



Central America and Caribbean :: Barbados

Introduction :: Barbados

Background:

The island was uninhabited when first settled by the British in 1627. African slaves worked the sugar plantations established on the island until 1834 when slavery was abolished. The economy remained heavily dependent on sugar, rum, and molasses production through most of the 20th century. The gradual introduction of social and political reforms in the 1940s and 1950s led to complete independence from the UK in 1966. In the 1990s, tourism and manufacturing surpassed the sugar industry in economic importance.

Geography :: Barbados

Location:

Caribbean, island in the North Atlantic Ocean, northeast of Venezuela

Geographic coordinates:

13 10 N, 59 32 W

Map references:

Central America and the Caribbean

Area:

total: 430 sq km

country comparison to the world: 202

land: 430 sq km

water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative:

2.5 times the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

97 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:

tropical; rainy season (June to October)

Terrain:

relatively flat; rises gently to central highland region

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Atlantic Ocean 0 m

highest point: Mount Hillaby 336 m

Natural resources:

petroleum, fish, natural gas

Land use:

arable land: 27.91%

permanent crops: 2.33%

other: 69.77% (2011)

Irrigated land:

54.35 sq km (2003)

Total renewable water resources:

0.08 cu km (2011)

Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):

total: 0.1 cu km/yr (20%/26%/54%)

per capita: 371.3 cu m/yr (2009)

Natural hazards:

infrequent hurricanes; periodic landslides

Environment - current issues:

pollution of coastal waters from waste disposal by ships; soil erosion; illegal solid waste disposal threatens contamination of aquifers

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

easternmost Caribbean island

People and Society :: Barbados

Nationality:

noun: Barbadian(s) or Bajan (colloquial)

adjective: Barbadian or Bajan (colloquial)

Ethnic groups:

black 92.4%, white 2.7%, mixed 3.1%, East Indian 1.3%, other 0.2%, unspecified 0.2% (2010 est.)

Languages:

English (official), Bajan (English-based creole language, widely spoken in informal settings)

Religions:

Protestant 66.3% (includes Anglican 23.9%, other Pentecostal 19.5%, Adventist 5.9%, Methodist 4.2%, Wesleyan 3.4%, Nazarene 3.2%, Church of God 2.4%, Baptist 1.8%, Moravian 1.2%, other Protestant .8%), Roman Catholic 3.8%, other Christian 5.4% (includes Jehovah's Witness 2.0%, other 3.4%), Rastafarian 1%, other 1.5%, none 20.6%, unspecified 1.2% (2010 est.)

Population:

289,680 (July 2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 181

Age structure:

0-14 years: 18.4% (male 26,709/female 26,716)

15-24 years: 13.6% (male 19,705/female 19,754)

25-54 years: 45% (male 64,821/female 65,394)

55-64 years: 10.5% (male 16,837/female 19,286)

65 years and over: 10.2% (male 12,068/female 18,390) (2014 est.)

Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 42.3 %

youth dependency ratio: 26.9 %

elderly dependency ratio: 15.5 %

potential support ratio: 6.5 (2013)

Median age:

total: 37.6 years

male: 36.5 years

female: 38.7 years (2014 est.)

Population growth rate:

0.33% (2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 169

Birth rate:

11.97 births/1,000 population (2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 166

Death rate:

8.41 deaths/1,000 population (2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 83

Net migration rate:

-0.3 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 125

Urbanization:

urban population: 44% of total population (2010)

rate of urbanization: 1.7% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

BRIDGETOWN (capital) 122,000 (2011)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.01 male(s)/female
0-14 years: 1 male(s)/female
15-24 years: 1 male(s)/female
25-54 years: 0.99 male(s)/female
55-64 years: 0.94 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.65 male(s)/female
total population: 0.94 male(s)/female (2014 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

51 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)
country comparison to the world: 106

Infant mortality rate:

total: 10.93 deaths/1,000 live births
country comparison to the world: 132
male: 12.58 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 9.26 deaths/1,000 live births (2014 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 74.99 years
country comparison to the world: 102
male: 72.64 years
female: 77.37 years (2014 est.)

Total fertility rate:

1.68 children born/woman (2014 est.)
country comparison to the world: 174

Health expenditures:

7.7% of GDP (2011)
country comparison to the world: 68

Physicians density:

1.81 physicians/1,000 population (2005)

Hospital bed density:

6.6 beds/1,000 population (2010)

Drinking water source:

improved:

urban: 99.8% of population
rural: 99.8% of population
total: 99.8% of population

unimproved:

urban: 0.2% of population
rural: 0.2% of population
total: 0.2% of population (2011 est.)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 100% of population
rural: 100% of population
total: 100% of population (2010 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

0.9% (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 49

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

1,500 (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 140

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

NA (2009 est.)

