



Australia-Oceania :: Tonga

Introduction :: Tonga

Background:

Tonga - unique among Pacific nations - never completely lost its indigenous governance. The archipelagos of "The Friendly Islands" were united into a Polynesian kingdom in 1845. Tonga became a constitutional monarchy in 1875 and a British protectorate in 1900; it withdrew from the protectorate and joined the Commonwealth of Nations in 1970. Tonga remains the only monarchy in the Pacific.

Geography :: Tonga

Location:

Oceania, archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean, about two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand

Geographic coordinates:

20 00 S, 175 00 W

Map references:

Oceania

Area:

total: 747 sq km

country comparison to the world: 190

land: 717 sq km

water: 30 sq km

Area - comparative:

four times the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

419 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

continental shelf: 200 m depth or to the depth of exploitation

Climate:

tropical; modified by trade winds; warm season (December to May), cool season (May to December)

Terrain:

most islands have limestone base formed from uplifted coral formation; others have limestone overlying volcanic base

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

highest point: unnamed elevation on Kao Island 1,033 m

Natural resources:

fish, fertile soil

Land use:

arable land: 21.33%

permanent crops: 14.67%

other: 64% (2011)

Irrigated land:

NA

Natural hazards:

cyclones (October to April); earthquakes and volcanic activity on Fonuafo'ou

volcanism: moderate volcanic activity; Fonualei (elev. 180 m) has shown frequent activity in recent years, while Niufo'ou (elev. 260 m), which last erupted in 1985, has forced evacuations; other historically active volcanoes include Late and Tofua

Environment - current issues:

deforestation results as more and more land is being cleared for agriculture and settlement; some damage to coral reefs from starfish and indiscriminate coral and shell collectors; overhunting threatens native sea turtle populations

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

archipelago of 169 islands (36 inhabited)

People and Society :: Tonga

Nationality:

noun: Tongan(s)

adjective: Tongan

Ethnic groups:

Polynesian, Europeans

Languages:

Tongan (official), English (official)

Religions:

Christian (Free Wesleyan Church claims over 30,000 adherents)

Population:

106,322 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 192

Age structure:

0-14 years: 36.2% (male 19,545/female 18,927)

15-24 years: 19.2% (male 10,432/female 9,935)

25-54 years: 33% (male 17,549/female 17,562)

55-64 years: 5.4% (male 2,779/female 2,994)

65 years and over: 6.2% (male 3,034/female 3,565) (2013 est.)

Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 75.7 %

youth dependency ratio: 65.4 %

elderly dependency ratio: 10.3 %

potential support ratio: 9.7 (2013)

Median age:

total: 21.8 years

male: 21.3 years

female: 22.2 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

0.14% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 184

Birth rate:

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

country comparison to the world: 65

Death rate:

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

country comparison to the world: 192

Net migration rate:

-17.87 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 218

Urbanization:

urban population: 23% of total population (2010)

rate of urbanization: 0.8% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.03 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1.05 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 1 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.91 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.86 male(s)/female

total population: 1.01 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

110 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

country comparison to the world: 68

Infant mortality rate:

total: 12.78 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 127

male: 13.2 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 12.34 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 75.6 years

country comparison to the world: 90

male: 74.16 years

female: 77.09 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

3.46 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 48

Health expenditures:

5.1% of GDP (2010)

country comparison to the world: 135

Physicians density:

0.29 physicians/1,000 population (2002)

Hospital bed density:

2.6 beds/1,000 population (2010)

Drinking water source:**improved:**

urban: 100% of population

rural: 100% of population

total: 100% of population (2010 est.)

Sanitation facility access:**improved:**

urban: 98% of population

rural: 96% of population

total: 96% of population

unimproved:

urban: 2% of population

rural: 4% of population

total: 4% 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:

57.6% (2008)

country comparison to the world: 5

Education expenditures:

3.9% of GDP (2004)

country comparison to the world: 116

Literacy:

definition: can read and write Tongan and/or English

total population: 99%

male: 99%

female: 99.1% (2006 est.)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 14 years

male: 14 years

female: 14 years (2007)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

total: 11.9%

country comparison to the world: 98

male: 9.9%

female: 15.1% (2003)

Government:: Tonga

Country name:

conventional long form: Kingdom of Tonga

conventional short form: Tonga

local long form: Pule'anga Tonga

local short form: Tonga

former: Friendly Islands

Government type:

constitutional monarchy

Capital:

name: Nuku'alofa

geographic coordinates: 21 08 S, 175 12 W

time difference: UTC+13 (18 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

5 island divisions: 'Eua, Ha'apai, Ongo Niua, Tongatapu, Vava'u

Independence:

