

Nauru

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This article is about the island country. For the Tanzanian village, see [Nauru, Tanzania](#).

Republic of Nauru *Ripublikee Naoero*



[Flag](#) [Coat of arms](#)

Motto: "God's Will shall be First"

Anthem: *Nauru Bwiema*

("Song of Nauru")



Capital [Yaren](#) (*de facto*)^[a]

Official language(s) [English](#)
[Nauruan](#)

Demonym [Nauruan](#)

Government Republic

- [President](#) [Sprent Dabwido](#)

Independence

- from the [Australian](#), [New Zealand](#),
and [British](#)-administered [U.N.](#) trusteeship. 31 January 1968

Area

- Total 21 km² (239th)
8.1 sq mi

- Water (%) 0.57

Population

- July 2010 estimate 9,322 ^[1] (216th)

- December 2006 census 9,275

- Density 441/km² (23rd)
1,233.3/sq mi

GDP (PPP) 2006 estimate

- Total	\$36.9 million ^[2] (192nd)
- Per capita	\$2,500 ('06 est.) ^[2] – \$5,000('05 est.) ^[1] (135th–141st)
HDI (2003)	n/a (unranked) (n/a)
Currency	Usually the Australian dollar (AUD)
Time zone	(UTC+12)
Drives on the	left
ISO 3166 code	NR
Internet TLD	.nr
Calling code	+674

a. [△] Nauru does not have an official capital, but Yaren is the largest settlement and the seat of Parliament.

Coordinates:  [0.527288°S 166.936724°E](#)

Nauru (English ⁱ/nɑːˈuːruː/ *ⁿnah-OO-roo*), officially the **Republic of Nauru** and formerly known as *Pleasant Island*, is an [island country](#) in [Micronesia](#) in the [South Pacific](#). Its nearest neighbour is [Banaba Island](#) in [Kiribati](#), 300 kilometres (186 mi) to the east. Nauru is the world's smallest republic, covering just 21 square kilometres (8.1 sq mi). With just over 9,265 residents, it is the second least-populated country after [Vatican City](#).

Settled by [Micronesian](#) and [Polynesian](#) people, Nauru was [annexed](#) and claimed as a [colony](#) by the [German Empire](#) in the late 19th century. After [World War I](#), Nauru became a [League of Nations mandate](#) administered by [Australia](#), [New Zealand](#), and the [United Kingdom](#). During [World War II](#), Nauru was occupied by [Japanese](#) troops, who were bypassed by the Allied advance across the Pacific. After the war ended, it entered into trusteeship again.^[3] Nauru gained its independence in 1968.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, Nauru was a “[rentier state](#)“. Nauru is a [phosphate rock island](#), with deposits close to the surface, which allow for simple [strip mining](#) operations. This island was a major exporter of [phosphate](#) starting in 1907, when the Pacific Phosphate Company began mining there, through the formation of the [British Phosphate Commission](#) in 1919, and continuing after independence. This gave Nauru back full control of its minerals under the [Nauru Phosphate Corporation](#), until the deposits ran out during the 1980s. For this reason, Nauru briefly boasted the highest per-capita income enjoyed by any [sovereign state](#) in the world during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

When the phosphate reserves were exhausted, and the environment had been seriously harmed by mining, the trust that had been established to manage the island's wealth diminished in value. To earn income, Nauru briefly became a [tax haven](#) and illegal [money laundering](#) centre. From 2001 to 2008, it accepted aid from the [Australian Government](#) in exchange for housing a [Nauru detention centre](#) that held and assessed the refugee claims of asylum seekers who had arrived unauthorised in Australia.

The island has one airport, [Nauru International Airport](#). From January to September 2006, Nauru became partially isolated from the outside world when [Air Nauru](#), the [airline](#) which serviced the island, ceased operations in December 2005 and left the island accessible only by ship. The airline was subsequently able to restart operations in October 2006 under the name [Our Airline](#) with monetary aid from the [Republic of China](#) (Taiwan).

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Etymology

English visitors to the island originally named it “Pleasant Island”.^[4] The name “Nauru” may derive from the [Nauruan](#) word *Anáoero*, which means “I go to the beach”. The German settlers called the island Nawodo or Onawero.

