



## Australia-Oceania :: Vanuatu

### Introduction :: Vanuatu

#### Background:

Multiple waves of colonizers, each speaking a distinct language, migrated to the New Hebrides in the millennia preceding European exploration in the 18th century. This settlement pattern accounts for the complex linguistic diversity found on the archipelago to this day. The British and French, who settled the New Hebrides in the 19th century, agreed in 1906 to an Anglo-French Condominium, which administered the islands until independence in 1980, when the new name of Vanuatu was adopted.

### Geography :: Vanuatu

#### Location:

Oceania, group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean, about three-quarters of the way from Hawaii to Australia

#### Geographic coordinates:

16 00 S, 167 00 E

#### Map references:

Oceania

#### Area:

**total:** 12,189 sq km

**country comparison to the world:** 164

**land:** 12,189 sq km

**water:** 0 sq km

**note:** includes more than 80 islands, about 65 of which are inhabited

#### Area - comparative:

slightly larger than Connecticut

#### Land boundaries:

0 km

#### Coastline:

2,528 km

#### Maritime claims:

measured from claimed archipelagic baselines

**territorial sea:** 12 nm

**contiguous zone:** 24 nm

**exclusive economic zone:** 200 nm

**continental shelf:** 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

#### Climate:

tropical; moderated by southeast trade winds from May to October; moderate rainfall from November to April; may be affected by cyclones from December to April

#### Terrain:

mostly mountainous islands of volcanic origin; narrow coastal plains

#### Elevation extremes:

**lowest point:** Pacific Ocean 0 m

**highest point:** Tabwemasana 1,877 m

#### Natural resources:

manganese, hardwood forests, fish

#### Land use:

**arable land:** 1.64%  
**permanent crops:** 10.25%  
**other:** 88.11% (2011)

**Irrigated land:**

NA

**Natural hazards:**

tropical cyclones or typhoons (January to April); volcanic eruption on Aoba (Ambae) island began on 27 November 2005, volcanism also causes minor earthquakes; tsunamis

**volcanism:** significant volcanic activity with multiple eruptions in recent years; Yasur (elev. 361 m), one of the world's most active volcanoes, has experienced continuous activity in recent centuries; other historically active volcanoes include, Aoba, Ambrym, Epi, Gaua, Kuwae, Lopevi, Suretamatai, and Traitor's Head

**Environment - current issues:**

most of the population does not have access to a reliable supply of potable water; deforestation

**Environment - international agreements:**

**party to:** Antarctic-Marine Living Resources, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 94

**signed, but not ratified:** none of the selected agreements

**Geography - note:**

a Y-shaped chain of four main islands and 80 smaller islands; several of the islands have active volcanoes and there are several underwater volcanoes as well

## People and Society :: Vanuatu

**Nationality:**

**noun:** Ni-Vanuatu (singular and plural)

**adjective:** Ni-Vanuatu

**Ethnic groups:**

Ni-Vanuatu 98.5%, other 1.5% (1999 Census)

**Languages:**

local languages (more than 100) 72.6%, pidgin (known as Bislama or Bichelama - official) 23.1%, English (official) 1.9%, French (official) 1.4%, other 0.3%, unspecified 0.7% (1999 Census)

**Religions:**

Protestant 55.6% (Presbyterian 31.4%, Anglican 13.4%, Seventh-Day Adventist 10.8%), Roman Catholic 13.1%, other Christian 13.8%, indigenous beliefs 5.6% (including Jon Frum cargo cult), other 9.6%, none 1%, unspecified 1.3% (1999 Census)

