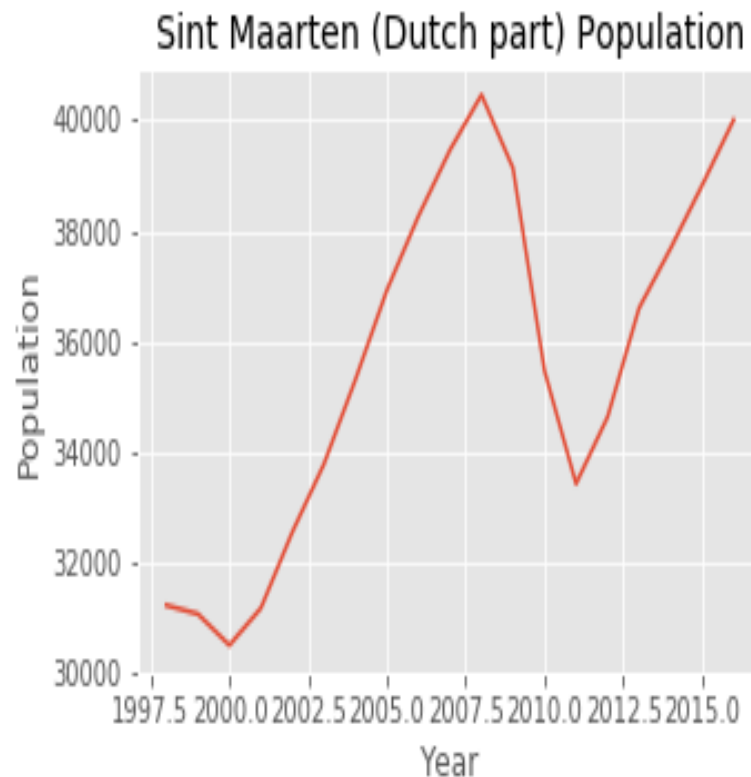


Sint Maarten (Dutch part)



Sint Maarten (Dutch pronunciation: [sɪnt maˌrte(n)]) is an island country in the Caribbean. It is a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. With a population of 40,120 on an area of 37 km² (14 sq mi), it encompasses the southern 40% of the divided island of Saint Martin, while the northern 60% of the island constitutes the French overseas collectivity of Saint-Martin. Sint Maarten's capital is Philipsburg. Before 10 October 2010, Sint Maarten was known as the Island Territory of Sint Maarten (Dutch: Eilandgebied Sint Maarten), and was one of five island territories (eilandgebieden) that constituted the Netherlands Antilles. On 6 and 7 September 2017 the island was hit by Category 5 Hurricane Irma, which caused widespread and significant damage to buildings and infrastructure. A total of two deaths had been reported as of 8 September. By then, "many inhabitants [were] devoid of basic necessities" and looting had become a serious problem. Sint Maarten has the 15th largest GDP per capita in the world (including territories) when measured by purchasing power parity, over three times as high as its French counterpart. == History == In 1493, during Christopher Columbus' second voyage to the West Indies, upon first sighting the island he named it Isla de San Martín after Saint Martin of Tours because it was 11 November, St. Martin's Day. However, though he claimed it as a Spanish territory, Columbus never landed there, and Spain made the settlement of the island a low priority. The French and Dutch, on the other hand, both coveted the island. While the French wanted to colonize the islands between Trinidad and Bermuda, the Dutch found San Martín a convenient halfway point between their colonies in New Amsterdam (present day New York) and Brazil. With few people inhabiting the island, the Dutch easily founded a settlement there in 1631, erecting Fort Amsterdam as protection from invaders. Jan Claeszen Van Campen became its first governor, and soon thereafter the Dutch West India Company began its salt mining operations. French and British settlements sprang up on the island as well. Taking note of these successful colonies and wanting to maintain their control of the salt trade, the Spanish now found St. Martin much more appealing. The Eighty Years' War which had been raging between Spain and the Netherlands provided further incentive to attack. Spanish forces captured Saint Martin from the Dutch in 1633, seizing control and driving most or all of the

colonists off the island. At Point Blanche, they built what is now Old Spanish Fort to secure the territory. Although the Dutch retaliated in several attempts to win back St. Martin, they failed. Fifteen years after the Spanish conquered the island, the Eighty Years' War ended. Since they no longer needed a base in the Caribbean and St. Martin barely turned a profit, the Spanish lost their inclination to continue defending it. In 1648, they deserted the island. With St. Martin free again, both the Dutch and the French jumped at the chance to re-establish their settlements. Dutch colonists came from St. Eustatius, while the French came from St. Kitts. After some initial conflict, both sides realized that neither would yield easily. Preferring to avoid an all-out war, they signed the Treaty of Concordia in 1648, which divided the island in two. During the treaty's negotiation, the French had a fleet of naval ships off shore, which they used as a threat to bargain more land for themselves. In spite of the treaty, relations between the two sides were not always cordial. Between 1648 and 1816, conflicts changed the border sixteen times. The entire island came under effective French control from 1795 when Netherlands became a puppet state under the French Empire until 1815. In the end, the French came out ahead with 53 km² (20 sq mi; 61%) against 34 km² (13 sq mi; 39%) on the Dutch side. With the new cultivation of cotton, tobacco, and sugar, the French and the Dutch imported a massive number of slaves to work on the plantations. The slave population quickly grew larger than that of the land owners. Subjected to cruel treatment, slaves staged rebellions, and their overwhelming numbers made it impossible to ignore their concerns. In 1848, the French abolished slavery