History

Main article: [History of Nauru](#)



Nauruan warrior, 1880

Nauru was first inhabited by Micronesian and Polynesian people at least 3,000 years ago.^[5] There were traditionally 12 clans or tribes on Nauru, which are represented in the 12-pointed star in the [flag of the country](#). Nauruans traced their descent [matrilineally](#). Nauruans practiced [aquaculture](#) – they caught juvenile *ibija fish*, [acclimatised](#) them to fresh water, and raised them in the [Buada Lagoon](#), providing an additional and more reliable source of food. The other locally grown components of their diet included [coconuts](#) and [pandanus fruit](#).^[6]

The [British](#) sea captain [John Fearn](#), a whale hunter, became the first Westerner to visit this island in 1798, and he named it “Pleasant Island”. From around 1830, Nauruans had contact with [Europeans](#) from whaling ships and traders who replenished their supplies (such as fresh water) at Nauru.

Around this time, deserters from the ships began to live on the island. The islanders traded food for alcoholic [palm wine](#) and firearms. The firearms were used during the 10-year [Nauruan Tribal War](#) that began in 1878, and by 1888 had resulted in a reduction of the population of Nauru from 1,400 to 900 people.

Nauru was annexed by [Germany](#) in 1888 and incorporated into Germany's [Marshall Island](#) Protectorate. The Germans called the island Nawodo or Onawero. The arrival of the [Germans](#) ended the war, and social changes brought about by the war established kings as rulers of the island. The most widely known of these was [King Auweyida](#). Christian missionaries from the [Gilbert Islands](#) arrived in 1888.^[7] The Germans ruled Nauru for almost three decades. Robert Rasch, a German trader who married a native woman, was the first administrator, appointed in 1890.

[Phosphate](#) was discovered on Nauru in 1900 by the prospector [Albert Ellis](#). The Pacific Phosphate Company started to exploit the reserves in 1906 by agreement with Germany. The company exported its first shipment in 1907.^[8] In 1914, following the outbreak of [World War I](#), Nauru was captured by Australian troops. [Australia](#), [New Zealand](#) and the [United Kingdom](#) signed the Nauru Island Agreement in 1919, creating a board known as the [British Phosphate Commission](#) (BPC). This took over the rights to phosphate mining.^[9] According to the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics (now the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)), "In common with other natives, the islanders are very susceptible to tuberculosis and influenza, and in 1921 an influenza epidemic caused the deaths of 230 islanders." In 1923, the [League of Nations](#) gave Australia a trustee mandate over Nauru, with the [United Kingdom](#) and New Zealand as co-trustees.^{[10][11]} On 6 and 7 December 1940, the German auxiliary cruisers [Komet](#) and [Orion](#) sank four supply ships in the vicinity of Nauru. On the next day, [Komet](#) shelled Nauru's phosphate mining areas, oil storage depots, and the shiploading cantilever.^[12]



In 1943, the [U.S. Army Air Force](#) bombed the Japanese airstrip, destroying about 15 Japanese warplanes^[12]

[Japanese](#) troops [occupied Nauru](#) on 26 August 1942.^[13] The Japanese troops built an airfield on Nauru which was bombed for the first time on 25 March 1943, preventing food supplies from being flown to Nauru. The Japanese deported 1,200 Nauruans to work as labourers in the [Chuuk islands](#).^[12] Nauru, which had been bypassed and left to "wither on the vine" by [American](#) forces, was finally set free from the Japanese on 13 September 1945, when Captain Hisayaki Soeda, the commander of all the Japanese troops on Nauru,^[14] surrendered the island to the [Australian Army](#) and the [Royal Australian Navy](#). This surrender was accepted by [Brigadier J. R. Stevenson](#), who represented [Lieutenant General Vernon Sturdee](#), the commander of the First Australian Army, on board the warship [HMAS Diamantina](#).^{[15][16]} Arrangements were made to repatriate from Chuuk the 737 Nauruans who survived Japanese captivity there. They were returned to Nauru by the BPC ship

Trienza in January 1946.^[17] In 1947, a trusteeship was established by the United Nations, and Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom became the [U.N.](#) trustees of the island.