**Population:**

261,565 (July 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 184

**Age structure:**

**0-14 years:** 37.9% (male 50,548/female 48,477)

**15-24 years:** 19.7% (male 25,685/female 25,900)

**25-54 years:** 34% (male 43,552/female 45,273)

**55-64 years:** 4.9% (male 6,493/female 6,289)

**65 years and over:** 3.6% (male 4,817/female 4,531) (2013 est.)

**Dependency ratios:**

**total dependency ratio:** 69.5 %

**youth dependency ratio:** 62.8 %

**elderly dependency ratio:** 6.7 %

**potential support ratio:** 15 (2013)

**Median age:**

**total:** 20.8 years

**male:** 20.4 years

**female:** 21.1 years (2013 est.)

**Population growth rate:**

2.06% (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 48

**Birth rate:**

26.35 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 50

**Death rate:**

4.2 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 208

**Net migration rate:**

-1.53 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 155

**Urbanization:**

**urban population:** 26% of total population (2010)

**rate of urbanization:** 4.2% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

**Sex ratio:**

**at birth:** 1.05 male(s)/female  
**0-14 years:** 1.04 male(s)/female  
**15-24 years:** 1 male(s)/female  
**25-54 years:** 0.96 male(s)/female  
**55-64 years:** 1.04 male(s)/female  
**65 years and over:** 1.07 male(s)/female  
**total population:** 1.01 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

**Maternal mortality rate:**

110 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)  
**country comparison to the world:** 66

**Infant mortality rate:**

**total:** 17.15 deaths/1,000 live births  
**country comparison to the world:** 101  
**male:** 18.34 deaths/1,000 live births  
**female:** 15.91 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

**Life expectancy at birth:**

**total population:** 72.38 years  
**country comparison to the world:** 132  
**male:** 70.83 years  
**female:** 74 years (2013 est.)

**Total fertility rate:**

3.47 children born/woman (2013 est.)  
**country comparison to the world:** 47

**Contraceptive prevalence rate:**

38.4% (2007)

**Health expenditures:**

4.1% of GDP (2011)  
**country comparison to the world:** 160

**Physicians density:**

0.12 physicians/1,000 population (2008)

**Hospital bed density:**

1.7 beds/1,000 population (2008)

**Drinking water source:**

**improved:**  
urban: 98% of population  
rural: 87% of population  
total: 90% of population  
**unimproved:**  
urban: 2% of population  
rural: 13% of population  
total: 10% of population (2010 est.)

**Sanitation facility access:**

**improved:**  
urban: 64% of population  
rural: 54% of population  
total: 57% of population  
**unimproved:**  
urban: 36% of population  
rural: 46% of population  
total: 43% of population (2010 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:**

NA

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:**

NA

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:**

NA

**Obesity - adult prevalence rate:**

27.5% (2008)  
**country comparison to the world:** 39

**Children under the age of 5 years underweight:**

11.7% (2007)  
**country comparison to the world:** 61

**Education expenditures:**

5.2% of GDP (2009)  
**country comparison to the world:** 66

**Literacy:**

**definition:** age 15 and over can read and write

**total population:** 83.2%

**male:** NA 84.9%

**female:** NA 81.6% (2011 est.)

**School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):**

**total:** 11 years

**male:** 11 years

**female:** 10 years (2004)

**Government:: Vanuatu**

**Country name:**

**conventional long form:** Republic of Vanuatu

**conventional short form:** Vanuatu

**local long form:** Ripablik blong Vanuatu

**local short form:** Vanuatu

**former:** New Hebrides

**Government type:**

parliamentary republic

**Capital:**

**name:** Port-Vila (on Efate)

**geographic coordinates:** 17 44 S, 168 19 E

**time difference:** UTC+11 (16 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

**Administrative divisions:**

6 provinces; Malampa, Penama, Sanma, Shefa, Tafea, Torba

**Independence:**

30 July 1980 (from France and the UK)

**National holiday:**

Independence Day, 30 July (1980)

**Constitution:**

effective 30 July 1980; amended 1981, 1983, 1988

**Legal system:**

mixed legal system of English common law, French law, and customary law

**International law organization participation:**

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; accepts ICtJ jurisdiction

**Suffrage:**

18 years of age; universal

**Executive branch:**

**chief of state:** President Iolu Johnson ABBIL (since 3 September 2009)

**head of government:** Prime Minister Moana CARCASSES Kalosil (since 23 March 2013)

**cabinet:** Council of Ministers appointed by the prime minister, responsible to parliament

(For more information visit the **World Leaders website** [en](#))

