



## Australia-Oceania :: Nauru

### Introduction :: Nauru

#### Background:

The exact origins of the Nauruans are unclear since their language does not resemble any other in the Pacific region. Germany annexed the island in 1888. A German-British consortium began mining the island's phosphate deposits early in the 20th century. Australian forces occupied Nauru in World War I; it subsequently became a League of Nations mandate. After the Second World War - and a brutal occupation by Japan - Nauru became a UN trust territory. It achieved independence in 1968 and joined the UN in 1999 as the world's smallest independent republic.

### Geography :: Nauru

#### Location:

Oceania, island in the South Pacific Ocean, south of the Marshall Islands

#### Geographic coordinates:

0 32 S, 166 55 E

#### Map references:

Oceania

#### Area:

**total:** 21 sq km

**country comparison to the world:** 240

**land:** 21 sq km

**water:** 0 sq km

#### Area - comparative:

about 0.1 times the size of Washington, DC

#### Land boundaries:

0 km

#### Coastline:

30 km

#### Maritime claims:

**territorial sea:** 12 nm

**contiguous zone:** 24 nm

**exclusive economic zone:** 200 nm

#### Climate:

tropical with a monsoonal pattern; rainy season (November to February)

#### Terrain:

sandy beach rises to fertile ring around raised coral reefs with phosphate plateau in center

#### Elevation extremes:

**lowest point:** Pacific Ocean 0 m

**highest point:** unnamed elevation along plateau rim 61 m

#### Natural resources:

phosphates, fish

#### Land use:

**arable land:** 0%

**permanent crops:** 20%

**other:** 80% (2011)

#### Irrigated land:

NA

#### Natural hazards:

periodic droughts

#### Environment - current issues:

limited natural freshwater resources, roof storage tanks collect rainwater but mostly dependent on a single, aging desalination plant; intensive phosphate mining during the past 90 years - mainly by a UK, Australia, and NZ consortium - has left the central 90% of Nauru a wasteland and threatens limited remaining land resources

#### Environment - international agreements:

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

**signed, but not ratified:** none of the selected agreements

#### Geography - note:

Nauru is one of the three great phosphate rock islands in the Pacific Ocean - the others are Banaba (Ocean Island) in Kiribati and Makatea in French Polynesia; only 53 km south of Equator

### People and Society :: Nauru

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#### Nationality:

**noun:** Nauruan(s)

**adjective:** Nauruan

#### Ethnic groups:

Nauruan 58%, other Pacific Islander 26%, Chinese 8%, European 8%

#### Languages:

Nauruan (official, a distinct Pacific Island language), English (widely understood, spoken, and used for most government and commercial purposes)

#### Religions:

Protestant 45.8% (Nauru Congregational 35.4%, Nauru Independent Church 10.4%), Roman Catholic 33.2%, other 14.1%, none 4.5%, unspecified 2.4% (2002 census)

#### Population:

9,434 (July 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 227

#### Age structure:

**0-14 years:** 32.5% (male 1,363/female 1,701)

**15-24 years:** 17.6% (male 857/female 801)

**25-54 years:** 42.3% (male 1,975/female 2,014)

**55-64 years:** 5.9% (male 225/female 327)

**65 years and over:** 1.8% (male 68/female 103) (2013 est.)

#### Median age:

**total:** 25 years

**male:** 25.2 years

**female:** 24.7 years (2013 est.)

#### Population growth rate:

0.58% (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 146

#### Birth rate:

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

**country comparison to the world:** 49

#### Death rate:

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

**country comparison to the world:** 169

#### Net migration rate:

-14.63 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 216

#### Urbanization:

**urban population:** 100% of total population (2010)

**rate of urbanization:** 0.6% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

#### Sex ratio:

**at birth:** 0.83 male(s)/female

**0-14 years:** 0.81 male(s)/female

**15-24 years:** 1.07 male(s)/female

**25-54 years:** 0.98 male(s)/female

**55-64 years:** 0.68 male(s)/female

**65 years and over:** 0.78 male(s)/female

**total population:** 0.91 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

#### Infant mortality rate:

**total:** 8.36 deaths/1,000 live births

**country comparison to the world:** 154

**male:** 10.74 deaths/1,000 live births

**female:** 6.37 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

#### Life expectancy at birth:

**total population:** 66.05 years

**country comparison to the world:** 169

**male:** 61.96 years

**female:** 69.47 years (2013 est.)

#### Total fertility rate:

2.98 children born/woman (2013 est.)  
**country comparison to the world:** 59

**Contraceptive prevalence rate:**

35.6% (2007)

**Health expenditures:**

11.2% of GDP (2010)

**country comparison to the world:** 17

**Physicians density:**

0.71 physicians/1,000 population (2008)

**Drinking water source:**

**improved:**

urban: 88% of population

total: 88% of population

**unimproved:**

urban: 12% of population

total: 12% of population (2010 est.)