Nauru became self-governing in January 1966, and following a two-year constitutional convention, it became independent in 1968, led by founding president [Hammer DeRoburt](#). In 1967, the people of Nauru purchased the assets of the British Phosphate Commissioners, and in June 1970, control passed to the locally owned [Nauru Phosphate Corporation](#). One of the ships commissioned to ship the natural resources of Nauru was the *Eigamoiya*, built by the [Henry Robb](#) shipyard at [Leith](#) in [Scotland](#).^[18]

Income from the mining of phosphate gave Nauruans one of the highest living standards in the Pacific and the world.^[19]

In 1989, Nauru took legal actions against Australia in the [International Court of Justice](#) over Australia's actions during its administration of Nauru. In particular, Nauru made a legal complaint against Australia's failure to remedy the environmental damage caused by phosphate mining.^{[20][21]} *Certain Phosphate Lands: Nauru v. Australia* led to an out-of-court settlement to rehabilitate the mined-out areas of Nauru.

Politics

Main articles: [Politics of Nauru](#) and [Districts of Nauru](#)



The Nauruan parliament.

Nauru is a [republic](#) with a [parliamentary system](#) of government. The president is both the [head of state](#) and of [government](#). An 18-member [unicameral](#) parliament is elected every three years. The parliament elects a President from its members, and the President appoints a cabinet of five to six members. Nauru does not have any formal structure for political parties. Candidates typically stand for office as independents. Fifteen of the 18 members of the current Parliament are independents, and alliances within the government are often formed on the basis of extended family ties.^[22] Three parties that have sometimes been active in Nauruan politics are the [Democratic Party](#), [Nauru First](#), and the [Centre Party](#).

Since 1992, local government has been the responsibility of the Nauru Island Council (NIC). The NIC has limited powers, and it functions as an advisor to the national government on local matters. The role of the NIC is to concentrate its efforts on local activities relevant to Nauruans. An elected member of the Nauru Island Council cannot simultaneously be a member of parliament. NIC was itself dissolved in 1999 and all assets and liabilities became vested in the national government ^[23] [Land tenure](#) on Nauru is unusual: all Nauruans have certain rights to all land on the island, which is owned by individuals and family groups. Government and corporate entities do not own any land,

and they must enter into a lease arrangement with the landowners to use land. Non-Nauruans cannot own land.^[5]



Former President [Marcus Stephen](#).

Nauru had 17 changes of administration between 1989 and 2003.^[22] Between 1999 and 2003, a series of no-confidence votes and elections resulted in two people, [René Harris](#) and [Bernard Dowiyogo](#), leading the country for alternating periods. Dowiyogo died in office in March 2003 and [Ludwig Scotty](#) was elected as the President. Scotty was re-elected to serve a full term in October 2004. Following a vote of “no confidence” by Parliament against President Scotty on 19 December 2007, [Marcus Stephen](#) became the President.

Nauru has a complex legal system. Its Supreme Court, headed by the Chief Justice, is paramount on [constitutional issues](#). Other cases can be appealed to the two-judge Appellate Court. Parliament cannot overturn court decisions, but Appellate Court rulings can be appealed to the [High Court of Australia](#).^[24] However, in practice, this rarely happens. Lower courts consist of the District Court and the Family Court, both of which are headed by a Resident Magistrate, who also is the Registrar of the Supreme Court. Finally, there also are two quasi-courts: the Public Service Appeal Board and the Police Appeal Board, both of which are presided over by the Chief Justice.^[25]

Nauru, with its small population, has no armed forces. Under an informal agreement, its defence is the responsibility of Australia. There is a small police force under civilian control.^[1]

Nauru is divided into fourteen administrative [districts](#) which are grouped into eight electoral constituencies. The districts are:

[Aiwo](#) • [Anabar](#) • [Anetan](#) • [Anibare](#) • [Baiti](#) • [Boe](#) • [Buada](#) • [Denigomodu](#) • [Ewa](#) • [Ijuw](#) • [Meneng](#) • [Nibok](#) • [Uaboe](#) • [Yaren](#)

Foreign relations

Main article: [Foreign relations of Nauru](#)

Following independence in 1968, Nauru joined the [Commonwealth of Nations](#) as a Special Member, and it became a full member in 2000.^[4] Nauru was admitted to the [Asian Development Bank](#) in 1991 and to the United Nations in 1999. Nauru is a member of the [Pacific Islands Forum](#), the South Pacific Regional Environmental Program, the South Pacific Commission, and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission. The American [Atmospheric Radiation Measurement](#) Program operates a climate-monitoring facility on Nauru.