**elections:** president elected for a five-year term by an electoral college consisting of parliament and the presidents of the regional councils; election for president last held on 2 September 2009 (next to be held in 2014); following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or majority coalition usually elected prime minister by parliament from among its members; election for prime minister last held on 23 March 2013 (next to be held following general elections in 2016)

**election results:** Iolu Johnson ABBIL elected president, with 41 votes out of 58, on the third ballot on 2 September 2009; Moana CARCASSES Kalosil was elected prime minister following the resignation of Sato KILMAN on 21 March 2013

**Legislative branch:**

unicameral Parliament (52 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)

**elections:** last held on 30 October 2012 (next to be held in 2016)

**election results:** percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - VP 8, PPP 6, UMP 5, GJP 4, NUP 4, IG 3, GC 3, NAG 3, RMC 3, MPP 2, NIPDP 2, PSP 1, VLDP 1, VNP 1, VPDP 1, VRP 1, and independent 4; note - political party associations are fluid

**note:** the National Council of Chiefs advises on matters of culture and language

**Judicial branch:**

**highest court(s):** Supreme Court (consists of a chief justice and 3 judges); note - appeals from the Supreme Court are considered by the Court of Appeal, constituted by 2 or more judges of the Supreme Court sitting together

**judge selection and term of office:** Supreme Court chief justice appointed by the president after consultation with the prime minister and the leader of the opposition; other judges are appointed by the president on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission, a 4-member advisory body; judges appointed until age of retirement

**subordinate courts:** magistrates' courts; island courts

**Political parties and leaders:**

Greens Confederation or GC [Moana CARCASSES Kalosil]

Iauko Group or IG [NA]

Land and Justice Party (Graon mo Jastis Pati) or GJP [Ralph REGENVANU]

Melanesian Progressive Party or MPP [Barak SOPE]

Nagriamel movement or NAG [NA]

Natatok Indigenous People's Democratic Party or (NATATOK) or NIPDP [Alfred Roland CARLOT]

National United Party or NUP [Ham LINI]

People's Progressive Party or PPP [Sato KILMAN]

People's Service Party or PSP [Don KEN]

Reunification of Movement for Change or RMC [Charlot SALWAI]

Union of Moderate Parties or UMP [Serge VOHOR]

Vanua'aku Pati (Our Land Party) or VP [Edward NATAPEI]  
Vanuatu Democratic Party [Maxime Carlot KORMAN]  
Vanuatu Liberal Democratic Party or VLDP [Tapangararua WILLIE]  
Vanuatu National Party or VNP [Issac HAMARILIU]  
Vanuatu Progressive Development Party or VPDP [Robert Bohn SIKOL]  
Vanuatu Republican Party or VRP [Marcellino PIPITE]

#### Political pressure groups and leaders:

NA

#### International organization participation:

ACP, ADB, AOSIS, C, FAO, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, IOC, IOM, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, NAM, OAS (observer), OIF, OPCW, PIF, Sparteca, SPC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

#### Diplomatic representation in the US:

Vanuatu does not have an embassy in the US; it does, however, have a Permanent Mission to the UN

#### Diplomatic representation from the US:

the US does not have an embassy in Vanuatu; the US ambassador to Papua New Guinea, currently Ambassador Walter E. North, is accredited to Vanuatu

#### Flag description:

two equal horizontal bands of red (top) and green with a black isosceles triangle (based on the hoist side) all separated by a black-edged yellow stripe in the shape of a horizontal Y (the two points of the Y face the hoist side and enclose the triangle); centered in the triangle is a boar's tusk encircling two crossed namele fern fronds, all in yellow; red represents the blood of boars and men, green the richness of the islands, and black the ni-Vanuatu people; the yellow Y-shape - which reflects the pattern of the islands in the Pacific Ocean - symbolizes the light of the Gospel spreading through the islands; the boar's tusk is a symbol of prosperity frequently worn as a pendant on the islands; the fern fronds represent peace

#### National symbol(s):

boar's tusk

#### National anthem:

**name:** "Yumi, Yumi, Yumi" (We, We, We)

 [PLAY ANTHEM](#)