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

34.7% (2008)
country comparison to the world: 14

Education expenditures:

5.6% of GDP (2012)
country comparison to the world: 54

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over has ever attended school
total population: 99.7%
male: 99.7%
female: 99.7% (2002 est.)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 15 years
male: 14 years
female: 17 years (2011)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

total: 26.2%
country comparison to the world: 38
male: 24.1%
female: 28.7% (2003)

Government:: Barbados

Country name:

conventional long form: none
conventional short form: Barbados

Government type:

parliamentary democracy and a Commonwealth realm

Capital:

name: Bridgetown
geographic coordinates: 13 06 N, 59 37 W
time difference: UTC-4 (1 hour ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

11 parishes and 1 city*; Bridgetown*, Christ Church, Saint Andrew, Saint George, Saint James, Saint John, Saint Joseph, Saint Lucy, Saint Michael, Saint Peter, Saint Philip, Saint Thomas

Independence:

30 November 1966 (from the UK)

National holiday:

Independence Day, 30 November (1966)

Constitution:

adopted 22 November 1966, effective 30 November 1966; amended several times, last in 2003 (2011)

Legal system:

English common law; no judicial review of legislative acts

International law organization participation:

accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; accepts ICCT jurisdiction

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: Queen ELIZABETH II (since 6 February 1952); represented by Governor General Elliot BELGRAVE (since 1 June 2012)
head of government: Prime Minister Freundel STUART (since 23 October 2010)
cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister
(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#).)
elections: the monarchy is hereditary; governor general appointed by the monarch; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or the leader of the majority coalition is usually appointed prime minister by the governor general; the prime minister recommends the deputy prime minister

Legislative branch:

bicameral Parliament consists of the Senate (21 seats; members appointed by the governor general - 12 on the advice of the Prime Minister, 2 on the advice of the opposition leader, and 7 at his discretion) and the House of Assembly (30 seats; members are elected by direct popular vote to serve five-year terms)
elections: House of Assembly - last held on 21 February 2013 (next to be called in 2018)
election results: House of Assembly - percent of vote by party - DLP 51.3%, BLP 48.3%, other .4%; seats by party - DLP 16, BLP 14

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Supreme Court (consists of the High Court with 8 justices) and the Court of Appeal (consists of the chief Justice and president of the court and 4 justices
note - Barbados, a member of the Caribbean Court of Justice, replaced the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (in London) as the final court of appeal
judge selection and term of office: Supreme Court chief justice appointed by the governor-general on the recommendation of the prime minister and opposition leader of Parliament; other justices appointed by the governor-general on the recommendation of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission, a 5-member independent body consisting of the Supreme Court chief justice, the commission head, and governor-general appointees recommended by the prime minister; justices serve until mandatory retirement at age 65
subordinate courts: Magistrates' Courts

Political parties and leaders:

Barbados Labor Party or BLP [Owen ARTHUR]
Democratic Labor Party or DLP [Freundel STUART]
People's Empowerment Party or PEP [David COMMISSIONG]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union or BSTU [Mary REDMAN]

Barbados Union of Teachers or BUT [Karen BEST]

Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados or CTUSAB, (includes the BWU, NUPW, BUT, and BSTU) [Leroy TROTMAN]

Barbados Workers Union or BWU [Linda BROOKS]

Clement Payne Labor Union [David COMMISSIONG]

National Union of Public Workers [Walter MALONEY]

International organization participation:

ACP, AOSIS, C, Caricom, CDB, CELAC, FAO, G-77, IADB, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), LAES, MIGRA, NAM, OAS, OPANAL, OPCW, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador John E. BEALE (since 29 January 2009)

chancery: 2144 Wyoming Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008

telephone: [1] (202) 939-9200

FAX: [1] (202) 332-7467

consulate(s) general: Miami, New York

consulate(s): Los Angeles

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Larry L. PALMER (since 9 May 2012); note - also accredited to Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

embassy: U.S. Embassy, Wildey Business Park, Wildey, St. Michael BB 14006

mailing address: P. O. Box 302, Bridgetown BB 11000; (Department Name) Unit 3120, DPO AA 34055

telephone: [1] (246) 227-4000

FAX: [1] (246) 431-0179

Flag description:

three equal vertical bands of blue (hoist side), gold, and blue with the head of a black trident centered on the gold band; the band colors represent the blue of the sea and sky and the gold of the beaches; the trident head represents independence and a break with the past (the colonial coat of arms contained a complete trident)

National symbol(s):

