



Australia-Oceania :: Cook Islands
(self-governing in free association with New Zealand)

Introduction :: Cook Islands

Background:

Named after Captain COOK, who sighted them in 1770, the islands became a British protectorate in 1888. By 1900, administrative control was transferred to New Zealand; in 1965, residents chose self-government in free association with New Zealand. The emigration of skilled workers to New Zealand and government deficits are continuing problems.

Geography :: Cook Islands

Location:

Oceania, group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean, about half way between Hawaii and New Zealand

Geographic coordinates:

21 14 S, 159 46 W

Map references:

Oceania

Area:

total: 236 sq km

country comparison to the world: 215

land: 236 sq km

water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative:

1.3 times the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

120 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

Climate:

tropical oceanic; moderated by trade winds; a dry season from April to November and a more humid season from December to March

Terrain:

low coral atolls in north; volcanic, hilly islands in south

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

highest point: Te Manga 652 m

Natural resources:

NEGL

Land use:

arable land: 8.33%

permanent crops: 4.17%

other: 87.5% (2011)

Irrigated land:

NA

Natural hazards:

typhoons (November to March)

Environment - current issues:

NA

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection

Geography - note:

the northern Cook Islands are seven low-lying, sparsely populated, coral atolls; the southern Cook Islands, where most of the population lives, consist of eight elevated, fertile, volcanic isles, including the largest, Rarotonga, at 67 sq km

People and Society :: Cook Islands

Nationality:

noun: Cook Islander(s)

adjective: Cook Islander

Ethnic groups:

Cook Island Maori (Polynesian) 81.3%, part Cook Island Maori 6.7%, other 11.9% (2011 est.)

Languages:

English (official) 86.4%, Cook Islands Maori (Rarotongan) (official) 76.2%, other 8.3% (2011 est.)

Religions:

Protestant 62.8% (Cook Islands Christian Church 49.1%, Seventh-Day Adventist 7.9%, Assemblies of God 3.7%, Apostolic Church 2.1%), Roman Catholic 17%, Mormon 4.4%, other 8%, none 5.6%, no response 2.2% (2011 est.)

Population:

10,134

country comparison to the world: 226

note: the Cook Islands' Ministry of Finance & Economic Management estimated the resident population to have been 13,700 in September 2013 (July 2014 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 22.8% (male 1,224/female 1,084)

15-24 years: 17.9% (male 971/female 845)

25-54 years: 38% (male 1,937/female 1,917)

55-64 years: 11% (male 555/female 487)

65 years and over: 10.6% (male 548/female 566) (2014 est.)

Median age:

total: 34.4 years

male: 33.8 years

female: 35 years (2014 est.)

Population growth rate:

-3% (2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 232

Birth rate:

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

country comparison to the world: 135

Death rate:

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

country comparison to the world: 107

Urbanization:

urban population: 75% of total population (2008)

rate of urbanization: 1.4% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.04 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.13 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1.15 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 1.01 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 1.07 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.96 male(s)/female

total population: 1.07 male(s)/female (2014 est.)

Infant mortality rate:

total: 14.33 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 111

male: 17.43 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 11.08 deaths/1,000 live births (2014 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 75.38 years

country comparison to the world: 95

male: 72.56 years

female: 78.33 years (2014 est.)

Total fertility rate:

2.27 children born/woman (2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 96

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

43.2% (1999)

Health expenditures:

5.5% of GDP (2011)

country comparison to the world: 121

Physicians density:

2.89 physicians/1,000 population (2009)

Drinking water source:**improved:**

urban: 99.6% of population

rural: 99.6% of population

total: 99.6% of population

unimproved:

urban: 0.4% of population

rural: 0.4% of population

total: 0.4% of population (2011 est.)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 94.6% of population

rural: 94.6% of population

total: 94.6% of population

unimproved:

urban: 5.4% of population

rural: 5.4% of population

total: 5.4% of population (2011 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

NA

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

NA

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

NA

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

63.7% (2008)

country comparison to the world: 3

Education expenditures:

3.1% of GDP (2011)

country comparison to the world: 137

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 95%

male: NA

female: NA

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 13 years

male: 12 years

female: 13 years (2011)

Government :: Cook Islands**Country name:**

conventional long form: none

conventional short form: Cook Islands

former: Harvey Islands

Dependency status:

self-governing in free association with New Zealand; Cook Islands is fully responsible for internal affairs; New Zealand retains responsibility for external affairs and defense in consultation with the Cook Islands