4 June 1970 (from UK protectorate)

National holiday:

National Day, 4 November (1875)

Constitution:

4 November 1875; revised 1967

Legal system:

English common law

International law organization participation:

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; non-party state to the ICCt

Suffrage:

21 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: King TUPOU VI (since 18 March 2012); note - King George TUPOU V died on 18 March 2012 in Hong Kong; he was succeeded by his brother Crown Prince TUPOUTO'A Lavaka, who took the throne name TUPOU VI

head of government: Prime Minister Lord Siale'ataonga TU'IVAKANO (since 22 December 2010)

cabinet: Cabinet is nominated by the prime minister and appointed by the monarch

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

note: there is also a Privy Council that advises the monarch

elections: the monarchy is hereditary; prime minister and deputy prime minister elected by and from the members of parliament and appointed by the monarch

election results: Lord Siale'ataonga TU'IVAKANO elected by parliament on 21 December 2010 with 14 of 26 votes

Legislative branch:

unicameral Legislative Assembly or Fale Alea (26 seats - 9 for nobles elected from among the country's 29 nobles, 17 members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)

elections: last held on 25 November 2010 (next to be held in 2014)

election results: Peoples Representatives: percent of vote - independents 67.3%, Democratic Party 28.5%, other 4.2%; seats - Democratic Party 12, independents 5

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Court of Appeal (consists of the court president and a number of judges determined by the monarch); note - appeals beyond the Court of Appeal are brought before the King in Privy Council, the monarch's advisory organ that has both judicial and legislative powers

judge selection and term of office: judge appointments and tenures made by the King in Privy Council, judge appointments subject to consent of the Legislative Assembly

subordinate courts: Supreme Court; Magistrate's Courts; Land Courts

Political parties and leaders:

Democratic Party of the Friendly Islands [Samuela 'Akilisi POHIVA]

People's Democratic Party or PDP [Tesina FUKO]

Sustainable Nation-Building Party [Sione FONUA]

Tonga Democratic Labor Party [NA]

Tonga Human Rights and Democracy Movement or THRDM [NA]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

Human Rights and Democracy Movement Tonga or HRDMT [Rev. Simote VEA, chairman]

Public Servant's Association [Finau TUTONE]

International organization participation:

ACP, ADB, AOSIS, C, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), OPCW, PIF, Sparteca, SPC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Sonatane Tu'akinamolahi TAUMOEPEAU-TUPOU

chancery: 800 Second Avenue, Suite 400B, New York, NY 10017

telephone: [1] (800) 345-6541

consulate(s) general: San Francisco

Diplomatic representation from the US:

the US does not have an embassy in Tonga; the US ambassador to Fiji is accredited to Tonga

Flag description:

red with a bold red cross on a white rectangle in the upper hoist-side corner; the cross reflects the deep-rooted Christianity in Tonga; red represents the blood of Christ and his sacrifice; white signifies purity

National symbol(s):

red cross on white field; arms equal length

National anthem:

name: "Ko e fasi `o e tu`i `o e `Otu Tonga" (Song of the King of the Tonga Islands)

lyrics/music: Uelingatoni Ngu TUPOUMALOHI/Karl Gustavus SCHMITT

note: in use since 1875; the anthem is more commonly known as "Fasi Fakafonua" (National Song)

Economy:: Tonga**Economy - overview:**

Tonga has a small, open, South Pacific island economy. It has a narrow export base in agricultural goods. Squash, vanilla beans, and yams are the main crops. Agricultural exports, including fish, make up two-thirds of total exports. The country must import a high proportion of its food, mainly from New Zealand. The country remains dependent on external aid and remittances from Tongan communities overseas to offset its trade deficit. Tourism is the second-largest source of hard currency earnings following remittances. Tonga had 39,000 visitors in 2006. The government is emphasizing the development of the private sector, especially the encouragement of investment, and is committing increased funds for health and education. Tonga has a reasonably sound basic infrastructure and well developed social services. High unemployment among the young, moderate inflation, pressures for democratic reform, and rising civil service expenditures are major issues facing the government.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$801 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 208

\$789.4 million (2011 est.)

\$778.8 million (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$476 million (2012 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

1.4% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 149

1.5% (2011 est.)

1.6% (2010 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$7,700 (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 136

\$7,600 (2011 est.)

\$7,500 (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 97.7%

government consumption: 17%

investment in fixed capital: 29.2%

investment in inventories: 0%

exports of goods and services: 17.5%

imports of goods and services: -61.4%
(2012 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 20.9%

industry: 16.6%

services: 62.5% (2012 est.)