**lyrics/music:** Francois Vincent AYSSAV

**note:** adopted 1980, the anthem is written in Bislama, a Creole language that mixes Pidgin English and French

### Economy:: Vanuatu

#### Economy - overview:

This South Pacific island economy is based primarily on small-scale agriculture, which provides a living for about two-thirds of the population. Fishing, offshore financial services, and tourism, with nearly 197,000 visitors in 2008, are other mainstays of the economy. Mineral deposits are negligible; the country has no known petroleum deposits. A small light industry sector caters to the local market. Tax revenues come mainly from import duties. Economic development is hindered by dependence on relatively few commodity exports, vulnerability to natural disasters, and long distances from main markets and between constituent islands. In response to foreign concerns, the government has promised to tighten regulation of its offshore financial center. In mid-2002, the government stepped up efforts to boost tourism through improved air connections, resort development, and cruise ship facilities. Agriculture, especially livestock farming, is a second target for growth. Australia and New Zealand are the main suppliers of tourists and foreign aid.

#### GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$1.213 billion (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 202

\$1.186 billion (2011 est.)

\$1.169 billion (2010 est.)

**note:** data are in 2012 US dollars

#### GDP (official exchange rate):

\$776.4 million (2012 est.)

#### GDP - real growth rate:

2.3% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 127

1.4% (2011 est.)

1.6% (2010 est.)

#### GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$4,800 (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 160

\$4,800 (2011 est.)

\$4,900 (2010 est.)

**note:** data are in 2012 US dollars

#### GDP - composition, by end use:

**household consumption:** 58.9%

**government consumption:** 18.2%

**investment in fixed capital:** 26.7%

**investment in inventories:** 0.9%

**exports of goods and services:** 45.6%

**imports of goods and services:** -50.3%  
(2012 est.)

#### GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

**agriculture:** 22.5%  
**industry:** 9.5%  
**services:** 67.9% (2012 est.)

**Agriculture - products:**

copra, coconuts, cocoa, coffee, taro, yams, fruits, vegetables; beef; fish

**Industries:**

food and fish freezing, wood processing, meat canning

**Industrial production growth rate:**

2.1% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 100

**Labor force:**

115,900 (2007)

**country comparison to the world:** 182

**Labor force - by occupation:**

**agriculture:** 65%

**industry:** 5%

**services:** 30% (2000 est.)

**Unemployment rate:**

1.7% (1999)

**country comparison to the world:** 7

**Population below poverty line:**

NA%

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:**

**lowest 10%:** NA%

**highest 10%:** NA%

**Budget:**

**revenues:** \$167.9 million

**expenditures:** \$182.8 million (2012 est.)

**Taxes and other revenues:**

21.6% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 156

**Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):**

-1.9% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 84

**Fiscal year:**

calendar year

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**

1.4% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 25

0.9% (2011 est.)

**Central bank discount rate:**

20% (31 December 2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 60

6% (31 December 2009 est.)

**Commercial bank prime lending rate:**

6% (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 151

5.5% (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of narrow money:**

\$264.1 million (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 172

\$239.6 million (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of broad money:**

\$610.8 million (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 174

\$612.3 million (31 December 2011 est.)

**Stock of domestic credit:**

\$549.4 million (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 163

\$512.6 million (31 December 2011 est.)

**Market value of publicly traded shares:**

\$NA

**Current account balance:**

\$-128.6 million (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 75

\$-126.9 million (2011 est.)

**Exports:**

\$57.5 million (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 194

\$67.4 million (2011 est.)

#### Exports - commodities:

copra, beef, cocoa, timber, kava, coffee

#### Exports - partners:

Thailand 41.9%, Cote d'Ivoire 30.5%, Japan 14.7% (2012)

#### Imports:

\$322.6 million (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 196

\$310.2 million (2011 est.)

#### Imports - commodities:

machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, fuels

#### Imports - partners:

China 20.2%, Singapore 18.8%, US 15%, Japan 11.6%, Australia 10.4%, Fiji 5.2%, NZ 4.8% (2012)

#### Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$187.3 million (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 159

\$173.8 million (31 December 2011 est.)

