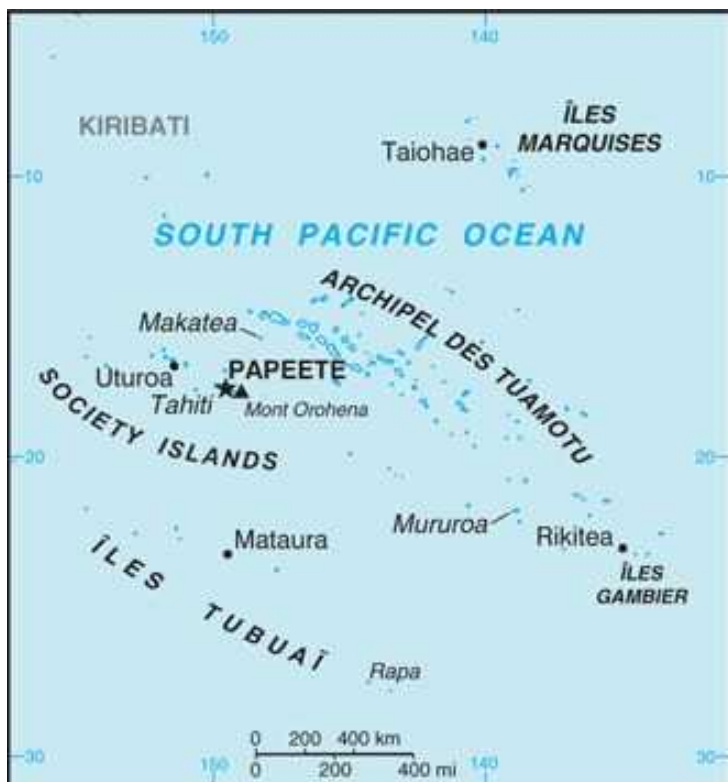




French Polynesia



Background French Polynesia consists of five archipelagos -- the Austral Islands, the Gambier Islands, the Marquesas Islands, the Society Islands, and the Tuamotu Archipelago. The Marquesas were first settled around 200 B.C. and the Society Islands around A.D. 300. Raiatea in the Society Islands became a center for religion and culture. Exploration of the other islands emanated from Raiatea, and by 1000, there were small permanent settlements in all the island groups. Ferdinand MAGELLAN was the first European to see the islands of French Polynesia in 1520. In 1767, British explorer Samuel WALLIS was the first European to visit Tahiti, followed by French navigator Louis Antoine de BOUGAINVILLE in 1768 and British explorer James COOK in 1769. King POMARE I united Tahiti and surrounding islands into the Kingdom of Tahiti in 1788. Protestant missionaries arrived in 1797, and POMARE I's successor converted in the 1810s, along with most Tahitians. In the 1830s, Queen POMARE IV refused to allow French Catholic missionaries to operate, leading France to declare a protectorate over Tahiti and fight the French-Tahitian War of the 1840s in an attempt to annex the islands.

In 1880, King POMARE V ceded Tahiti and its possessions to France, changing its status into a colony. France then claimed the Gambier Islands and Tuamotu Archipelago and by 1901 had incorporated all five island groups into its establishments in Oceania. A Tahitian nationalist movement formed in 1940, leading France to grant French citizenship to the islanders in 1946 and change it to an overseas territory. In 1957, the islands' name was changed to French Polynesia, and the following year, 64% of voters chose to stay part of France when they approved a new constitution. Uninhabited Mururoa Atoll was established as a French nuclear test site in 1962, and tests were conducted between 1966 and 1992 (underground beginning in 1975). France also conducted tests at Fangataufa Atoll, including its last nuclear test in 1996.

France granted French Polynesia partial internal autonomy in 1977 and expanded autonomy in 1984. French Polynesia was converted into an overseas collectivity in 2003 and renamed an overseas territory in 2004. Pro-independence politicians won a surprise majority in local elections that same year, but in subsequent elections, they have been relegated to a vocal minority. In 2013, French Polynesia was relisted on the UN List of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Capital	name: Papeete (located on Tahiti)
Government type	parliamentary democracy (Assembly of French Polynesia); an overseas collectivity of France
Area	total : 4,167 sq km (118 islands and atolls; 67 are inhabited) land: 3,827 sq km water: 340 sq km
Climate	tropical, but moderate
Natural resources	timber, fish, cobalt, hydropower
Population	total: 303,540 (2024 est.)
Population growth rate	0.66% (2024 est.)
Ethnic groups	Polynesian 78%, Chinese 12%, local French 6%, metropolitan French 4%
Religions	Protestant 54%, Roman Catholic 30%, other 10%, no religion 6%
Languages	French (official) 73.5%, Tahitian 20.1%, Marquesan 2.6%, Austral languages 1.2%, Paumotu 1%, other 1.6% (2017 est.)
Executive branch	chief of state: President Emmanuel MACRON (since 14 May 2017), represented by High Commissioner of the Republic Alexander ROCHATTE (since 1 September 2025) head of government: President of French Polynesia Moetai BROTHERRSON (since 12 May 2023)
Legislative branch	legislature name: Assembly of French Polynesia (Assemblée de la Polynésie française)
Diplomatic representation from the US	embassy: none (overseas lands of France)
Economic overview	small, territorial-island tourism-based economy; large French financing; lower EU import duties; Pacific Islands Forum member; fairly resilient from COVID-19; oil-dependent infrastructure
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$6.007 billion (2024 est.) \$5.935 billion (2023 est.) \$5.892 billion (2022 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$23,300 (2024 est.) \$22,800 (2023 est.) \$20,700 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$162 million (2021 est.) \$94.4 million (2020 est.) \$184 million (2019 est.)
Exports - partners	Japan 44%, USA 15%, France 12%, Netherlands 9%, China 5% (2023)
Exports - commodities	pearls, fish, aircraft parts, gas turbines, vanilla (2023)
Imports	\$1.66 billion (2021 est.) \$1.75 billion (2020 est.) \$2.24 billion (2019 est.)
Imports - partners	France 26%, China 11%, USA 10%, NZ 7%, Malaysia 4% (2023)

Imports - commodities cars, packaged medicine, refined petroleum, poultry, broadcasting equipment (2023)

Population Pyramid

