



Senegal



Background Senegal is one of the few countries in the world with evidence of continuous human life from the Paleolithic period to present. Between the 14th and 16th centuries, the Jolof Empire ruled most of Senegal. Starting in the 15th century, Portugal, the Netherlands, France, and Great Britain traded along the Senegalese coast. Senegal's location on the western tip of Africa made it a favorable base for the European slave trade. European powers used the Senegalese island of Goree as a base to purchase slaves from the warring chiefdoms on the mainland, and at the height of the slave trade in Senegal, over one-third of the Senegalese population was enslaved. In 1815, France abolished slavery and began expanding inland. During the second half of the 19th century, France took possession of Senegal as a French colony. In 1959, the French colonies of Senegal and French Sudan were merged and granted independence in 1960 as the Mali Federation. The union broke up after only a few months. In 1982, Senegal joined with The Gambia to form the nominal confederation of Senegambia. The envisaged integration of the two countries was never implemented, and the union dissolved in 1989.

Since the 1980s, the Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance -- a separatist movement based in southern Senegal -- has led a low-level insurgency. Several attempts at reaching a comprehensive peace agreement have failed. Since 2012, despite sporadic incidents of violence, an unofficial cease-fire has remained largely in effect. Senegal is one of the most stable democracies in Africa and has a long history of participating in international peacekeeping and regional mediation. The Socialist Party of Senegal ruled for 40 years until Abdoulaye WADE was elected president in 2000 and re-elected in 2007. WADE amended Senegal's constitution over a dozen times to increase executive power and weaken the opposition. In 2012, WADE's decision to run for a third presidential term sparked public backlash that led to his loss to current President Macky SALL. A 2016 constitutional referendum limited future presidents to two consecutive five-year terms. President Bassirou Diomaye FAYE took office in April 2024.

Capital	name: Dakar
Government type	presidential republic
Area	total : 196,722 sq km land: 192,530 sq km water: 4,192 sq km
Climate	tropical; hot, humid; rainy season (May to November) has strong southeast winds; dry season (December to April) dominated by hot, dry, harmattan wind
Natural resources	fish, phosphates, iron ore

Population	total: 18,847,519 (2024 est.)
Population growth rate	2.46% (2024 est.)
Ethnic groups	Wolof 39.7%, Pulaar 27.5%, Sereer 16%, Mandinka 4.9%, Jola 4.2%, Soninke 2.4%, other 5.4% (includes Europeans and persons of Lebanese descent) (2019 est.)
Religions	Muslim 97.2% (most adhere to one of the four main Sufi brotherhoods), Christian 2.7% (mostly Roman Catholic) (2019 est.)
Languages	French (official), Wolof, Pulaar, Jola, Mandinka, Serer, Soninke
Executive branch	chief of state: President Bassirou Diomaye FAYE (since 2 April 2024) head of government: Prime Minister Ousmane SONKO (since 2 April 2024)
Legislative branch	legislature name: National Assembly (Assemblée nationale)
Diplomatic representation in the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Abdoul Wahab HAIDARA (since 24 July 2025)
Diplomatic representation from the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Michael RAYNOR (since 10 March 2022); note - also accredited to Guinea-Bissau
Economic overview	lower middle-income, services-driven West African economy; key mining, construction, agriculture, and fishing industries; tourism and exports hit hard by COVID-19; large informal economy; developing offshore oil and gas fields; systemic corruption
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$83.183 billion (2024 est.) \$77.82 billion (2023 est.) \$74.642 billion (2022 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$4,500 (2024 est.) \$4,300 (2023 est.) \$4,200 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$7.001 billion (2023 est.) \$7.418 billion (2022 est.) \$6.78 billion (2021 est.)
Exports - partners	Mali 21%, India 12%, Switzerland 11%, China 5%, UAE 4% (2023)
Exports - commodities	gold, refined petroleum, phosphoric acid, fish, cement (2023)
Imports	\$14.916 billion (2023 est.) \$14.698 billion (2022 est.) \$12.278 billion (2021 est.)
Imports - partners	China 19%, France 9%, Nigeria 7%, India 7%, Russia 5% (2023)
Imports - commodities	refined petroleum, crude petroleum, rice, garments, wheat (2023)

Population Pyramid

