

Western Sahara

Continent: Africa

Languages Spoken: Arabic, Hassaniya Arabic, Spanish, French

Population: 597,330

Currency: Moroccan dirham (de facto), Sahrawi peseta (Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic)

Area: 266,000

Main Landmarks:

- {'name': 'Dakhla Peninsula', 'writeup': 'A prominent peninsula known for its desert landscapes and Atlantic coastline, popular for water sports and fishing.'}
- {'name': 'Smara', 'writeup': 'An important town with historical significance as a center of Islamic scholarship and Sahrawi culture.'}
- {'name': 'Laayoune', 'writeup': 'The largest city and administrative center, featuring markets and cultural sites reflecting Sahrawi heritage.'}

Head of State / Government:

Brahim Ghali (President of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, partially recognized)

Main Cultural Events:

- {'name': 'Sahrawi National Day', 'writeup': 'Celebrated on February 27, marking the founding of the Polisario Front and the Sahrawi struggle for independence.'}
- {'name': 'Eid al-Fitr', 'writeup': 'A major Islamic festival celebrated by Sahrawi people marking the end of Ramadan with communal prayers and feasts.'}

Food & Cuisine:

Sahrawi cuisine is influenced by Berber, Arab, and Spanish traditions, featuring dishes like mechoui (roasted lamb), couscous, and tea ceremonies with mint tea.

Brief History:

Western Sahara was a Spanish colony until 1975. Following Spain's withdrawal, Morocco and Mauritania claimed the territory, leading to conflict with the Polisario Front, which declared the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. The region remains disputed with ongoing tensions and a UN-brokered ceasefire since 1991.

Important People:

- El-Ouali Mustapha Sayed - Founder of the Polisario Front
- Brahim Ghali - Current President of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
- Mohamed Abdelaziz - Longtime leader of the Polisario Front

Current Conflicts:

Ongoing territorial dispute between Morocco and the Polisario Front over sovereignty, with intermittent clashes despite a UN ceasefire.

Youtube Links:

- Western Sahara Explained: History and Conflict
- Life in Western Sahara Refugee Camps
- The Sahrawi People: Culture and Struggle
- Western Sahara: The Last African Colony?
- Dakhla Peninsula: Desert Meets Ocean