Symbol of the Pacific Islands Forum

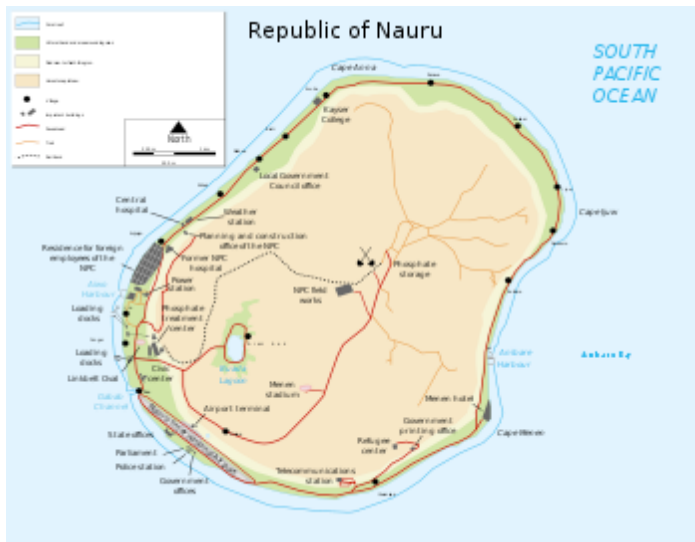
Nauru and Australia have close diplomatic ties. In addition to the informal defence arrangements, the September 2005 Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries provides Nauru with financial aid and technical assistance, including a Secretary of Finance to prepare Nauru's budget, and advisers on health and education. This aid is in return for Nauru's housing of asylum seekers while their applications for entry into Australia are processed.^[22] Nauru uses the [Australian dollar](#) as its official currency.

Nauru has used its position as a member of the United Nations to gain financial support from both [Taiwan](#) (Republic of China) and the [People's Republic of China](#) by changing its recognition from one to the other (see [One China policy](#)). During 2002, Nauru signed an agreement to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC on 21 July. Nauru accepted \$130m from PRC for this action.^[26] In response, the ROC severed diplomatic relations with Nauru two days later. Nauru later re-established links with the ROC on 14 May 2005,^[27] and diplomatic ties with the PRC were officially severed on 31 May 2005. However, the PRC continues to maintain a representative office on Nauru. Similarly in 2008, Nauru recognised Serbian break away region [Kosovo](#) as an independent country. Then, in 2009, Nauru became the fourth country, after Russia, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to recognise the breakaway region of [Georgia](#), [Abkhazia](#). [Russia](#) was reported to be giving Nauru \$50M in humanitarian aid in return.^[28] On 15 July, the Nauru government announced a port refurbishment programme to be completed in early 2011. The programme is financed with US\$9 million of development aid received from Russia. The Nauru government claims this aid is not related to its recognising Abkhazia and South Ossetia.^[29]

In recent times, a significant portion of Nauru's income has been in the form of aid from [Australia](#). In 2001, the *MV Tampa*, a Norwegian ship that had rescued 433^[30] refugees (from various countries including [Afghanistan](#)) from a stranded 20-metre-long boat and was seeking to dock in Australia, was diverted to Nauru as part of the [Pacific Solution](#). Nauru operated the detention centre in exchange for Australian aid. By November 2005, only two refugees, [Mohammed Sagar](#) and [Muhammad Faisal](#), remained on Nauru from those first sent there in 2001,^[31] with Sagar finally resettling in early 2007. The Australian government sent further groups of asylum-seekers to Nauru in late 2006 and early 2007.^[32] In late January 2008, following Australia's decision to close the processing centre, Nauru announced that they will request a new aid deal to ease the resulting blow to the economy.^[33]

Geography

Main article: [Geography of Nauru](#)



Map of Nauru

Nauru is a 21 square kilometres (8 sq mi),^[1] oval-shaped island in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, 42 kilometres (26 mi) south of the [Equator](#).^[4] The island is surrounded by a coral reef, which is exposed at low tide and dotted with pinnacles. The reef is bounded seaward by deep water, and on the inside by a sandy beach. The presence of the reef has prevented the establishment of a [seaport](#), although 16 [channels](#) in reef allow small boats access to the island. A 150 to 300 metre (about 500 to 1,000 ft.) wide fertile coastal strip lies inland from the beach.