#### Debt - external:

\$201.8 million (31 December 2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 186

\$258.9 million (31 December 2010 est.)

#### Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:

\$565.1 million (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 101

\$527.1 million (31 December 2011 est.)

#### Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:

\$22.3 million (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 95

\$23.3 million (31 December 2011 est.)

#### Exchange rates:

vatu (VUV) per US dollar -

92.64 (2012 est.)

89.47 (2011 est.)

96.91 (2010 est.)

### Energy:: Vanuatu

---

#### Electricity - production:

55 million kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 204

#### Electricity - consumption:

51.15 million kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 204

#### Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 111

#### Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 112

#### Electricity - installed generating capacity:

28,000 kW (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 197

#### Electricity - from fossil fuels:

89.3% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 75

#### Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 149

#### Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 188

#### Electricity - from other renewable sources:

10.7% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 24

**Crude oil - production:**

0 bbl/day (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 199

**Crude oil - exports:**

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 163

**Crude oil - imports:**

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 103

**Crude oil - proved reserves:**

0 bbl (1 January 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 170

**Refined petroleum products - production:**

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 116

**Refined petroleum products - consumption:**

1,170 bbl/day (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 197

**Refined petroleum products - exports:**

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 202

**Refined petroleum products - imports:**

837.7 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 198

**Natural gas - production:**

0 cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 174

**Natural gas - consumption:**

0 cu m (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 179

**Natural gas - exports:**

0 cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 155

**Natural gas - imports:**

0 cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 105

**Natural gas - proved reserves:**

0 cu m (1 January 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 177

**Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:**

149,000 Mt (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 200

---

**Communications:: Vanuatu**

**Telephones - main lines in use:**

5,800 (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 208

**Telephones - mobile cellular:**

137,000 (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 186

**Telephone system:**

**international:** country code - 678; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Pacific Ocean)

**Broadcast media:**

1 state-owned TV station; multi-channel pay TV is available; state-owned Radio Vanuatu operates 2 radio stations; 2 privately owned radio broadcasters; programming from multiple international broadcasters is available (2008)

**Internet country code:**

.vu

**Internet hosts:**

5,655 (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 143

**Internet users:**



17,000 (2009)

**country comparison to the world:** 198

---

## Transportation :: Vanuatu

### Airports:

31 (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 114

### Airports - with paved runways:

**total:** 3

**2,438 to 3,047 m:** 1

**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 1

**914 to 1,523 m:** 1 (2013)

### Airports - with unpaved runways:

**total:** 28

**914 to 1,523 m:** 7

**under 914 m:**

21 (2013)

### Roadways:

**total:** 1,070 km

**country comparison to the world:** 184

**paved:** 256 km

**unpaved:** 814 km (2000)

### Merchant marine:

**total:** 77

**country comparison to the world:** 57

**by type:** bulk carrier 38, cargo 8, chemical tanker 2, container 1, liquefied gas 2, passenger 1, refrigerated cargo 24, vehicle carrier 1

**foreign-owned:** 72 (Belgium 1, Canada 5, China 1, Greece 3, Japan 39, Norway 1, Poland 9, Russia 7, Singapore 2, Taiwan 1, UAE 1, US 2) (2010)

### Ports and terminals:

Forari Bay, Luganville (Santo, Espiritu Santo), Port-Vila

---

## Military :: Vanuatu

### Military branches:

no regular military forces; Vanuatu Police Force (VPF), Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF; includes Police Maritime Wing (PMW)) (2013)

### Manpower available for military service:

**males age 16-49:** 62,216 (2010 est.)

### Manpower fit for military service:

**males age 16-49:** 43,331

**females age 16-49:** 44,927 (2010 est.)

### Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

**male:** 2,323

**female:** 2,230 (2010 est.)

### Military expenditures:

NA

---

## Transnational Issues :: Vanuatu

### Disputes - international:

Matthew and Hunter Islands east of New Caledonia claimed by Vanuatu and France