in their colonies including the French side of St. Martin. Slaves on the Dutch side of the island protested and threatened to flee to the French side to seek asylum. The local Dutch authorities then freed the colonies' slaves. While this decree was respected locally, it was not until 1863 when the Dutch abolished slavery in all of their island colonies that the slaves became legally free. === 20th century === After abolition of slavery, plantation culture declined and the island's economy suffered. In 1939, St. Martin received a major boost when it was declared a duty-free port. In 1941, the island was shelled by a German U-boat during World War II. The Dutch side began focusing on tourism in the 1950s, with the French side following suit two decades later. Because of being split up into a Dutch and a French part, the tourist boom was heavier on Sint Maarten than on the surrounding islands. Its Princess Juliana International Airport became one of the busiest in the Eastern Caribbean. For much of this period, Sint Maarten was governed by business tycoon Claude Wathey of the Democratic Party. The island's demographics changed dramatically during this period as well. The island's population increased from a mere 5,000 people to around 60,000 people in the mid-1990s. Immigration from the neighbouring Lesser Antilles, Curaçao, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Europe, and Asia turned the native population into a minority. Sint Maarten became an "island territory" (eilandgebied in Dutch) of the Netherlands Antilles in 1983. Before that date, Sint Maarten was part of the island territory of the Windward Islands, together with Saba and Sint Eustatius. The status of an island territory entails considerable autonomy summed up in the Island Regulation of the Netherlands Antilles. The island territory of Sint Maarten was ruled by an island council, an executive council, and a Lieutenant Governor (Dutch: gezaghebber) appointed by the Dutch Crown. On 5 September 1995, Hurricane Luis hammered the islands causing extensive damage 35 years to the day after Hurricane Donna. Then 22 years and one day later, September 6, 2017, the island was hit by category 5 Hurricane Irma which caused widespread devastation. === 21st century === In 1994, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and France signed the Franco-Dutch treaty on Saint Martin border controls, which allows for joint Franco-Dutch border controls on so-called "risk flights". After some delay, the treaty was ratified in November 2006 in the Netherlands, and subsequently entered into force on 1 August 2007. Though the treaty is now in force, its provisions are not yet implemented as the working group specified in the treaty is not yet installed. On 10 October 2010, Sint Maarten became a constituent country (Dutch: Land Sint Maarten) within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, making it a constitutional equal partner with Aruba, Curaçao, and the Netherlands proper. Sint Maarten has been assigned the ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 country codes of SXM and SX, and the .sx Internet ccTLD became available to register on 15 November 2012. The combined population of the two territories has continued to grow, albeit at a slower rate, and as of (2013) around 75,000. ===== Effects of Hurricane Irma ===== Hurricane Irma caused extensive damage in September 2017. The Prime Minister of the Netherlands told the news media on 8 September that the airport in Sint Maarten was again ready to receive flights and that aid, as well as police officers and military personnel, were on their way. The Prime Minister of Sint Maarten had already asked the Dutch government for extended relief assistance which began to arrive on 8 September. Reports on 9 September indicated that 70% of the infrastructure on the Dutch part had been destroyed. The government issued a Tropical Storm Warning on 8 September since the Category

