



Australia-Oceania :: Northern Mariana Islands (commonwealth in political union with the US)

Introduction :: Northern Mariana Islands

Background:

Under US administration as part of the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific, the people of the Northern Mariana Islands decided in the 1970s not to seek independence but instead to forge closer links with the US. Negotiations for territorial status began in 1972. A covenant to establish a commonwealth in political union with the US was approved in 1975, and came into force on 24 March 1976. A new government and constitution went into effect in 1978.

Geography :: Northern Mariana Islands

Location:

Oceania, islands in the North Pacific Ocean, about three-quarters of the way from Hawaii to the Philippines

Geographic coordinates:

15 12 N, 145 45 E

Map references:

Oceania

Area:

total: 464 sq km

country comparison to the world: 197

land: 464 sq km

water: 0 sq km

note: consists of 14 islands including Saipan, Rota, and Tinian

Area - comparative:

2.5 times the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

1,482 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:

tropical marine; moderated by northeast trade winds, little seasonal temperature variation; dry season December to June, rainy season July to October

Terrain:

southern islands are limestone with level terraces and fringing coral reefs; northern islands are volcanic

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

highest point: unnamed elevation on Agrihan 965 m

Natural resources:

arable land, fish

Land use:

arable land: 2.17%

permanent crops: 2.17%

other: 95.65% (2011)

Irrigated land:

1 sq km (2011)

Natural hazards:

active volcanoes on Pagan and Agrihan; typhoons (especially August to November)

Environment - current issues:

contamination of groundwater on Saipan may contribute to disease; clean-up of landfill; protection of endangered species conflicts with development

Geography - note:

strategic location in the North Pacific Ocean

People and Society :: Northern Mariana Islands

Nationality:

noun: NA (US citizens)

adjective: NA

Ethnic groups:

Asian 56.3%, Pacific islander 36.3%, Caucasian 1.8%, other 0.8%, mixed 4.8% (2000 census)

Languages:

Philippine languages 24.4%, Chinese 23.4%, Chamorro (official) 22.4%, English (official) 10.8%, other Pacific island languages 9.5%, other 9.6% (2000 census)

Religions:

Christian (Roman Catholic majority, although traditional beliefs and taboos may still be found)

Population:

51,170 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 209

Age structure:

0-14 years: 26% (male 6,970/female 6,333)

15-24 years: 14.9% (male 4,133/female 3,471)

25-54 years: 45.5% (male 9,906/female 13,396)

55-64 years: 9.3% (male 2,592/female 2,187)

65 years and over: 4.3% (male 1,033/female 1,149) (2013 est.)

Median age:

total: 31.1 years

male: 29.5 years

female: 31.5 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

0.09% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 186

Birth rate:

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

country comparison to the world: 90

Death rate:

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

country comparison to the world: 215

Net migration rate:

-15.22 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 217

Urbanization:

urban population: 91% of total population (2010)

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

Major urban areas - population:

SAIPAN (capital) NA (2009)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.06 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.12 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1.13 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 0.75 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 1.19 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.91 male(s)/female

total population: 0.93 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Infant mortality rate:

total: 5.59 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 177

male: 5.98 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 5.18 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 77.45 years

country comparison to the world: 67

male: 74.8 years

female: 80.26 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

2.05 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 122

Drinking water source:

improved:
urban: 98% of population
rural: 97% of population
total: 98% of population
unimproved:
urban: 2% of population
rural: 3% of population
total: 2% of population (2010 est.)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:
urban: 92% of population
rural: 93% of population
total: 92% of population
unimproved:
urban: 8% of population
rural: 7% of population
total: 8% of population (2000 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

NA

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

NA

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

NA

Education expenditures:

NA

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 97%
male: 97%
female: 96% (1980 est.)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

total: 5.9%
country comparison to the world: 129
male: 11.2%
female: 4.4% (2003)

Government:: Northern Mariana Islands

Country name:

conventional long form: Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
conventional short form: Northern Mariana Islands
abbreviation: CNMI
former: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Mariana Islands District

Dependency status:

commonwealth in political union with the US; federal funds to the Commonwealth administered by the US Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs

Government type:

commonwealth; self-governing with locally elected governor, lieutenant governor, and legislature

Capital:

name: Saipan
geographic coordinates: 15 12 N, 145 45 E
time difference: UTC+10 (15 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

none (commonwealth in political union with the US); there are no first-order administrative divisions as defined by the US Government, but there are four municipalities at the second order: Northern Islands, Rota, Saipan, Tinian

Independence:

none (commonwealth in political union with the US)

National holiday:

Commonwealth Day, 8 January (1978)

Constitution:

partially effective 1 January 1978 (Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands); fully effective 4 November 1986 (Covenant Agreement); amended several times, last in 2012

Legal system:

US system applies, except for customs, wages, immigration laws, and taxation

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal; note - indigenous inhabitants are US citizens but do not vote in US presidential elections

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Barack H. OBAMA (since 20 January 2009); Vice President Joseph R. BIDEN (since 20 January 2009)
head of government: Governor Eloy S. INOS (since 20 February 2013); Lieutenant Governor Jude U. HOFSCHEIDER (since 20 February 2013)
cabinet: the cabinet consists of the heads of the 10 principal departments under the executive branch who are appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate; other members include special assistants to the governor and office heads appointed by and reporting directly to the governor
 (For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#).)
elections: under the US Constitution, residents of unincorporated territories, such as the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, do not vote in elections for US president and vice president; however, they may vote in the Democratic and Republican party presidential primary elections; governor and lieutenant governor elected on the same ticket by popular vote for four-year terms (eligible for a second term); election last held on 7 November 2009 with a run-off election held on 23 November 2009 (next to be held in 2014)
election results: Benigno R. FITIAL reelected governor in a run-off election held 23 November 2009; percent of vote - Benigno R. FITIAL 51.4%, Heinz HOFSCHEIDER 48.6%
note: Benigno R. FITIAL was impeached by House of Representatives on 11-12 February 2013 and resigns on 20 February 2013; Eloy INOS was sworn in as governor the same day

