



Mauritius



Background Although known to Arab and European sailors since at least the early 1500s, the island of Mauritius was uninhabited until 1638 when the Dutch established a settlement named in honor of Prince Maurits van NASSAU. Their presence led to the rapid disappearance of the flightless dodo bird that has since become one of the most well-known examples of extinction in modern times. The Dutch abandoned their financially distressed settlement in 1710, although a number of formerly enslaved people remained. In 1722, the French established what would become a highly profitable settlement focused on sugar cane plantations that were reliant on the labor of enslaved people brought to Mauritius from other parts of Africa. In the 1790s, the island had a brief period of autonomous rule when plantation owners rejected French control because of laws ending slavery that were temporarily in effect during the French Revolution. Britain captured the island in 1810 as part of the Napoleonic Wars but kept most of the French administrative structure, which remains to this day in the form of the country's legal codes and widespread use of the French Creole language. The abolition of slavery in 1835 -- later than most other British colonies -- led to increased reliance on contracted laborers from the Indian subcontinent to work on plantations. Today their descendants form the majority of the population. Mauritius remained a strategically important British naval base and later an air station, and it played a role during World War II in anti-submarine and convoy operations, as well as in the collection of signals intelligence.

Mauritius gained independence from the UK in 1968 as a Parliamentary Republic and has remained a stable democracy with regular free elections and a positive human rights record. The country also attracted considerable foreign investment and now has one of Africa's highest per capita incomes. Mauritius' often-fractious coalition politics has been dominated by two prominent families, each of which has had father-son pairs who have been prime minister over multiple, often nonconsecutive, terms. Seewoosagur RAMGOOLAM (1968-76) was Mauritius' first prime minister, and he was succeeded by Anerood JUGNAUTH (1982-95, 2000-03, 2014-17); his son Navin RAMGOOLAM (1995-2000, 2005-14); and Paul Raymond BERENGER (2003-05), the only non-Hindu prime minister of post-independence Mauritius. In 2017, Pravind JUGNAUTH became prime minister after his father stepped down short of completing his term, and he was elected in his own right in 2019.

Mauritius claims the French island of Tromelin and the British Chagos Archipelago (British Indian Ocean Territory). Since 2017, Mauritius has secured favorable UN General Assembly resolutions and an International Court of Justice advisory opinion relating to its sovereignty dispute with the UK.

Capital	name: Port Louis
Government type	parliamentary republic
Area	total : 2,040 sq km land: 2,030 sq km water: 10 sq km
Climate	tropical, modified by southeast trade winds; warm, dry winter (May to November); hot, wet, humid summer (November to May)
Natural resources	arable land, fish
Population	total: 1,310,504 (2024 est.)
Population growth rate	0.07% (2024 est.)
Ethnic groups	Indo-Mauritian (compose approximately two thirds of the total population), Creole, Sino-Mauritian, Franco-Mauritian
Religions	Hindu 48.5%, Roman Catholic 26.3%, Muslim 17.3%, other Christian 6.4%, other 0.6%, none 0.7%, unspecified 0.1% (2011 est.)
Languages	Creole 86.5%, Bhojpuri 5.3%, French 4.1%, two languages 1.4%, other 2.6% (includes English, one of the two official languages of the National Assembly, which is spoken by less than 1% of the population), unspecified 0.1% (2011 est.)
Executive branch	chief of state: President Dharam GOKHOOL (since 7 December 2024) head of government: Prime Minister Navin RAMGOOLAM (since 13 November 2024)
Legislative branch	legislature name: National Assembly - Assemblée nationale
Diplomatic representation in the US	chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Chargé d'Affaires Gajjaluxmi MOOTOOSAMY (since 5 June 2025)
Diplomatic representation from the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Henry V. JARDINE (since 22 February 2023); note - also accredited to Seychelles
Economic overview	upper middle-income Indian Ocean island economy; diversified portfolio; investing in maritime security; strong tourism sector decimated by COVID-19; expanding in information and financial services; environmentally fragile
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$34.406 billion (2024 est.) \$32.864 billion (2023 est.) \$31.296 billion (2022 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$27,300 (2024 est.) \$26,100 (2023 est.) \$24,800 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$6.381 billion (2023 est.) \$6.138 billion (2022 est.) \$4.213 billion (2021 est.)
Exports - partners	USA 11%, France 11%, Zimbabwe 10%, South Africa 7%, Zambia 7% (2023)

Exports - commodities	fish, garments, raw sugar, fertilizers, diamonds (2023)
Imports	\$8.027 billion (2023 est.) \$8.052 billion (2022 est.) \$6.057 billion (2021 est.)
Imports - partners	China 15%, UAE 11%, India 10%, South Africa 9%, France 6% (2023)
Imports - commodities	refined petroleum, cars, fish, coal, packaged medicine (2023)

Population Pyramid