4 Hurricane Jose was approaching. Princess Juliana Airport was extensively damaged but reopened on a partial basis in two days to allow incoming relief flights and for flights that would take evacuees to other islands. The government of the Netherlands was sending aid, as well as additional police and military, since looting was a serious problem. A statement by the Prime Minister summarized the situation on 8 September. "We've lost many, many homes. Schools have been destroyed. We foresee a loss of the tourist season because of the damage that was done to hotel properties, the negative publicity that one would have that it's better to go somewhere else because it's destroyed. So that will have a serious impact on our economy." At the time, preparations were being made as Hurricane Jose approached the island. Government estimates on 9 September indicated that 70 percent of houses were badly damaged or destroyed; much of the population was living in shelters pending the arrival of Jose. Thankfully, this second hurricane did not have a significant impact on the island. Widespread looting had started and a state of emergency was announced; some 230 soldiers from the Netherlands were patrolling. Additional Dutch troops were expected. By 10 September, some 1,200 Americans had been evacuated to Puerto Rico from Sint Maarten by military aircraft during a time of looting and violence. On that date, Royal Caribbean International said that the company was sending its Adventure of the Seas to Saint-Martin and to St. Thomas to provide supplies and to offer evacuation services. The ship arrived on the island on 10 September with water, ice, garbage bags, clothing and canned food; she evacuated 320 people. By 11 September, King Willem-Alexander had already arrived in Curaçao and was scheduled to visit St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Saba. A survey by the Dutch Red Cross estimated that nearly a third of the buildings in Sint Maarten had been destroyed and that over 90 percent of structures on the island had been damaged. ===== Post hurricane rebuilding ===== A report in late March 2018 indicated that the airport was able to handle some flights and some service had resumed from the US, Canada and Europe. A new departure lounge was being used during rebuilding of the original facility. The General General Aviation building was being used for passengers arriving on the island. Telecommunications, including Wi-Fi had been restored on the island, 95% of customers were receiving electricity and drinking water was readily available on the island. Some tourist accommodations were open, with 27 operating and 36 said to be ready some time later this year. Cruise ships were arriving; a full 14 were accommodated the week of February 18, 2018. == Government and politics == The Constitution of Sint Maarten was unanimously adopted by the island council of Sint Maarten on 21 July 2010. Elections for a new island council were held on 17 September 2010, since the number of seats was increased from 11 to 15. The newly elected island council became the Estates of Sint Maarten on 10 October. Eugene Holiday was appointed as the first Governor of Sint Maarten (Dutch: gouverneur) by the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in September 2010. He also assumed office on 10 October 2010. === Current composition of the Estates of Sint Maarten === ===== Corruption ===== In 1978, the government of the Netherlands Antilles installed a Research Committee on the Windward Islands (Dutch: Commissie van Onderzoek Bovenwindse Eilanden) to investigate claims of corruption in the island government. Even though the report issued by this commission was damaging for the island's government, measures were not put into place to curb corruption, arguably because the government of the Netherlands Antilles depended on the support of Wathey's Democratic Party in the Estates of the Netherlands Antilles. In August 1990, the public prosecutor of the Netherlands Antilles started an investigation into the alleged ties between the island government of Sint Maarten and the Sicilian Mafia, and in 1991 the Court of Audit of the Netherlands Antilles issued a report which concluded that the island government of Sint Maarten was ailing. In the government and parliament of the Netherlands, the call for measures became louder and louder. With Dutch pressure, the government of the Netherlands Antilles installed the Pourier Commission tasked with investigating the state of affairs of the island government of Sint Maarten in December 1991. Its report concluded that the island was in a severe financial crisis, that rules of democratic decision-making were continuously broken, and that the island government constituted