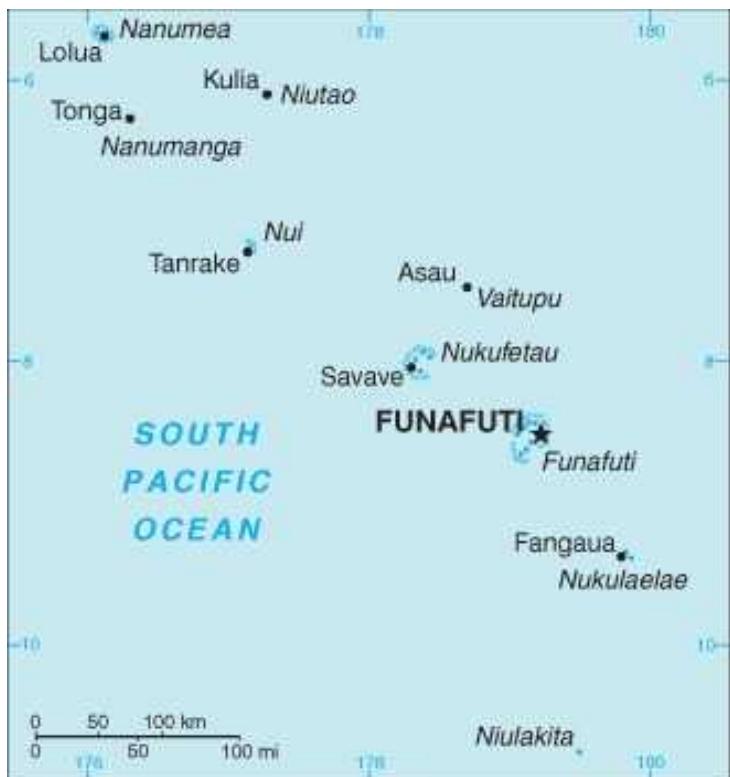




# Tuvalu



**Background** Voyagers from either Samoa or Tonga first populated Tuvalu in the first millennium A.D., and the islands provided a stepping-stone for various Polynesian communities that subsequently settled in Melanesia and Micronesia. Tuvalu eventually came under Samoan and Tongan spheres of influence, although proximity to Micronesia allowed some Micronesian communities to flourish in Tuvalu, in particular on Nui Atoll. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, a series of American, British, Dutch, and Russian ships visited the islands, which were named the Ellice Islands in 1819.

The UK declared a protectorate over islands in 1892 and merged them with the Micronesian Gilbert Islands. The Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate became a colony in 1916. During World War II, the US set up military bases on a few islands, and in 1943, after Japan captured many of the northern Gilbert Islands, the UK transferred administration of the colony southward to Funafuti. After the war, Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands was once again made the colony's capital, and the center of power was firmly in the Gilbert Islands, including the colony's only secondary school. Amid growing tensions with the Gilbertese, Tuvaluans voted to secede from the colony in 1974, were granted self-rule in 1975, and gained independence in 1978 as Tuvalu. In 1979, the US relinquished its claims to the Tuvaluan islands in a treaty of friendship.

**Capital** name: Funafuti

**Government type** parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm

**Area**  
total : 26 sq km  
land: 26 sq km  
water: 0 sq km

**Climate** tropical; moderated by easterly trade winds (March to November); westerly gales and heavy rain (November to March)

**Natural resources** fish, coconut (copra)

**Population** total: 11,733 (2024 est.)

**Population growth rate** 0.78% (2024 est.)

**Ethnic groups** Tuvaluan 97%, Tuvaluan/I-Kiribati 1.6%, Tuvaluan/other 0.8%, other 0.6% (2017 est.)

**Religions** Protestant 92.7% (Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu 85.9%, Brethren 2.8%, Seventh Day Adventist 2.5%, Assemblies of God 1.5%), Baha'i 1.5%, Jehovah's Witness 1.5%, other 3.9%, none or refused 0.4% (2017 est.)

**Languages** Tuvaluan (official), English (official), Samoan, Kiribati (on the island of Nui)

<b>Executive branch</b>	chief of state: King CHARLES III (since 8 September 2022); represented by Governor General Tofiga Vaevalu FALANI (since 29 August 2021) head of government: Prime Minister Feleti Penitala TEO (since 27 February 2024)
<b>Legislative branch</b>	legislature name: Parliament (Palamene)
<b>Diplomatic representation in the US</b>	chief of mission: Ambassador Tapugao FALEFOU (since 19 April 2023); note - also Permanent Representative to UN
<b>Diplomatic representation from the US</b>	embassy: the US does not have an embassy in Tuvalu; the US Ambassador to Fiji is accredited to Tuvalu
<b>Economic overview</b>	upper middle-income Pacific island economy; extremely environmentally fragile; currency pegged to Australian dollar; large international aid recipient; subsistence agrarian sector; Te Kakeega sustainable development; domain name licensing incomes
<b>Real GDP (purchasing power parity)</b>	\$57.055 million (2023 est.) \$54.938 million (2022 est.) \$54.568 million (2021 est.)
<b>Real GDP per capita</b>	\$5,800 (2023 est.) \$5,500 (2022 est.) \$5,400 (2021 est.)
<b>Exports</b>	\$2.232 million (2022 est.) \$2.745 million (2021 est.) \$3.089 million (2020 est.)
<b>Exports - partners</b>	Thailand 88%, Japan 6%, Philippines 3%, Ireland 1%, USA 1% (2023)
<b>Exports - commodities</b>	fish (2023)
<b>Imports</b>	\$57.388 million (2022 est.) \$63.962 million (2021 est.) \$56.947 million (2020 est.)
<b>Imports - partners</b>	China 42%, Fiji 24%, Japan 11%, Australia 11%, NZ 4% (2023)
<b>Imports - commodities</b>	ships, refined petroleum, iron structures, fish, hand tools (2023)

## Population Pyramid

