

**Ghana**,<sup>[a]</sup> officially the **Republic of Ghana**, is a country in [West Africa](#). It lies adjacent to the [Gulf of Guinea](#) and the [Atlantic Ocean](#) to the south, sharing a [border](#) with [Ivory Coast](#) (Côte d'Ivoire) [in the west](#), [Burkina Faso in the north](#), and [Togo in the east](#). Ghana covers an area of 239,567 km<sup>2</sup> (92,497 sq mi), spanning diverse [ecologies](#), from [coastal savannas](#) to [tropical rainforests](#). With nearly 35 million inhabitants, Ghana is the [second-most populous country](#) in [West Africa](#). The [capital](#) and [largest city](#) is [Accra](#); other significant [cities](#) include [Tema](#), [Kumasi](#), [Sunyani](#), [Ho](#), [Cape Coast](#), [Techiman](#), [Tamale](#), and [Sekondi-Takoradi](#).

The earliest kingdoms to emerge in Ghana were [Bonoman](#) in the south and the [Kingdom of Dagbon](#) in the north, with Bonoman existing in the area during the 11th century.<sup>[7][8]</sup> The Ashanti Empire and other Akan kingdoms in the south emerged over the centuries.<sup>[9]</sup> Beginning in the 15th century, the [Portuguese Empire](#), followed by other [European powers](#), contested the area for trading rights, until the [British](#) ultimately established control of the coast by the 19th [century](#). Following more than a century of colonial resistance, the current borders of the country took shape, encompassing four separate British colonial territories: [Gold Coast](#), [Ashanti](#), the [Northern Territories](#), and [British Togoland](#). These were unified as an independent dominion within the [Commonwealth of Nations](#). On 6 March 1957 Ghana became the first colony in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve sovereignty—that is, gain independence.<sup>[10][11][12]</sup> Under President [Kwame Nkrumah](#), it became influential in [decolonisation efforts](#) and the [Pan-African movement](#).<sup>[13][14]</sup>

Ghana is a [multi-ethnic](#) country with diverse linguistic and religious groups;<sup>[15]</sup> while the [Akan](#) are the largest ethnic group, they constitute a plurality. Most [Ghanaians](#) are [Christians](#) (71.3%); almost a fifth are [Muslims](#); a tenth practice traditional faiths or report no religion.<sup>[3]</sup> Ghana is a [unitary constitutional democracy](#) led by a [president](#) who is [head of state](#) and [head of government](#).<sup>[16]</sup> For political stability in Africa, Ghana ranked seventh in the 2012 [Ibrahim Index of African Governance](#) and fifth in the 2012 [Fragile States Index](#). It has maintained since 1993 one of the freest and most stable governments on the continent, and it performs relatively well in [healthcare](#), [economic](#) growth, and human development,<sup>[13][17]</sup> so that it has a significant influence in West Africa and Africa as a whole.<sup>[18]</sup> Ghana is highly integrated in international affairs, being a founding member of the [Non-Aligned Movement](#) and the [African Union](#), and a member of the [Economic Community of West African States](#), the [Group of 24](#) and the [Commonwealth of Nations](#)