an oligarchy. In short, the island government failed completely according to the report. After long negotiations, the Kingdom government enacted a General Measure of Kingdom Administration (Dutch: Algemene Maatregel van Rijksbestuur) in early 1993, placing Sint Maarten under direct supervision of the Kingdom. Although originally meant for one year, the Order-in-Council for the Kingdom was eventually extended until 1 March 1996. Though much has changed since, allegations of criminal activities continue to plague Sint Maarten. In 2004, the Minister of Justice of the Netherlands Antilles asked the Scientific Research and Documentation Centre (Dutch: Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum (WODC)) of the Dutch Ministry of Justice to conduct research into organized crime in Sint Maarten. The report concluded that money laundering and cocaine trade are widespread

on Sint Maarten. It also alleged that money from the island was used to finance Hamas, its associate Holy Land Foundation, and the Taliban. In April 2009, former Commissioner Louie Laveist was convicted, and sentenced to an 18-month prison sentence, by the Sint Maarten Court-of-First-Instance, on account of forgery, fraud, and bribery. He was later acquitted of forgery and of fraud by the Common Court of Justice of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, but not of bribery. == Demographics == In the 2011 Netherlands Antilles census, the population of the island territory was 33,609. Births and deaths === Settlements === Philipsburg (1,327 inhabitants). Lower Prince's Quarter (8,143 inhabitants). Cul de Sac (7,593 inhabitants). Cole Bay (5,594 inhabitants). Upper Prince's Quarter (3,139 inhabitants). Little Bay (Fort Amsterdam) (3,093 inhabitants). Simpson Bay (596 inhabitants). Lowlands (348 inhabitants). === Religion === Languages === English is the day-to-day administrative language and language of communication in Sint Maarten, and the first language of the majority; the government uses Dutch when communicating with the Dutch government and formerly did so with the Netherlands Antilles government. Local signage uses both Dutch and English. The government continues to produce Dutch-language documents. There were English-medium and Dutch-medium schools on St. Maarten, and the Dutch government policy towards St. Maarten and other SSS islands promoted English medium education. As per the 2001 census there were far more Spanish speakers than Dutch speakers; each group was 14.8% and 4.2%, respectively. Thus, Sint Maarten is a polyglot society, they are simultaneous bilinguals in Dutch and English, and among them speak Spanish. Linguist Linda-Andrea Richardson stated in 1983 that Dutch was a "dead language" in Sint Maarten. Some residents, including Arubans and St. Martiners who lived in Aruba, speak Papiamentu. == Culture == The official languages are Dutch and English. A local English-based creole known as Virgin Islands Creole is also spoken. An annual regatta is also held over 3 days culminating in the first weekend in March. Among the leading cultural artists of the island are Isidore "Mighty Dow" York, kaisonian, panman; Roland Richardson, Impressionist painter; Nicole de Weever, dancer, Broadway star; Susha Hien, choreographer; Lasana M. Sekou, poet, author, independence advocate; Clara Reyes, choreographer; Tanny and The Boys, string band music group. The annual Saint Maarten Carnival starts in April and ends in May. The Grand Carnival parade that takes place on the Dutch side is the largest parade of the island's two carnivals. The annual St. Martin Book Fair takes place during the first weekend of June, featuring emerging and famous authors from the island, the Caribbean region, and from around the world. Ank Klomp wrote in "Saint Martin: Communal Identities on a Divided Caribbean Island" that Sint-Maarten lacked a Dutch cultural identity. === Sport and recreation === Popular team sports in Sint Maarten include baseball, cricket, and soccer. Recreational fishing, golf, and water sports (including diving, kayaking, snorkelling, and yachting) are popular amongst tourists. The Sint Maarten Soccer Association was founded in 1986. The organisation is not a member of FIFA, but became an associate member of CONCACAF in 2002, and a full member in 2013. The national football team debuted in 1989, and plays