Government type:

self-governing parliamentary democracy

Capital:

name: Avarua

geographic coordinates: 21 12 S, 159 46 W

time difference: UTC-10 (5 hours behind Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

none

Independence:

none (became self-governing in free association with New Zealand on 4 August 1965 and has the right at any time to move to full independence by unilateral action)

National holiday:

Constitution Day, first Monday in August (1965)

Constitution:

effective 4 August 1965 (Cook islands Constitution Act 1964); amended many times, last in 2004 (2004)

Legal system:

common law similar to New Zealand common law

International law organization participation:

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration (New Zealand normally retains responsibility for external affairs); accepts ICCt jurisdiction

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: Queen ELIZABETH II (since 6 February 1952) represented by Tom J. MARSTERS (since 9 August 2013); New Zealand High Commissioner Joanna KEMPKERS (since 19 July 2013)

head of government: Prime Minister Henry PUNA (since 30 November 2010)

cabinet: Cabinet chosen by the prime minister; collectively responsible to Parliament

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

elections: the monarchy is hereditary; the UK representative appointed by the monarch; the New Zealand high commissioner appointed by the New Zealand Government; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or the leader of the majority coalition usually becomes prime minister

Legislative branch:

bicameral Parliament consists of a House of Ariki, or upper house, made up of traditional leaders and a Legislative Assembly, or lower house, (24 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)

note: the House of Ariki advises on traditional matters and maintains considerable influence but has no legislative powers

elections: last held on 17 November 2010 (next to be held by 2014)

election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - CIP 16, Demo 8

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Court of Appeal (consists of the chief justice and 3 judges of the High Court); High Court (consists of the chief justice and at least 4 judges and organized into civil, criminal, and land divisions)

note - appeals beyond the Cook Islands Court of Appeal are brought before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (in London)

judge selection and term of office: High Court chief justice appointed by the Queen's Representative on the advice of the Executive Council tendered by the prime minister; other judges appointed by the Queen's Representative, on the advice of the Executive Council tendered by the chief justice, High Court chief justice, and the minister of justice; chief justice and judges appointed for 3-year renewable terms

subordinate courts: justices of the peace

Political parties and leaders:

Cook Islands Party or CIP [Henry PUNA]

Democratic Party or Demo [Dr. Terepai MAOATE]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

Reform Conference (lobby for political system changes)

other: various groups lobbying for political change

International organization participation:

ACP, ADB, AOSIS, FAO, ICAO, ICRM, IFAD, IFRCS, IMO, IMSO, IOC, ITUC (NGOs), OPCW, PIF, Sparteca, SPC, UNESCO, UPU, WHO, WMO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

none (self-governing in free association with New Zealand)

Diplomatic representation from the US:

none (self-governing in free association with New Zealand)

Flag description:

blue, with the flag of the UK in the upper hoist-side quadrant and a large circle of 15 white five-pointed stars (one for every island) centered in the outer half of the flag

National anthem:

name: "Te Atua Mou E" (To God Almighty)

lyrics/music: Tapaeru Te RITO/Thomas DAVIS

note: adopted 1982; as prime minister, Sir Thomas DAVIS composed the anthem; his wife, a tribal chief, wrote the lyrics

Economy :: Cook Islands

Economy - overview:

Like many other South Pacific island nations, the Cook Islands' economic development is hindered by the isolation of the country from foreign markets, the limited size of domestic markets, lack of natural resources, periodic devastation from natural disasters, and inadequate infrastructure. Agriculture, employing more than one-quarter of the working population, provides the economic base with major exports of copra and citrus fruit. Black pearls are the Cook Islands' leading export. Manufacturing activities are limited to fruit processing, clothing, and handicrafts. Trade deficits are offset by remittances from emigrants and by foreign aid overwhelmingly from New Zealand. In the 1980s and 1990s, the country lived beyond its means, maintaining a bloated public service and accumulating a large foreign debt. Subsequent reforms, including the sale of state assets, the strengthening of economic management, the encouragement of tourism, and a debt restructuring agreement, have rekindled investment and growth.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$183.2 million (2005 est.)

country comparison to the world: 220

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$183.2 million (2005 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

0.1% (2005 est.)

country comparison to the world: 193

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$9,100 (2005 est.)

country comparison to the world: 123

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 5.1%

industry: 12.7%

services: 82.1% (2010 est.)

