



Central America and Caribbean :: Sint Maarten (part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Introduction :: Sint Maarten

Background:

Although sighted by Christopher COLUMBUS in 1493 and claimed for Spain, it was the Dutch who occupied the island in 1631 and set about exploiting its salt deposits. The Spanish retook the island in 1633, but continued to be harassed by the Dutch. The Spanish finally relinquished the island of Saint Martin to the French and Dutch, who divided it amongst themselves in 1648. The establishment of cotton, tobacco, and sugar plantations dramatically expanded African slavery on the island in the 18th and 19th centuries; the practice was not abolished in the Dutch half until 1863. The island's economy declined until 1939 when it became a free port; the tourism industry was dramatically expanded beginning in the 1950s. In 1954, Sint Maarten and several other Dutch Caribbean possessions became part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands as the Netherlands Antilles. In a 2000 referendum, the citizens of Sint Maarten voted to become a self-governing country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The change in status became effective in October of 2010 with the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles.

Geography :: Sint Maarten

Location:

Caribbean, located in the Leeward Islands (northern) group; Dutch part of the island of Saint Martin in the Caribbean Sea; Sint Maarten lies east of the US Virgin Islands

Geographic coordinates:

18 4 N, 63 4 W

Map references:

Central America and the Caribbean

Area:

total: 34 sq km

country comparison to the world: 236

land: 34 sq km

water: 0 sq km

note: Dutch part of the island of Saint Martin

Area - comparative:

one-fifth the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

total: 15 km

border countries: Saint Martin (France) 15 km

Coastline:

364 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive fishing zone: 12 nm

Climate:

tropical marine climate, ameliorated by northeast trade winds, results in moderate temperatures; average rainfall of 1500 mm/year; hurricane season stretches from July to November

Terrain:

low, hilly terrain, volcanic origin

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Caribbean Sea 0 m

highest point: Mount Flagstaff 386 m

Natural resources:

fish, salt

Land use:

arable land: 10%

permanent crops: 0%

other: 90% (2011)

Irrigated land:

NA

Natural hazards:

subject to hurricanes from July to November

Environment - current issues:

NA

Geography - note:

the northern border is shared with the French overseas collectivity of Saint Martin; together, these two entities make up the smallest landmass in the world shared by two self-governing states

People and Society :: Sint Maarten

Languages:

English (official) 67.5%, Spanish 12.9%, Creole 8.2%, Dutch (official) 4.2%, Papiamentu (a Spanish-Portuguese-Dutch-English dialect) 2.2%, French 1.5%, other 3.5% (2001 census)

Religions:

Roman Catholic 39%, Protestant 44.8% (Pentecostal 11.6%, Seventh-Day Adventist 6.2%, other Protestant 27%), none 6.7%, other 5.4%, Jewish 3.4%, not reported 0.7% (2001 census)

Population:

39,689 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 213

Age structure:

0-14 years: 19.7% (male 3,986/female 3,704)

15-24 years: 16.3% (male 3,130/female 3,253)

25-54 years: 45.3% (male 8,626/female 9,077)

55-64 years: 12.9% (male 2,448/female 2,596)

65 years and over: 5.8% (male 1,087/female 1,181) (2013 est.)

Median age:

total: 39.7 years

male: 38.9 years

female: 40.4 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

1.51% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 79

Birth rate:

13 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 154

Death rate:

4.51 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 203

Net migration rate:

6.63 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 21

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.08 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 0.96 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 0.95 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.94 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.92 male(s)/female

total population: 0.97 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Infant mortality rate:

total: 9.05 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 146

male: 9.84 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 8.22 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 77.61 years

country comparison to the world: 65

male: 75.34 years

female: 79.99 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

2.09 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 110

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

NA

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

NA

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

NA

Government:: Sint Maarten

Country name:

Dutch long form: Land Sint Maarten
Dutch short form: Sint Maarten
English long form: Country of Sint Maarten
English short form: Sint Maarten
former: Netherlands Antilles; Curacao and Dependencies

Dependency status:

constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands; full autonomy in internal affairs granted in 2010; Dutch Government responsible for defense and foreign affairs

Government type:

parliamentary

Capital:

name: Philipsburg
geographic coordinates: 18 1 N, 63 2 W
time difference: UTC-4 (1 hour ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

none (part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Independence:

none (part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands)

National holiday:

Queen's Day (Birthday of Queen-Mother JULIANA and accession to the throne of her oldest daughter BEATRIX), 30 April (1909 and 1980)

Constitution:

Staatsregeling, 10 October 2010; revised Kingdom Charter pending previous 1947, 1955; latest adopted 21 July 2010, entered into force 10 October 2010 (regulates governance of Sint Maarten but is subordinate to the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands); note - in October 2010, with the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles, Sint Maarten became a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands (2013)

Legal system:

based on Dutch civil law system with some English common law influence

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: Queen BEATRIX of the Netherlands (since 30 April 1980); represented by Governor General Eugene HOLIDAY (since 10 October 2010)

head of government: Sarah WESCOTT-WILLIAMS (since 10 October 2010)

cabinet: Cabinet

(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#).)