Neptune's trident

National anthem:

name: "The National Anthem of Barbados"

lyrics/music: Irving BURGIE/C. Van Roland EDWARDS

note: adopted 1966; the anthem is also known as "In Plenty and In Time of Need"

Economy:: Barbados

Economy - overview:

Barbados is the wealthiest and most developed country in the Eastern Caribbean and enjoys one of the highest per capita incomes in Latin America. Historically, the Barbadian economy was dependent on sugarcane cultivation and related activities. However, in recent years the economy has diversified into light industry and tourism with about four-fifths of GDP and of exports being attributed to services. Offshore finance and information services are important foreign exchange earners and thrive from having the same time zone as eastern US financial centers and a relatively highly educated workforce. Barbados' tourism, financial services, and construction industries have been hard hit since the onset of the global economic crisis in 2008. Barbados' public debt-to-GDP ratio rose from 56% in 2008 to 90.5% in 2013. Growth prospects are limited because of a weak tourism outlook and planned austerity measures.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$7.004 billion (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 162

\$7.056 billion (2012 est.)

\$7.056 billion (2011 est.)

note: data are in 2013 US dollars

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$4.262 billion (2013 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

-0.8% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 202

0% (2012 est.)

0.8% (2011 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$25,100 (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 60

\$25,400 (2012 est.)

\$25,400 (2011 est.)

note: data are in 2013 US dollars

Gross national saving:

9% of GDP (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 142

9.4% of GDP (2012 est.)

3.4% of GDP (2011 est.)

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 81.7%

government consumption: 15.4%

investment in fixed capital: 14.3%

investment in inventories: 1.9%

exports of goods and services: 40.5%

imports of goods and services: -53.8%

(2013 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 3.1%

industry: 13.9%

services: 83% (2013 est.)

Agriculture - products:

sugarcane, vegetables, cotton

Industries:

tourism, sugar, light manufacturing, component assembly for export

Industrial production growth rate:

-0.7%

country comparison to the world: 173

Labor force:

141,800 (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 179

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 10%

industry: 15%

services: 75% (1996 est.)

Unemployment rate:

11.4% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 119

11.6% (2012 est.)

Population below poverty line:

NA%

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: NA%

highest 10%: NA%

Budget:

revenues: \$1.15 billion (2013 est.)

expenditures: \$1.45 billion (2013 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

27% of GDP (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 109

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-7% of GDP (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 187

Public debt:

90.5% of GDP (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 21

85.6% of GDP (2012 est.)

Fiscal year:

1 April - 31 March

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

2.1% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 70

4.8% (2012 est.)

Central bank discount rate:

7% (31 December 2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 43

7% (31 December 2009 est.)

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

8.5% (31 December 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 109

8.7% (31 December 2012 est.)

Stock of narrow money:

\$1.749 billion (31 December 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 132

\$1.711 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

Stock of broad money:

\$4.229 billion (31 December 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 132

\$4.198 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

Stock of domestic credit:

\$5.035 billion (31 December 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 115

\$4.874 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$4.495 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 86

\$4.571 billion (31 December 2011)

\$4.366 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

Current account balance:

-\$276.6 million (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 90

-\$204.4 million (2012 est.)

Exports:

\$1.051 billion (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 157

\$1.039 billion (2012 est.)

Exports - commodities:

manufactures, sugar and molasses, rum, other foods and beverages, chemicals, electrical components

Exports - partners:

Trinidad and Tobago 20.8%, US 11.9%, St. Lucia 9.7%, St. Vincent and the Grenadines 6%, Jamaica 5.6%, Antigua and Barbuda 4.9%, St. Kitts and Nevis 4.6%, UK 4.4% (2012)

Imports:

\$1.674 billion (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 170

\$1.584 billion (2012 est.)

Imports - commodities:

consumer goods, machinery, foodstuffs, construction materials, chemicals, fuel, electrical components

Imports - partners:

Trinidad and Tobago 35.9%, US 26.9%, China 5.6% (2012)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$712.6 million (31 December 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 145

\$839.7 million (31 December 2012 est.)

Debt - external:

\$4.49 billion (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 125

\$668 million (2003 est.)

Exchange rates:

Barbadian dollars (BBD) per US dollar -

2 (2013 est.)

2 (2012 est.)