**Sanitation facility access:**

**improved:**

urban: 65% of population

total: 65% of population

**unimproved:**

urban: 35% of population

total: 35% of population (2010 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:**

NA

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:**

NA

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:**

NA

**Obesity - adult prevalence rate:**

71.1% (2008)

**country comparison to the world:** 2

**Children under the age of 5 years underweight:**

4.8% (2007)

**country comparison to the world:** 90

**Education expenditures:**

NA

**Literacy:**

NA

**School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):**

**total:** 9 years

**male:** 9 years

**female:** 10 years (2008)

**Government:: Nauru**

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**Country name:**

**conventional long form:** Republic of Nauru

**conventional short form:** Nauru

**local long form:** Republic of Nauru

**local short form:** Nauru

**former:** Pleasant Island

**Government type:**

republic

**Capital:**

no official capital; government offices in Yaren District

**time difference:** UTC+12 (17 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

**Administrative divisions:**

14 districts; Aiwo, Anabar, Anetan, Anibare, Baiti, Boe, Buada, Denigomodu, Ewa, Ijuw, Meneng, Nibok, Uaboe, Yaren

**Independence:**

31 January 1968 (from the Australia-, NZ-, and UK-administered UN trusteeship)

**National holiday:**

Independence Day, 31 January (1968)

**Constitution:**

29 January 1968; amended 17 May 1968

**Legal system:**

mixed legal system of common law based on the English model and customary law

**International law organization participation:**

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; accepts ICCT jurisdiction

**Suffrage:**

20 years of age; universal and compulsory

**Executive branch:**

**chief of state:** President Baron WAQA (since 11 June 2013); note - the president is both chief of state and head of government

**head of government:** President Baron WAQA (since 11 June 2013)

**cabinet:** Cabinet appointed by the president from among the members of parliament  
(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#).)

**elections:** president elected by parliament for a three-year term; election last held on 11 June 2013 (next to be held in 2016)

**election results:** Baron WAQA elected in a parliamentary vote of 13 to 5

**Legislative branch:**

unicameral parliament (19 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve three-year terms)

**elections:** last held on 8 June 2013 (next to be held in 2016)

**election results:** percent of vote - NA; seats - independents 19

**Judicial branch:**

**highest court(s):** Supreme Court (consists of a chief justice and 1 judge)

**judge selection and term of office:** judges appointed by the president to serve until age 65

**subordinate courts:** District Court, Family Court

**Political parties and leaders:**

Democratic Party [Kennan ADEANG]

Nauru First (Naoero Amo) Party

Nauru Party (informal)

*note:* loose multiparty system

**Political pressure groups and leaders:**

Woman Information and News Agency (women's issues)

**International organization participation:**

ACP, ADB, AOSIS, C, FAO, G-77, ICAO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ITU, OPCW, PIF, Sparteca, SPC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UPU, WHO

**Diplomatic representation in the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador Marlene I. MOSES

**chancery:** 800 2nd Avenue, Suite 400 D, New York, NY 10017

**telephone:** [1] (212) 937-0074

**FAX:** [1] (212) 937-0079

**consulate(s):** Agana (Guam)

**Diplomatic representation from the US:**

the US does not have an embassy in Nauru; the US Ambassador to Fiji is accredited to Nauru

**Flag description:**

blue with a narrow, horizontal, yellow stripe across the center and a large white 12-pointed star below the stripe on the hoist side; blue stands for the Pacific Ocean, the star indicates the country's location in relation to the Equator (the yellow stripe) and the 12 points symbolize the 12 original tribes of Nauru

**National anthem:**

**name:** "Nauru Bwiema" (Song of Nauru)

**lyrics/music:** Margaret HENDRIE/Laurence Henry HICKS

*note:* adopted 1968

**Economy :: Nauru****Economy - overview:**

Revenues of this tiny island traditionally have come from exports of phosphates. Few other resources exist, with most necessities being imported, mainly from Australia, its former occupier and later major source of support. In 2005 an Australian company entered into an agreement to exploit remaining supplies. Primary reserves of phosphates were exhausted and mining ceased in 2006, but mining of a deeper layer of "secondary phosphate" in the interior of the island began the following year. The secondary phosphate deposits may last another 30 years. The rehabilitation of mined land and the replacement of income from phosphates are serious long-term problems. In anticipation of the exhaustion of Nauru's phosphate deposits, substantial amounts of phosphate income were invested in trust funds to help cushion the transition and provide for Nauru's economic future. As a result of heavy spending from the trust funds, the government faced virtual bankruptcy. To cut costs the government has frozen wages and reduced overstuffed public service departments. Nauru lost further revenue in 2008 with the closure of Australia's refugee processing center, making it almost totally dependent on food imports and foreign aid. Housing, hospitals, and other capital plant are deteriorating. The cost to Australia of keeping the government and economy afloat continues to climb. Few comprehensive statistics on the Nauru economy exist with estimates of Nauru's GDP varying widely.