Agriculture - products:

squash, coconuts, copra, bananas, vanilla beans, cocoa, coffee, ginger, black pepper; fish

Industries:

tourism, construction, fishing

Industrial production growth rate:

0.5% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 127

Labor force:

39,960 (2007)

country comparison to the world: 196

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 31.8%

industry: 30.6%

services: 2,003% (2003 est.)

Unemployment rate:

13% (FY03/04 est.)

country comparison to the world: 131

Population below poverty line:

24% (FY03/04)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: NA%

highest 10%: NA%

Budget:

revenues: \$116.3 million

expenditures: \$116.3 million (2012 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

24.4% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 130

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

0% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 49

Fiscal year:

1 July - 30 June

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

1.2% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 21

6.3% (2011 est.)

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

10.36% (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 71

11.21% (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of narrow money:

\$81.03 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 183

\$66.56 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of broad money:

\$169.2 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 187

\$177.3 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of domestic credit:

\$125.5 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 185

\$132.1 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$NA

Current account balance:

-\$48.1 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 63

-\$29.8 million (2011 est.)

Exports:

\$8.4 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 213

\$8 million (2011 est.)

Exports - commodities:

squash, fish, vanilla beans, root crops

Exports - partners:

South Korea 17.8%, US 16.4%, NZ 15.1%, Fiji 10.9%, Japan 9.2%, Samoa 9.1%, American Samoa 5.8%, Australia 5% (2012)

Imports:

\$121.9 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 209

\$131 million (2011 est.)

Imports - commodities:

foodstuffs, machinery and transport equipment, fuels, chemicals

Imports - partners:

Fiji 38%, NZ 23.5%, US 10.1%, China 9.9% (2012)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$152.4 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 163

\$143.3 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Debt - external:

\$198.1 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 186

\$190.5 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:

\$61.43 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 101

\$61.47 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Exchange rates:

pa'anga (TOP) per US dollar -

1.7195 (2012 est.)

1.729 (2011 est.)

1.906 (2010 est.)

Energy:: Tonga

Electricity - production:

41 million kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 207**Electricity - consumption:**

38.13 million kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 207**Electricity - exports:**

0 kWh (2010)

country comparison to the world: 136

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 139

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

12,000 kW (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 198

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

100% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 40

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 185

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 202

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 191

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 193

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 190

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 127

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 193

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

1,221 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 196

Refined petroleum products - exports:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

Refined petroleum products - imports:

1,202 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 189

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 196

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 197

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 189

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 134

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 196

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

155,000 Mt (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 196

Communications:: Tonga**Telephones - main lines in use:**

30,000 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 177

Telephones - mobile cellular:

55,000 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 200

Telephone system:

general assessment: competition between Tonga Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) and Shoreline Communications Tonga (SCT) is accelerating expansion of telecommunications; SCT granted approval to introduce high-speed digital service for telephone, Internet, and television while TCC has exclusive rights to operate the mobile-phone network; international telecom services are provided by government-owned Tonga Telecommunications International

domestic: combined fixed-line and mobile-cellular teledensity about 80 telephones per 100 persons; fully automatic switched network

international: country code - 676; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Pacific Ocean) (2011)

Broadcast media:

2 state-owned TV stations and 2 privately owned TV stations; satellite and cable TV services are available; 2 state-owned and 3 privately owned radio stations; Radio Australia broadcasts available via satellite (2009)

Internet country code:

.to

Internet hosts:

5,367 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 144

Internet users:

8,400 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 203

Transportation :: Tonga

Airports:

6 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 175

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 1

2,438 to 3,047 m: 1 (2013)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 5

1,524 to 2,437 m: 1

914 to 1,523 m: 3

under 914 m:

1 (2013)

Roadways:

total: 680 km

country comparison to the world: 189

paved: 184 km

unpaved: 496 km (2000)

Merchant marine:

total: 7

country comparison to the world: 122

by type: cargo 4, carrier 1, passenger/cargo 2

foreign-owned: 2 (Australia 1, UK 1) (2010)

Ports and terminals:

Nuku'alofa, Neiafu, Pangai

Military :: Tonga

Military branches:

Tonga Defense Services (TDS): Land Force (Royal Guard), Maritime Force (includes Royal Marines, Air Wing) (2013)

Military service age and obligation:

16 years of age for voluntary enlistment (with parental consent); no conscription; the king retains the right to call up "all those capable of bearing arms" in wartime (2012)

Manpower available for military service:

males age 16-49: 24,460

females age 16-49: 24,041 (2010 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 20,956

females age 16-49: 20,577 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 1,196

female: 1,134 (2010 est.)

Military expenditures:

0.9% of GDP (2012)

country comparison to the world: 135

Disputes - international:

none