elections: the monarch is hereditary; governor general appointed by the monarch for a six-year term; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party is usually elected prime minister by the legislature

Legislative branch:

unicameral parliament or Staten (15 seats; members elected by popular vote for four-year term)

elections: last held 17 September 2010 (next to be held in 2014)

election results: percent of vote by party - National Alliance 45.9%, UPP 36.1%, Democratic Party 17.1%, other .9%; seats by party - National Alliance 7, UPP 6, Democratic Party 2

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Joint Court of Justice of Aruba, Curacao, Sint Maarten, and of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba or "Joint Court of Justice" (consists of the presiding judge, other members, and their substitutes); final appeals heard by the Supreme Court, in The Hague, Netherlands

note - prior to 2010, the Joint Court of Justice was the Common Court of Justice of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba

judge selection and term of office: Joint Court judges appointed by the monarch for life

subordinate courts: Courts in First Instance

Political parties and leaders:

Democratic Party or DP [Sarah WESCOTT-WILLIAMS]

National Alliance or NA [William MARLIN]

United People's Party or UPP [Theodore HEYLIGER]

Concordia Political Alliance or CPA [Jeffery RICHARDSON]

Diplomatic representation in the US:

none (represented by the Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Diplomatic representation from the US:

the US does not have an embassy in Sint Maarten; the Consul General to Curacao, currently Consul General James R. Moore, is accredited to Sint Maarten

Flag description:

two equal horizontal bands of red (top) and blue with a white isosceles triangle based on the hoist side; the center of the triangle displays the Sint Maarten coat of arms; the arms consist of an orange-bordered blue shield prominently displaying the white court house in Philipsburg, as well as a bouquet of yellow sage (the national flower) in the upper left, and the silhouette of a Dutch-French friendship monument in the upper right; the shield is surmounted by a yellow rising sun in front of which is a Brown Pelican in flight; a yellow scroll below the shield bears the motto: SEMPER PROGREDIENS (Always Progressing); the three main colors are identical to those on the Dutch flag

note: the flag somewhat resembles that of the Philippines, but with the main red and blue bands reversed; the banner more closely evokes the wartime Philippine flag

National anthem:

name: "O Sweet Saint Martin's Land"

lyrics/music: Gerard KEMPS

note: the song, written in 1958, is used as an unofficial anthem for the entire island (both French and Dutch sides); as a collectivity of France, in addition to the local anthem, "La Marseillaise" is official on the French side (see France); as a constituent part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in addition to the local anthem, "Het Wilhelmus" is official on the Dutch side (see Netherlands)

Economy:: Sint Maarten

Economy - overview:

The economy of Sint Maarten centers around tourism with nearly four-fifths of the labor force engaged in this sector. Nearly two million visitors come to the island each year by cruise ship and roughly 500,000 visitors arrived through Princess Juliana International Airport in 2012. Cruise ships and yachts also call on Sint Maarten's numerous ports and harbors. No significant agriculture and limited local fishing means that almost all food must be imported. Energy resources and manufactured goods are also imported. Sint Maarten had the highest per capita income among the five islands that formerly comprised the Netherlands Antilles.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$798.3 million (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 209

\$794.7 million (2008 est.)

\$748.9 million (2007 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$794.7 million (2008)

GDP - real growth rate:

4% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 75

1.6% (2008 est.)

4.5% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$15,400 (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 89

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 0.4%

industry: 18.3%

services: 81.3% (2008 est.)

Agriculture - products:

sugar

Industries:

tourism, light industry, and manufacturing

Labor force:

23,200 (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 208

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 1.1%

industry: 15.2%

services: 83.7% (2008 est.)

Unemployment rate:

12% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 123

10.6% (2008 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

4% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

0.7% (2009 est.)

Exports - commodities:

sugar

Exchange rates:

Netherlands Antillean guilders (ANG) per US dollar -

1.79 (2012)

1.79 (2011)

1.79 (2009)

1.79 (2008)

1.79 (2007)

note: The Netherland Antillean guilder was replaced by the newly created Caribbean guilder in 2013

Energy:: Sint Maarten

Electricity - production:

304.3 million kWh (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 171

Communications :: Sint Maarten

Telephone system:

general assessment: generally adequate facilities

domestic: extensive interisland microwave radio relay links

international: country code - 1-721; the Americas Region Caribbean Ring System (ARCOS-1) and the Americas-2 submarine cable systems provide connectivity to Central America, parts of South America and the Caribbean, and the US; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean) (2010)

Internet country code:

.sx; note - IANA has designated .sx for Sint Maarten, but has not yet assigned it to a sponsoring organization

Internet hosts:

NA

Internet users:

NA

Transportation :: Sint Maarten

Airports:

1 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 233

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 1

1,524 to 2,437 m: 1 (2012)

Roadways:

total: 53 km

country comparison to the world: 218

Ports and terminals:

major seaport(s): Philipsburg

oil terminals: Coles Bay oil terminal

Military :: Sint Maarten

Military branches:

no regular military forces (2012)

Military - note:

defense is the responsibility of the Kingdom of the Netherlands