its home games at the Raoul Ildige Sports Complex, which has a 3,000-spectator capacity. After an initial period of popularity during the 1990s, including an appearance at the 1993 Caribbean Cup, interest in football declined, with the national team playing its last official match in 2000 (against Dominica). However, Sint Maarten is scheduled to return to international competition in March 2016, in the 2017 Caribbean Cup qualification tournament. The Sint Maarten Cricket Association is a member of the Leeward Islands Cricket Association (LICA), which is in turn a member of the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB). With rare exceptions (for instance, the Stanford 20/20), the national cricket team plays only against other LICA members, though Sint Maarteners may go on to play for the Leeward Islands team at regional level and for the West Indies team internationally. The primary venue for cricket is the Charles Vlaun Cricket Field. Colin Hamer was the first Sint Maartener to play first-class cricket, while Keacy Carty was the first islander to play at international level (for the West Indies under-19s). Carty was the man of the final at the 2016 Under-19 World Cup, and was later described by the prime minister, William Marlin, as having "brought the name of St Maarten to international acclaim". Prior to cricket becoming popular, baseball was preferred. No national team existed, although Sint Maarteners were eligible to play for the Netherlands Antilles baseball team before its dissolution. Several Sint Maarteners have passed through the American baseball system, playing at college level or in the minor leagues. Allen Halley played college baseball for the South Alabama Jaguars and was drafted by the Chicago White Sox in the 30th round of the 1995 draft, reaching Class A-Advanced in the minor leagues. Three others, Rene Leveret, Marc Ramirez, and Rafael Skeete, were signed as free agents by major league teams during their careers, but played only in the minor leagues. === Popular culture === The island is famous for its runway at Princess Juliana International Airport, in which landing aircraft pass within less than 35

metres of Maho Beach below, due to the close proximity of the runway to the ocean. The planes appear to land dangerously close to beach goers, so the beach and airport have become a popular place for people to view aeroplane landings. In July 2017 a New Zealander died from head injuries after being propelled backwards from a jet engine blast. == Education == === Primary and secondary schools === Public schools include: Primary: Charles Leopold Bell School (Cole Bay) Leonald Connor School (Cape Bay) Martin Luther King, Jr. Primary School (Lower Princes Quarter) Ruby Labega Primary (Retreat Estate) Oranje School (Philipsburg) Marie G. de Weever School (Hope Estate) The sole public secondary school is the St. Maarten Vocational Training School in South Reward Prins Willem Alexander School in St. Peters is the special education school Private schools subsidized by the St. Maarten government include: Primary: Hillside Christian School (St. Peters) MAC Browlia F. Maillard Campus (Cul-de-Sac) and Rev. John A. Gumbs Campus (Betty's Estate) Seven Day Adventist (Cole Bay) Sr. Borgia Primary (Philipsburg) Sr. Magda Primary (St. Peters) Sr. Marie Laurence (Middle Region) Sr. Regina Primary (Simpson Bay) St. Dominic Primary (South Reward) St. Joseph Primary (Philipsburg) The Asha Stevens - Hillside Christian School (Cayhill) Secondary: Milton Peters College (South Reward) - Has HAVO, PKL, PBL, TKL, and VWO classes St. Maarten Academy (Main campus in Cul-de-Sac, PSVE in Ebenezer) Sundial School (Philipsburg) Previously residents had to complete secondary studies in Aruba and/or Curaçao. Prior to 1976 Sint Maarten had two secondary schools: the government secondary school John Phillips School and the Catholic secondary school Pastoor Nieuwen Huis School. Philips was both a MAVO/ETAO school while Huis was a MAVO school. The foundation Stichting Voortgezet Onderwijs van de Bovenwindse Eilanden (SVOBE), established on February 20, 1974, was created as the neutral governing body for a new school created by the merger of Phillips and Huis schools. MPC, the merged school, opened on August 17, 1976. The Caribbean International Academy, founded in 2003 is a preparatory private