**GDP (purchasing power parity):**

\$60 million (2005 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 224

**GDP (official exchange rate):**

\$NA

**GDP - real growth rate:**

NA%

**GDP - per capita (PPP):**

\$5,000 (2005 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 160

**GDP - composition, by sector of origin:**

**agriculture:** 6.1%  
**industry:** 33%  
**services:** 60.8% (2009 est.)

**Agriculture - products:**

coconuts

**Industries:**

phosphate mining, offshore banking, coconut products

**Industrial production growth rate:**

NA%

**Labor force - by occupation:**

**note:** employed in mining phosphates, public administration, education, and transportation

**Unemployment rate:**

90% (2004 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 201

**Population below poverty line:**

NA%

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:**

**lowest 10%:** NA%

**highest 10%:** NA%

**Budget:**

**revenues:** \$13.5 million

**expenditures:** \$13.5 million (2005)

**Fiscal year:**

1 July - 30 June

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**

NA% (2011 est.)

**Exports:**

\$64,000 (2005 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 220

**Exports - commodities:**

phosphates

**Imports:**

\$20 million (2004 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 220

**Imports - commodities:**

food, fuel, manufactures, building materials, machinery

**Debt - external:**

\$33.3 million (2004 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 195

**Exchange rates:**

Australian dollars (AUD) per US dollar -

0.9658 (2012)

0.9695 (2011 est.)

1.0902 (2010)

1.2822 (2009)

1.2059 (2008)

**Energy :: Nauru**

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**Electricity - production:**

33 million kWh (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 208

**Electricity - consumption:**

30.69 million kWh (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 208

**Electricity - exports:**

0 kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 113

**Electricity - imports:**

0 kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 115

**Electricity - installed generating capacity:**

11,000 kW (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 200

**Electricity - from fossil fuels:**

100% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 30

**Electricity - from nuclear fuels:**

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 153

**Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:**

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 189

**Electricity - from other renewable sources:**

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 169

**Crude oil - production:**

0 bbl/day (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 174

**Crude oil - exports:**

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 162

**Crude oil - imports:**

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 109

**Crude oil - proved reserves:**

0 bbl (1 January 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 173

**Refined petroleum products - production:**

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 121

**Refined petroleum products - consumption:**

1,000 bbl/day (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 200

**Refined petroleum products - exports:**

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 209

**Refined petroleum products - imports:**

1,044 bbl/day (2008 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 191

**Natural gas - production:**

0 cu m (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 175

**Natural gas - consumption:**

0 cu m (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 181

**Natural gas - exports:**

0 cu m (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 155

**Natural gas - imports:**

0 cu m (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 109

**Natural gas - proved reserves:**

0 cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 178

**Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:**

219,700 Mt (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 195

**Communications:: Nauru**

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**Telephones - main lines in use:**

1,900 (2009)

**country comparison to the world:** 218

**Telephones - mobile cellular:**

6,700 (2011)

**country comparison to the world:** 212

**Telephone system:**

**general assessment:** adequate local and international radiotelephone communication provided via Australian facilities

**international:** country code - 674; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Pacific Ocean)

**Broadcast media:**

1 government-owned TV station broadcasting programs from New Zealand sent via satellite or on videotape; 1 government-owned radio station, broadcasting on AM and FM, utilizes Australian and British programs (2009)

**Internet country code:**

.nr

**Internet hosts:**

8,162 (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 138

**Transportation :: Nauru**

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**Airports:**

1 (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 229

**Airports - with paved runways:**

total: 1

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

**Roadways:**

total: 24 km

**country comparison to the world:** 220

**paved:** 24 km (2002)

**Ports and terminals:**

Nauru

**Military :: Nauru**

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**Military branches:**

no regular military forces (2012)

**Manpower available for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 2,542 (2010 est.)

**Manpower fit for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 1,823

**females age 16-49:** 2,034 (2010 est.)

**Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:**

**male:** 74

**female:** 78 (2010 est.)

**Military expenditures:**

NA

**Military - note:**

Nauru maintains no defense forces; under an informal agreement, defense is the responsibility of Australia

**Transnational Issues :: Nauru**

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**Disputes - international:**

none