Coral cliffs surround Nauru's central plateau, which is known as "Topside". The highest point of the plateau, called the [Command Ridge](#), is 71 metres above sea level.^[34] The only fertile areas on Nauru are the narrow coastal belt, where [coconut palms](#) flourish. The land surrounding [Buada Lagoon](#) supports [bananas](#), [pineapples](#), vegetables, [pandanus trees](#), and indigenous hardwoods such as the [tomano tree](#). The population of Nauru is concentrated in the coastal belt and around Buada Lagoon.

Nauru was one of three great [phosphate rock](#) islands in the Pacific Ocean (the others were [Banaba](#) (Ocean Island) in [Kiribati](#) and [Makatea](#) in [French Polynesia](#)). However, the phosphate reserves on Nauru are depleted for all practical purposes. Phosphate mining in the central plateau has left a barren terrain of jagged limestone pinnacles up to 15 metres (49 ft) high. A century of mining has stripped and devastated about 80% of the land area. Mining has also affected the surrounding [Exclusive Economic Zone](#), with 40% of marine life estimated to have been killed by silt and phosphate runoff.^[35]



A limestone plateau surrounded by a coral reef, an airstrip, and [channels](#), but no seaport.

There are limited natural fresh water resources on Nauru. Rooftop [storage tanks](#) collect rainwater, but the islanders are mostly dependent on three [desalination plants](#) housed at Nauru's Utilities Agency. Nauru's climate is hot and very humid year-round – because of the proximity of the island to the [Equator](#) and the ocean. Nauru is hit by [monsoon](#) rains between November and February. Annual rainfall is highly variable and is influenced by the [El Niño-Southern Oscillation](#), with several significant recorded droughts.^[5]

The temperature on Nauru ranges between 26 °C (79 °F) and 35 °C (95 °F) Celsius during the day and between 22 °C (72 °F) and 34 °C (93 °F) at night.^[36] As an island country, Nauru is quite vulnerable to [climate change](#) and [sea level change](#), but to what degree is difficult to predict. At least 80% of the land of Nauru is well-elevated, but this area will be uninhabitable until the phosphate mining rehabilitation program is implemented.^[35] Also, the agricultural area of Nauru is quite close to the seashore.

[hide]Climate data for Yaren District, Nauru

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °C	34	37	35	35	32	32	35	33	35	34	36	35	37
(°F)	(93)	(99)	(95)	(95)	(90)	(90)	(95)	(91)	(95)	(93)	(97)	(95)	(99)
Average high °C	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	31	31	31	30
(°F)	(86)	(86)	(86)	(86)	(86)	(86)	(86)	(86)	(86)	(88)	(88)	(88)	(86.5)
Average low °C	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25.0
(°F)	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77.0)
Record low °C	21	21	21	21	20	21	20	21	20	21	21	21	20
(°F)	(70)	(70)	(70)	(70)	(68)	(70)	(68)	(70)	(68)	(70)	(70)	(70)	(68)
Precipitation mm	280	250	190	190	120	110	150	130	120	100	120	280	2,080
(inches)	(11.02)	(9.84)	(7.48)	(7.48)	(4.72)	(4.33)	(5.91)	(5.12)	(4.72)	(3.94)	(4.72)	(11.02)	(81.89)
Avg. precipitation days	16	14	13	11	9	9	12	14	11	10	13	15	152

Source: ^[4]

There are only about 60 recorded [vascular plant](#) species native to the island, none of which are [endemic](#). Coconut farming, mining, and introduced species have caused serious disturbance to the native vegetation.^[5] There are no native land [mammals](#), but there are native birds, including the endemic [Nauru Reed Warbler](#), insects, and land crabs. The [Polynesian rat](#), cats, dogs, pigs, and chickens have been introduced to Nauru from ships, either accidentally or on purpose.

Economy

Main article: [Economy of Nauru](#)



An aerial image of Nauru in 2002 from the U.S. Department of Energy's Atmospheric Radiation Measurement Program. Regenerated vegetation covers 63% of land that was mined.^[35]

The Nauruan economy peaked in the early 1980s, dependent almost entirely on the [phosphate](#) deposits that originate from the [droppings of sea birds](#). There are few other resources, and most necessities are imported.^[37] Small-scale mining is still conducted by the [RONPhos](#), formerly known as the [Nauru Phosphate Corporation](#). The government places a percentage of RONPhos's earnings into the [Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust](#). The Trust manages long-term investments, which were intended to support the citizens once the phosphate reserves were exhausted.

