. Others magazines are available, but expensive. Ordering them via pouch is advisable. Bookstores carry a fair selection of popular British and American fiction and nonfiction, but prices are high. Secondhand bookstores offer reasonable prices. The selection of children's books is very limited.

Health and Medicine

Medical Facilities

There are three adequate hospitals; one opened in December 1998. There are good clinicians in most of the medical specialty areas. Laboratory, diagnostic imaging, and blood transfusions services are of good standards. Pharmacies are adequately stocked, and medicines that are not available in Zimbabwe can usually be purchased from South Africa. However, the unavailability of foreign exchange has made purchasing of certain medicines uncertain. The trauma clinics and road/air evacuation standards in Harare continue to improve. Medical evacuation is usually to South Africa.

However, adequate private medical care outside Harare is sparse. Government medical facilities are declining throughout the country.

Community Health

Public health standards are quite high in low-density urban suburbs. However, it varies throughout the high-density and rural areas. Public boards are responsible for, and stringent in setting standards for meats and produce available locally. Water in major cities is generally safe to drink. Sewage treatment is advanced, as are virtually all sanitation controls.

HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and bilharzia are at epidemic levels throughout the nation.

Preventive Measures

Malaria continues to be a problem in regions outside Harare. Adjunctive measures for prevention of

malaria are strongly recommended. Mefloquine or Doxycycline are the prophylaxis regimes of choice because of the high incidence of chloroquine-resistant malaria.

No particular safeguards are necessary in food preparation. Fruits and vegetables are washed thoroughly with tap water. Drinking water should be boiled and/or filtered as a precaution.

Most lakes and standing bodies of water are infested with bilharzia. Swimming and wading in them is ill advised.

Individuals with asthma or allergies may be adversely affected due to the great variety of year-round pollens and dry and wet seasons.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Passage, Customs and Duties

A passport, return ticket, and adequate funds are required. U.S. citizens traveling to Zimbabwe for tourism, business and transit can obtain a visa at the airports and border ports-of-entry, or in advance by contacting the Embassy of Zimbabwe in Washington, D.C. U.S. citizens who intend to work in Zimbabwe as journalists must apply for accreditation with the Zimbabwean embassy at least one month in advance of planned travel. It is no longer possible to seek accreditation within Zimbabwe at the Ministry of Information. Journalists attempting to enter Zimbabwe without proper advance accreditation may be denied admission or deported.

There is a non-waivable airport departure tax of 20 dollars (US) by all U.S. citizens, including holders of official and diplomatic passports.

Travelers should obtain the latest travel and visa information from the Embassy of Zimbabwe, 1608 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009; telephone (202) 332-7100. Overseas, inquiries should be

made at the nearest Zimbabwean embassy or consulate. Upon arrival in Zimbabwe, travelers should keep all travel documents readily available, as well as a list of residences or hotels where they will stay while in Zimbabwe.

Most Americans in Harare travel through Europe and then to Johannesburg, in South Africa. British Airways, KLM, and Lufthansa no longer fly non-stop to Harare. An overnight rest stop is permitted and recommended in Europe to break up two consecutive all-night flights.

If you arrive between May and August, include in accompanying baggage warm clothes for chilly evenings. Unaccompanied airfreight from the U.S. can take 1-3 months.

Currency control restrictions are tight in Zimbabwe, and frequent arrests are made of those dealing in the export of Zimbabwean or foreign currency. Declare to customs officials the amount of cash in all currencies you are carrying. No more than Z\$2,000 may be imported or exported.

Americans living in or visiting Zimbabwe are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Zimbabwe and obtain updated information on travel and security within Zimbabwe. Americans may register on-line by accessing our web site at <http://USEmbassy.State.Gov/Zimbabwe>, then access the consular/American citizen page to complete the registration on-line. The U.S. Embassy is located at 172 Herbert Chitepo Avenue, Harare, telephone (263-4) 250-593/4, after hours telephone (263-4) 250-595, fax (263-4) 722-618 and 796-488. The mailing address is P.O. Box 3340, Harare. The e-mail address is consular-harare@state.gov. American citizen service hours are from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Fridays, except U.S. and Zimbabwean holidays.

Pets

No quarantine period is required for cats and dogs in Zimbabwe. Birds can be imported, but the paperwork takes some time to complete. Import permits for all animals are required and can be obtained by writing directly to the Ministry of Agriculture at the following address: The Ministry of Agriculture Ngungunya Building, 1 Borrowdale Road P/Bag 7701 Causeway Harare, Zimbabwe.

Transiting South Africa with a pet can be problematic. It is easier to travel through Europe.

Veterinary services are quite adequate with a simple consultation costing about Z\$500 (about US \$7.50). Dogs and cats are dipped for fleas and ticks regularly during summer (October to April). A rabies vaccination is required prior to arrival and it is advisable to have a parvo and hepatitis shot as well. Government of Zimbabwe Customs also requires a veterinary certificate stating the animal is in good health. Bring all grooming aids and anything special that your animal requires, as well as any special foods or medicine. Pet foods are available, but cat litter is not. There is a kennel club, a feline club, and a bird club in Harare and dog and cat shows are held throughout the year.

Licenses are required for both cats and dogs. Unspayed females are Z\$20, and males and spayed females are Z\$10.

Firearms and Ammunition

U.S. citizens who are bringing weapons and ammunition into Zimbabwe for purposes of hunting should contact the Embassy of Zimbabwe in Washington, D.C. to find out what permits are required. (Please check the Entry Requirements section for the address and telephone number for the Embassy of Zimbabwe.) Some Americans traveling in Zimbabwe have come under added scrutiny from immigration and police officials in the wake of the March 1999 arrest of three American citizens at Harare International Airport, who were allegedly in possession of undeclared assault

weapons. Travelers are advised to make sure that all of the necessary documentation is in order before departing the United States. The weapons also must be cleared through U.S. Customs to ensure their expeditious re-entry into the United States at the conclusion of one's trip.

Currency, Banking, and Weights and Measures

The local currency is the Zimbabwe dollar (Z\$). US \$1 equals about Z\$55 (as of November 2000). However, this rate is extremely volatile at this time.

Barclays, Standard Chartered, and Zimbank provide commercial banking services. Zimbabwe uses metric measurements.

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of material published on this country.

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LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Jan.1 New Year's Day
Mar.

(2nd Mon) Commonwealth Day

Mar/Apr. Holy Saturday*

Mar/Apr. Easter*

Mar/Apr. Easter Monday*

Apr. 18. Independence Day

May 1 Worker's Day

May 25 Africa Day

Aug. 11 Heroes' Day

Aug. 12 Defense Forces Day

Dec. 25 Christmas Day

Dec. 26 Boxing Day

*variable

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