Legislative branch:

bicameral legislature consists of the Senate (9 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year staggered terms) and the House of Representatives (20 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve two-year terms)

elections: Senate - last held on 6 November 2012 (next to be held in November 2014); House of Representatives - last held on 6 November 2012 (next to be held in November 2014)

election results: Senate - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - Covenant Party 3, Republican Party 3, Democratic Party 1, independents 2; House of Representatives - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - Republican Party 4, Covenant Party 3, independents 13

note: the Northern Mariana Islands elects one nonvoting delegate to the US House of Representatives; election last held on 6 November 2012 (next to be held in November 2014); seats by party - independent 1

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or CNMI (consists of the chief justice and 2 associate justices); US Federal District Court (consists of 1 judge); note - US Federal District Court jurisdiction limited to US federal laws

note - appeals beyond the Northern Marianas Islands Supreme Court are referred to the US Supreme Court

judge selection and term of office: judges of the Supreme Court of the CNMI appointed by the governor and confirmed by the CNMI Senate; judges appointed for 8-year terms and can serve another term if approved through voter election; US Federal District Court judges appointed by the US president and confirmed by the US Senate; judges appointed for renewable 10-year terms

subordinate courts: Superior Court

Political parties and leaders:

Covenant Party [Benigno R. FITIAL]
 Democratic Party [Dr. Carlos S. CAMACHO]
 Republican Party [Juan S. REYES]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

NA

International organization participation:

SPC, UPU

Flag description:

blue, with a white, five-pointed star superimposed on a gray latte stone (the traditional foundation stone used in building) in the center, surrounded by a wreath; blue symbolizes the Pacific Ocean, the star represents the Commonwealth; the latte stone and the floral head wreath display elements of the native Chamorro culture

National symbol(s):

latte stone

National anthem:

name: "Gi Talo Gi Halom Tasi" (In the Middle of the Sea)

[▶ PLAY ANTHEM](#)

lyrics/music: Jose S. PANGELINAN [Chamoru], David PETER [Carolinian]/Wilhelm GANZHORN

note: adopted 1996; the Carolinian version of the song is known as "Satil Matawal Pacifico;" as a commonwealth of the United States, in addition to the local anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is official (see United States)

Economy:: Northern Mariana Islands

Economy - overview:

The Northern Mariana Islands' economy benefits substantially from financial assistance from the US. The tourist industry employs approximately a quarter of the work force and accounts for roughly one-fourth of GDP. As a share of total arrivals, the number of Japanese tourists has dropped recently to less than half, while Korean visitors account for roughly one-third. Annual tourist arrivals have remained below 400,000 since 2007. Other services such as trade are also important to the local economy. The small agriculture sector is made up of cattle ranches and small farms producing coconuts, breadfruit, tomatoes, and melons.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$733 million (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 211

note: GDP estimate includes US subsidy

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$733 million (2010 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$13,600 (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 95

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 1.7%
industry: 3.3%
services: 95% (2010)

Agriculture - products:

vegetables and melons, fruits and nuts; ornamental plants; livestock, poultry and eggs; fish and aquaculture products

Industries:

tourism, banking, construction, fishing, handicrafts, other services

Industrial production growth rate:

NA%

Labor force:

38,450

country comparison to the world: 199

note: nearly 29,000 of these were foreign workers (2005 est.)

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 1.9%

industry: 10%

services: 88.1% (2010 est.)

Unemployment rate:

11.2% (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 119

8% (2005 est.)

Population below poverty line:

NA%

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: NA%

highest 10%: NA%

Budget:

revenues: \$260 million

expenditures: \$318.2 million (FY10/11)

Taxes and other revenues:

35.5% of GDP (FY10/11 est.)

country comparison to the world: 66

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-7.9% of GDP (FY10/11 est.)

country comparison to the world: 189

Fiscal year:

1 October - 30 September

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

-2.7% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 1

Exports:

\$98.2 million (2008)

country comparison to the world: 190

Exports - commodities:

garments

Imports:

\$214.4 million (2001)

country comparison to the world: 203

Imports - commodities:

food, construction equipment and materials, petroleum products

Debt - external:

\$NA

Exchange rates:

the US dollar is used

Energy:: Northern Mariana Islands

Electricity - production:

60,600 kWh (January 2009)

country comparison to the world: 217

Electricity - consumption:

48,300 kWh (January 2009)

country comparison to the world: 218

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (January 2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 182

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (January 2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 173

Communications :: Northern Mariana Islands

Telephone system:

international: country code - 1-670; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (Pacific Ocean)

Broadcast media:

1 TV broadcast station on Saipan; multi-channel cable TV services are available on Saipan; 9 licensed radio broadcast stations (2009)

Internet country code:

.mp

Internet hosts:

17 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 222

Transportation :: Northern Mariana Islands

Airports:

5 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 179

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 3

2,438 to 3,047 m: 2

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

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 2

2,438 to 3,047 m: 1

under 914 m:

1 (2013)

Heliports:

1 (2013)

Roadways:

total: 536 km (2008)

country comparison to the world: 193

Ports and terminals:

Saipan, Tinian, Rota

Military :: Northern Mariana Islands

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 8,793

females age 16-49: 11,569 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily

significant age annually:

male: 410

female: 306 (2010 est.)

Military - note:

defense is the responsibility of the US

Transnational Issues :: Northern Mariana Islands

Disputes - international:

none