



Nauru



Background By 1000 B.C., Micronesian and Polynesian settlers inhabited Nauru, and the island was divided among 12 clans. Nauru developed in relative isolation because ocean currents made landfall on the island difficult. As a result, the Nauruan language does not clearly resemble any other in the Pacific region. In 1798, a British mariner was the first European to spot the island and by 1830, European whalers used Nauru as a supply stop, trading firearms for food. A civil war in 1878 reduced the population by more than a third. Germany forcibly annexed Nauru in 1888 by holding the 12 chiefs under house arrest until they consented to the annexation. Phosphate was discovered in 1900 and was heavily mined, although Nauru and Nauruans earned about one tenth of one percent of the profits from the phosphate deposits.

Australian forces captured Nauru from Germany during World War I, and in 1919, it was placed under a joint Australian-British-New Zealand mandate with Australian administration. Japan occupied Nauru during World War II and used its residents as forced labor elsewhere in the Pacific while destroying much of the infrastructure on the island. After the war, Nauru became a UN trust territory under Australian administration. In 1962, recognizing the phosphate stocks would eventually be depleted, Australian Prime Minister Robert MENZIES offered to resettle all Nauruans on Curtis Island in Queensland, but Nauruans rejected that plan and opted for independence, which was achieved in 1968. In 1970, Nauru purchased the phosphate mining assets, and income from the mines made Nauruans among the richest people in the world. However, a series of unwise investments led to near bankruptcy by 2000. Widespread phosphate mining officially ceased in 2006.

As its economy faltered, Nauru briefly tried to rebrand itself as an offshore banking haven, an initiative that ended in 2005, and the country made a successful bid for Russian humanitarian aid in 2008. In 2001, Australia set up the Nauru Regional Processing Center (NRPC), an offshore refugee detention facility, paying Nauru per person at the center. The NRPC closed in 2008 but reopened in 2012. The number of refugees steadily declined after 2014, and in 2020, the remaining people were moved to Brisbane, Australia, effectively shuttering the NRPC. However, in 2023, Australia agreed to continue funding NRPC for two years and restarted settling asylees in the center in mid-2023. The center remains the Government of Nauru's largest source of income.

Capital	name: no official capital; government offices in the Yaren District
Government type	parliamentary republic
Area	total : 21 sq km land: 21 sq km water: 0 sq km
Climate	tropical with a monsoonal pattern; rainy season (November to February)
Natural resources	phosphates, fish
Population	total: 9,892 (2024 est.)
Population growth rate	0.39% (2024 est.)
Ethnic groups	Nauruan 94.6%, I-Kiribati 2.2%, Fijian 1.3%, other 1.9% (2021 est.)
Religions	Protestant 60.4% (Nauruan Congregational 34.7%, Assemblies of God 11.6%, Pacific Light House 6.3%, Nauru Independent 3.6%, Baptist 1.5, Seventh Day Adventist 1.3%, other Protestant 1.4%), Roman Catholic 33.9%, other 4.2%, none 1.3%, no answer 0.3% (2021 est.)
Languages	Nauruan 93% (official, a distinct Pacific Island language), English 2% (widely understood, spoken, and used for most government and commercial purposes), other 5% (includes Gilbertese 2% and Chinese 2%) (2011 est.)
Executive branch	chief of state: President David ADEANG (since 30 October 2023) head of government: President David ADEANG (since 30 October 2023)
Legislative branch	legislature name: Parliament
Diplomatic representation in the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Lara Erab DANIEL (since 13 January 2025); note - also Permanent Representative to the UN
Diplomatic representation from the US	embassy: the US does not have an embassy in Nauru; the US Ambassador to Fiji is accredited to Nauru
Economic overview	upper-middle-income Pacific island country; phosphate resource exhaustion made island interior uninhabitable; licenses fishing rights; houses Australia's Regional Processing Centre; former tax haven; largely dependent on foreign subsidies
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$150.581 million (2024 est.) \$147.976 million (2023 est.) \$147.026 million (2022 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$12,600 (2024 est.) \$12,500 (2023 est.) \$12,500 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$64.931 million (2023 est.) \$78.383 million (2022 est.) \$54.403 million (2021 est.)
Exports - partners	Thailand 78%, Philippines 11%, NZ 5%, Japan 1%, Canada 1% (2023)
Exports - commodities	fish, phosphates (2023)

Imports	\$150.193 million (2023 est.)
	\$165.371 million (2022 est.)
	\$141.185 million (2021 est.)
Imports - partners	Australia 50%, Japan 11%, Fiji 9%, Senegal 9%, China 9% (2023)
Imports - commodities	ships, titanium ore, refined petroleum, plastic products, other foods (2023)

Population Pyramid