boarding and day school on the island of St. Maarten. Catering to children from Kindergarten to Grade 12, CIA is also the only school offering Canadian/Ontario High School Diploma (OSSD) and 90% of their graduates go on to attend universities in Europe, Canada and the United States. === Colleges and universities === Most residents who attend tertiary institutions do so in Curaçao and/or European Netherlands. The American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine (AUC), founded in 1978, was previously located on Montserrat. Because of the eruption of the Soufrière Hills volcano in 1995, AUC moved its campus to St. Maarten later that year. A permanent campus was completed in 1998 in Cupecoy. The University of St. Martin (USM) was located in Philipsburg. The University of Sint Eustatius School of Medicine, founded in 1999, was previously located on Sint Eustatius. In September 2013, the University of Sint Eustatius moved its campus to Cole Bay, St. Maarten. === Libraries === Philipsburg Jubilee Library is in Philipsburg. == Transportation and economy == Air transportation to Sint Maarten and the whole island is served by Princess Juliana International Airport, which is well known for its very low final approach landings close to a popular beach at the end of the runway. Winair (Windward Islands Airways) has its headquarters on the grounds of the airport. There are no railroads on the island. St. Maarten's economy is mostly based on tourism, either from tourists staying on the island or day tourists from the many cruise lines that dock in the Philipsburg Harbour. In 2014, St. Maarten had more gaming machines per resident than any other country in the world. == See also == Postage stamps and postal history of Sint Maarten List of divided islands List of Designated Monuments in Sint Maarten Le Grand Marché Mary Star of the Sea Church, Simpson Bay == Notes == == References == Gert Oostindie (1998) *paradijs overzee: de 'Nederlandse' Caraïben en Nederland*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker. Gert Oostindie and Inge Klinkers (2001) *Knellende koninkrijksbanden: het Nederlandse dekolonisatiebeleid in de Caraïben, 1940–2000*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. Joseph H. Lake, Jr. (2004) *Friendly Anger - The rise of the labor movement in St. Martin*. St. Martin: House of Nehesi Publishers. <https://www.amazon.com/Friendly-Anger-Labor-Movement-Martin/dp/0913441414>. Lasana M. Sekou, ed. (1997, Third printing) *National Symbols of St. Martin - A Primer*. St. Martin: House of Nehesi Publishers. Louis Duzanson (2000, 2004) *An Introduction to Government - Island territory of St. Maarten*. St. Martin: House of Nehesi Publishers. https://www.amazon.com/Louis-Duzanson/e/B001KMLHEA/ref=dp_byline_cont_book_1. Richardson, Linda-Andrea. "The socio-linguistic situation in St. Maarten." In: Carrington, Lawrence D. (editor). *Studies in Caribbean Language*. Society for Caribbean Linguistics, 1983. p. 63-69.. Rhoda Arrindell (2014) *Language, Culture, and Identity in St. Martin*. St. Martin: House of Nehesi Publishers. <http://www.spdbooks.org/Products/9780988825222/language-culture-and-identity-in-st-martin.aspx>. == External links == Government Official website of the Sint Maarten government Organizations Philipsburg Jubilee Public Library St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce and Industry (official site). St.

Maarten Hospitality and Trade Association (official trade association site). House of Nehesi Publishers (book publishing/research/PR foundation). Universities American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine University of St. Martin Secondary education Milton Peters College Caribbean International Academy Learning Unlimited Preparatory School St. Dominic High School St. Maarten Academy Sundial School Tourism Sint Maarten travel guide from Wikivoyage "Sint Maarten". The World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency. St. Maarten Tourist Bureau (official site). St. Maarten Hospitality and Trade Association (visitor information) St. Maarten Tourism Map (visitor information) Princess Juliana International Airport (official site). St. Maarten Excursions. News and opinion The Today Newspaper, local daily newspaper. St. Maarten Daily Herald, local newspaper. St. Maarten Island Times St. Martin News Network