The Trust's fixed and [current assets](#), many of which were in [Melbourne](#), were reduced considerably, and many never fully recovered. Some of the failed investments included financing 1993's [Leonardo the Musical](#), which was a financial failure, the purchase of the vacant [Carlton and United Breweries](#) site on [Swanston Street](#) in 1994 which was sold undeveloped in 1998, and a loan to the [Fitzroy Football Club](#) which went into liquidation in 1996.

The Mercure Hotel in [Sydney](#)^[38] and [Nauru House](#) in Melbourne were sold in 2004 to finance debts and [Air Nauru](#)'s only [Boeing 737](#), which was repossessed in December 2005. Normal air service resumed after the aircraft was replaced with a Boeing 737-300 airliner in June 2006.^{[39][40]}

The value of the Trust is estimated to have shrunk from [A\\$1.3 billion](#) in 1991 to \$138 million in 2002.^[41] In 2005, the corporation sold its property asset in Melbourne, the vacant Savoy Tavern site, for \$7.5 million.^[42] Nauru currently lacks money to perform many of the basic functions of government; for example, the National Bank of Nauru is insolvent. The CIA World Factbook estimated GDP per capita at \$5,000 in 2005.^[1] The Asian Development Bank 2007 economic report on Nauru estimated [GDP per capita](#) at \$2,400 to \$2,715.^[2]

There are no personal taxes in Nauru. The [unemployment](#) rate is estimated to be 90%, and the government employs 95% of those Nauruans who are employed.^{[1][43]} The [Asian Development Bank](#) notes that although the Administration has a strong public mandate to implement economic reforms, in the absence of an alternative to phosphate mining, the medium-term outlook is for continued dependence on external assistance.^[41] The rental of tuna fishing opportunities within the Nauru Exclusive Economic zone generates significant revenue. Tourism is not a major contributor to the

economy because there is little to see or do, and there are few facilities for tourists. The [Menen Hotel](#) and the [OD-N-Aiwo Hotel](#) are the only two hotels on the island.



[Limestone](#) pinnacles remain after phosphate mining removed the [guano](#).

In the 1990s, Nauru became a [tax haven](#) and it offered passports to foreign nationals for a fee.^[44] The inter-governmental [Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering](#) (FATF) then identified Nauru as one of 15 “[non-cooperative](#)“ countries in its fight against [money laundering](#). During the 1990s, it was possible to establish a licensed bank in Nauru for only \$25,000 with no other requirements. Under pressure from FATF, Nauru introduced anti-avoidance legislation in 2003, after which foreign [hot money](#) left the country. In October 2005, after satisfactory results from the legislation and its enforcement, FATF lifted the non-cooperative designation.^[45]

From 2001 to 2007, the [Nauru detention centre](#) provided a source of income for Nauru. The Nauruan authorities reacted with concern to its closure by Australia.^[46] In February 2008, the Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr. [Kieren Keke](#), stated that it would result in 100 Nauruans losing their jobs, and would affect 10% of the island’s population directly or indirectly: :”We have got a huge number of families that are suddenly going to be without any income. We are looking at ways we can try and provide some welfare assistance but our capacity to do that is very limited. Literally we have got a major unemployment crisis in front of us.”^[47]

Demographics

Main article: [Demographics of Nauru](#)



Nauruan districts of [Denigomodu](#) and [Nibok](#)