Agriculture - products:

copra, citrus, pineapples, tomatoes, beans, pawpaws, bananas, yams, taro, coffee; pigs, poultry

Industries:

fruit processing, tourism, fishing, clothing, handicrafts

Industrial production growth rate:

1% (2002)

country comparison to the world: 147

Labor force:

6,820 (2001)

country comparison to the world: 219

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 29%

industry: 15%

services: 56% (1995)

Unemployment rate:

13.1% (2005)

country comparison to the world: 130

Population below poverty line:

NA%

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: NA%

highest 10%: NA%

Budget:

revenues: \$70.95 million

expenditures: \$69.05 million (FY05/06)

Taxes and other revenues:

38.7% of GDP (FY05/06)

country comparison to the world: 49

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

1% of GDP (FY05/06)

country comparison to the world: 27

Fiscal year:

1 April - 31 March

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

2.2% (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 75

2.2% (2011 est.)

Stock of narrow money:

\$38.99 million (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 187

\$38.99 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of broad money:

\$148.2 million (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 188

\$170.9 million (31 December 2010 est.)

Current account balance:

\$26.67 million (2005)

country comparison to the world: 59

Exports:

\$5.222 million (2005 est.)

country comparison to the world: 217

\$3,000

Exports - commodities:

copra, papayas, fresh and canned citrus fruit, coffee; fish; pearls and pearl shells; clothing

Imports:

\$83.49 million (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 215

\$80.55 million

Imports - commodities:

foodstuffs, textiles, fuels, timber, capital goods

Debt - external:

\$141 million (1996 est.)

country comparison to the world: 190

Exchange rates:

NZ dollars (NZD) per US dollar -

1.247 (2013)

1.2659 (2011 est.)

1.3874 (2010)

1.6002 (2009)

1.4151 (2008)

Energy :: Cook Islands

Electricity - production:

31.13 million kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 210

Electricity - consumption:

28.95 million kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 210

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 126

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

8,090 kW (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 206

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

98.9% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 53

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 73

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 165

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

1.1% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 82

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 164

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 102

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 176

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2013 es)

country comparison to the world: 121

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 135

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

974.1 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 204

Refined petroleum products - exports:

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 168

Refined petroleum products - imports:

484.7 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 205

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 120

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 136

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 87

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 182

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2013 es)

country comparison to the world: 128

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

75,400 Mt (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 207

Communications :: Cook Islands

Telephones - main lines in use:

7,200 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 206

Telephones - mobile cellular:

7,800 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 212

Telephone system:

general assessment: Telecom Cook Islands offers international direct dialing, Internet, email, fax, and Telex

domestic: individual islands are connected by a combination of satellite earth stations, microwave systems, and VHF and HF radiotelephone; within the islands, service is provided by small exchanges connected to subscribers by open-wire, cable, and fiber-optic cable

international: country code - 682; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Pacific Ocean)

Broadcast media:

1 privately owned TV station broadcasts from Rarotonga providing a mix of local news and overseas-sourced programs; a satellite program package is available; 6 radio stations broadcast with 1 reportedly reaching all of the islands (2009)

Internet country code:

.ck

Internet hosts:

3,562 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 150

Internet users:

6,000 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 205

Transportation :: Cook Islands

Airports:

11 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 153

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 1

1,524 to 2,437 m: 1 (2013)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 10
1,524 to 2,437 m: 2
914 to 1,523 m: 7
under 914 m:
1 (2013)

Roadways:

total: 320 km
country comparison to the world: 204
paved: 33 km
unpaved: 287 km (2003)

Merchant marine:

total: 35
country comparison to the world: 81
by type: bulk carrier 2, cargo 25, passenger 1, refrigerated cargo 6, roll on/roll off 1
foreign-owned: 23 (Estonia 1, Germany 1, Lithuania 1, Norway 8, NZ 2, Russia 1, Sweden 3, Turkey 4, UK 2) (2010)

Ports and terminals:

major seaport(s): Avatiu

Military :: Cook Islands

Military branches:

no regular military forces; National Police Department (2009)

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 2,198
females age 16-49: 2,156 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 127
female: 107 (2010 est.)

Military - note:

defense is the responsibility of New Zealand in consultation with the Cook Islands and at its request

Transnational Issues :: Cook Islands

Disputes - international:

none