

# Fiji

## Geography

Location: Oceania, island group in the South Pacific Ocean, about two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand

Area:

total area: 18,270 sq km

land area: 18,270 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 1,129 km

Maritime claims: measured from claimed archipelagic baselines

continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation;

rectilinear shelf claim added

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical marine; only slight seasonal temperature variation

Terrain: mostly mountains of volcanic origin

Natural resources: timber, fish, gold, copper, offshore oil potential

Land use:

arable land: 8%

permanent crops: 5%

meadows and pastures: 3%

forest and woodland: 65%

other: 19%

Irrigated land: 10 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: deforestation; soil erosion

natural hazards: cyclonic storms can occur from November to January

Note: includes 332 islands of which approximately 110 are inhabited

# People

Population: 772,891 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 36% (female 136,570; male 142,581)

15-64 years: 61% (female 235,491; male 235,411)

65 years and over: 3% (female 11,943; male 10,895) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.16% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 23.69 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 6.42 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -5.67 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 17.7 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 65.42 years

male: 63.13 years

female: 67.82 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.87 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Fijian(s)

adjective: Fijian

Ethnic divisions: Fijian 49%, Indian 46%, European, other Pacific Islanders, overseas Chinese, and other 5%

Religions: Christian 52% (Methodist 37%, Roman Catholic 9%), Hindu 38%, Muslim 8%, other 2%

note: Fijians are mainly Christian, Indians are Hindu, and there is a Muslim minority (1986)

Languages: English (official), Fijian, Hindustani

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1986)

total population: 87%

male: 90%

female: 84%

# Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Fiji

conventional short form: Fiji

Capital: Suva

Independence: 10 October 1970 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 10 October (1970)

Legal system: based on British system

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Flag: light blue with the flag of the UK in the upper hoist-side quadrant and the Fijian shield centered on the outer half of the flag; the shield depicts a yellow lion above a white field quartered by the cross of Saint George featuring stalks of sugarcane, a palm tree, bananas, and a white dove

# Economy

Overview: Fiji's economy is primarily agricultural, with a large subsistence sector. Sugar exports and tourism are the major sources of foreign exchange. Roughly 250,000 tourists visit each year.

Industries: sugar, tourism, copra, gold, silver, clothing, lumber, small cottage industries

Agriculture: accounts for 23% of GDP; principal cash crop is sugarcane; coconuts, cassava, rice, sweet potatoes, bananas; small livestock sector includes cattle, pigs, horses, and goats; fish

## Transportation

### Railroads:

total: 644 km; note - belongs to the government owned Fiji Sugar Corporation

### Highways:

total: 3,300 km

Inland waterways: 203 km

Ports: Labasa, Lautoka, Levuka, Savusavu, Suva

Airports:

total: 23

Defence Forces

Branches: Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF; includes army, navy, and air elements)