Nauru had 9,265 residents at end of 2006.^[2] The population was previously larger, but in 2006 some 1500 people left the island during a repatriation of immigrant workers from [Kiribati](#) and [Tuvalu](#). The repatriation was motivated by wide-scale reductions-in-force in the phosphate mining industry.^[2] The official language of Nauru is [Nauruan](#), a distinct Pacific island language, which is spoken by 96% of ethnic Nauruans at home.^[2] English is widely spoken and it is the language of government and commerce, as Nauruan is not common outside of the country. The top [ethnic groups](#) of Nauru are [Nauruan](#) (58%), other Pacific Islander (26%), [European](#) (8%), and Chinese (8%). All Europeans are of British origin, and most of these have left since independence. The main [religion practiced on the island](#) is Christianity (two-thirds [Protestant](#), one-third Roman Catholic). There is also a sizeable [Bahá'í](#) population (10%) – the largest proportion of any country in the world^[48] – and a [Buddhist](#) population (9%) and a [Muslim](#) population (2.2%). The Constitution provides for [freedom of religion](#). However, the government restricts this right in some circumstances, and it has restricted the practice of religion by [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#) and members of the [Jehovah's Witnesses](#), most of whom are foreign workers employed by the government-owned Nauru Phosphate Corporation.^[49]

[Literacy](#) on Nauru is 96%, and education is compulsory for children from six to 15 years old, and two more non-compulsory years are offered (years 11 and 12).^[50] There is a campus of the [University of the South Pacific](#) on Nauru. Before this school was built, eligible students travelled to Australia, New Zealand, etc., for their college educations.

Nauruans are the most [obese](#) people in the world.^[51] 90% of adults have a higher [BMI](#) than the world average.^[52] 97% of men and 93% of women are overweight or obese.^[51] Nauru has the world's highest level of [type 2 diabetes](#), with more than 40% of the population affected,^[53] 47% in American Samoa, 44% in Tokelau.^[51] Other significant dietary-related problems on Nauru include [kidney disease](#) and [heart disease](#). Life expectancy on Nauru in 2009 was 60.6 years for males and 68.0 years for females.^[54]

Culture

Main article: [Culture of Nauru](#)

Nauruans descended from Polynesian and Micronesian seafarers who [believed in a female deity](#), Eijebong, and a spirit land, an island called Buitani. Two of the 12 original tribal groups became extinct in the 20th century. [Angam Day](#), held on 26 October, celebrates the recovery of the Nauruan population after the two World Wars, which together reduced the indigenous population to fewer than 1500. The displacement of the indigenous culture by colonial and contemporary, western influences is significant. Few of the old customs have been preserved, but some forms of traditional music, arts and crafts, and fishing are still practiced.



[Australian rules football](#), played at [Linkbelt Oval](#)

There are no daily news publications on Nauru, although there is one fortnightly publication, “Mwinen Ko”, meaning ‘let’s talk about it’. There is a state-owned television station, Nauru Television (NTV), which broadcasts programmes from New Zealand and Australia, and there is a state-owned non-commercial radio station, Radio Nauru, which carries programs from [Radio Australia](#) and the [BBC](#).^[55]

[Australian rules football](#) is the most popular sport in Nauru. There is a [football league](#) with seven teams. All games are played at the [Linkbelt Oval](#), one of only two stadiums in Nauru. Other sports popular in Nauru include volleyball, netball, weightlifting, fishing and tennis. Nauru participates in the [Commonwealth Games](#) and the Summer Olympic Games, where team members have been somewhat successful in weightlifting. [Marcus Stephen](#) has been a medallist, and he was elected to Parliament in 2003, and was elected as President of Nauru in 2007.

A traditional activity is catching [noddy terns](#) when they return from foraging at sea. At sunset, men stand on the beach ready to throw their [lassos](#) at the incoming birds. The Nauruan lasso is supple rope with a weight at the end. When a bird approaches, the lasso is thrown up, hits or drapes itself over the bird, which falls to the ground. The noddy is then killed, plucked, cleaned, cooked, and eaten.^[56]

See also



[*Geography portal*](#)



[*Oceania portal*](#)



[*Micronesia portal*](#)

- [Outline of Nauru](#)
- [Index of Nauru-related articles](#)

Further reading

- John M. Gowdy, Carl N. McDaniel (2000). *Paradise for Sale: A Parable of Nature*. Berkeley, U.S.; Los Angeles, U.S.; London, U.K.: University of California Press. [ISBN 978-0-520-22229-8](#).
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- [Nauru](#) from *UCB Libraries GovPubs*
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- [Six Fivers](#)
- [Nauru country information on globalEDGE](#)
- [CenPac](#) – The ISP of the Republic of Nauru
- [Radio program “This American Life” featured a 30-minute story on Nauru](#)
- [Asian Development Bank Country Economic Report, Nauru, November, 2007](#)