2 (2010 est.)

note: the Barbadian dollar is pegged to the US dollar

Energy :: Barbados

Electricity - production:

1.002 billion kWh (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 145

Electricity - consumption:

986 million kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 150

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 101

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 116

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

239,000 kW (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 157

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

100% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 5

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 44

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 156

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 154

Crude oil - production:

1,001 bbl/day (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 108

Crude oil - exports:

764.5 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 70

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 156

Crude oil - proved reserves:

2.26 million bbl (1 January 2013 es)

country comparison to the world: 96

Refined petroleum products - production:

31.2 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 115

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

8,339 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 157

Refined petroleum products - exports:

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 150

Refined petroleum products - imports:

8,736 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 134

Natural gas - production:

20 million cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 89

Natural gas - consumption:

20 million cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 111

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 61

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 156

Natural gas - proved reserves:

113.3 million cu m (1 January 2013 es)

country comparison to the world: 106

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

1.442 million Mt (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 157

Communications :: Barbados

Telephones - main lines in use:

144,000 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 137

Telephones - mobile cellular:

347,000 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 172

Telephone system:

general assessment: island-wide automatic telephone system

domestic: fixed-line teledensity of roughly 50 per 100 persons; mobile-cellular telephone density approaching 125 per 100 persons

international: country code - 1-246; landing point for the East Caribbean Fiber System (ECFS) submarine cable with links to 13 other islands in the eastern Caribbean extending from the British Virgin Islands to Trinidad; satellite earth stations - 1 (Intelsat - Atlantic Ocean); tropospheric scatter to Trinidad and Saint Lucia (2009)

Broadcast media:

government-owned Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) operates the lone terrestrial TV station; CBC also operates a multi-channel cable TV subscription service; roughly a dozen radio stations, consisting of a CBC-operated network operating alongside privately owned radio stations (2007)

Internet country code:

.bb

Internet hosts:

1,524 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 167

Internet users:

188,000 (2008)

country comparison to the world: 143

Transportation :: Barbados

Airports:

1 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 236

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 1

over 3,047 m: 1 (2013)

Pipelines:

gas 33 km; oil 64 km; refined products 6 km (2013)

Roadways:

total: 1,600 km

country comparison to the world: 176

paved: 1,600 km (2011)

Merchant marine:

total: 109

country comparison to the world: 49

by type: bulk carrier 23, cargo 52, chemical tanker 13, container 6, passenger 1, passenger/cargo 1, petroleum tanker 8, refrigerated cargo 4, roll on/roll off 1

foreign-owned: 83 (Canada 11, Greece 14, Iran 5, Lebanon 2, Norway 38, Sweden 4, Syria 1, Turkey 1, UAE 1, UK 6) (2010)

Ports and terminals:

major seaport(s): Bridgetown

Military :: Barbados

Military branches:

Royal Barbados Defense Force: Troops Command, Barbados Coast Guard (2011)

Military service age and obligation:

18 years of age for voluntary military service, or earlier with parental consent; no conscription (2013)

Manpower available for military service:

males age 16-49: 73,820

females age 16-49: 73,835 (2010 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 58,125

females age 16-49: 58,016 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 1,842

female: 1,849 (2010 est.)

Military - note:

the Royal Barbados Defense Force includes a land-based Troop Command and a small Coast Guard; the primary role of the land element is island defense against external aggression; the Command consists of a single, part-time battalion with a small regular cadre deployed throughout the island; the cadre increasingly supports the police in patrolling the coastline for smuggling and other illicit activities (2007)

Transnational Issues:: Barbados

Disputes - international:

Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago abide by the April 2006 Permanent Court of Arbitration decision delimiting a maritime boundary and limiting catches of flying fish in Trinidad and Tobago's exclusive economic zone; joins other Caribbean states to counter Venezuela's claim that Aves Island sustains human habitation, a criterion under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which permits Venezuela to extend its Economic Exclusion Zone/continental shelf over a large portion of the eastern Caribbean Sea

Trafficking in persons:

current situation: Barbados is a source and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor; legal and illegal female migrants from Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Guyana seem most vulnerable to forced prostitution; Barbadian and immigrant children are prostituted in exchange for material goods; in the past, foreigners are reported to have been forced to work in the domestic service, agriculture, and construction industries

tier rating: Tier 2 Watch List - Barbados does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so; the country was granted a waiver of an otherwise required downgrade to Tier 3 because the government adopted a national action plan on human trafficking that specifies implementing agencies and addresses prosecution, protection, and prevention measures; the government conducted at least two sex trafficking investigations in 2012, as opposed to none in the previous year but did not report any prosecutions or convictions of trafficking offenses; Barbadian law does not appear to prohibit all forms of human trafficking and does not prescribe sufficiently stringent penalties; government efforts to prevent human trafficking included broadcasting short public awareness messages, holding town hall meetings, and funding a hotline (2013)

Illicit drugs:

one of many Caribbean transshipment points for narcotics bound for Europe and the US; offshore financial center