

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Burkina Faso

**CAPITAL:** Ouagadougou

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Multiparty Republic

**AREA:** 274,200 Sq Km (105,869 Sq Mi)

**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION** 11,621,700

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**LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY:** Burkina is a landlocked country in West Africa. It is bound by Mali to the north and west, Niger to the northeast and east, Benin to the southeast, Togo and Ghana to the south and the Ivory Coast to the southwest. The territory is a vast plateau that slopes southward and contains three voltas which are slow meandering rivers. They are (1.) the Black Volta, (2.) the White Volta and (3.) the Red Volta. The other main river is the Niger and one of the few permanent lakes in West Africa, Lake Bama, is situated on the White Volta. Wooded savannas are located to the south and in the north the plains dry out into a semidesert terrain. Major Cities (pop. est.); Ouagadougou 442,000, Bobo-Dioulasso 229,000, Koudougou 52,000 Ouahigouya 39,000 (1985). Land Use; forested 50%, pastures 22%, agricultural-cultivated 13%, other 15% (1993).

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**CLIMATE:** Burkina has a tropical climate which is hot all year round and has two alternating seasons, (1.) a dry season between November and May and a (2.) wet season between June and October with violent storms in August. A dry dust laden wind called the Harmattan blows from the Sahara Desert in the northeast between March to May. Average annual precipitation in Ouagadougou is 894 mm (35 inches) and the average temperature ranges are from 16 to 33 degrees Celsius (61 to 91 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 26 to 39 degrees Celsius (79 to 102 degrees Fahrenheit) in April.

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**PEOPLE:** Burkina has over fifty tribes with the principal ethnic group the Mossi who account for approximately 48% of the population. Other dominant tribes include the Fulani Nomads who account for around 8%, the Gourma or Gurma for around 5%, the Lobi-Dagari for around 7%, the Mandé for around 9%, the Bobo for around 7%, the Senoufo for around 5% and the Gourounsi for around 5%. Some resident Europeans exist, although they amount to only 2,500 and are mainly French.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 34 persons per sq km (87 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 8.6% urban, 91.4% rural (1988). Sex Distribution; 48.1% male, 51.9% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 45.6 years male, 48.9 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 49% under 15, 24% 15 to 29, 13% 30 to 44, 8% 45 to 59, 5% 60 to 74, 1% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 47.1 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 18.4 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 28.7 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 137.0 per 1,000 live births (1985).

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**RELIGIONS:** Around 45% of the population follow local native tribal beliefs. The remainder are Muslims which account for around 43% and Christians mainly Roman Catholics for around 12%.

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**LANGUAGES:** The official language is French, although around 60% of the population speak local languages of the Sudanic group which include More, Dioula and Gourmantche.

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**EDUCATION:** Aged 25 or over and having attained: N/A. Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 18.2% (1990).

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**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** In 1958 Burkina Faso, then called Upper Volta, became a self-governing state within the French Community. In 1959 Upper Volta joined Dahomey (Benin), the Ivory Coast and Niger in the Council of the Entente, a group formed to solve the regions economic and social problems. On Aug. 5, 1960 Upper Volta became an independent republic with Maurice Yameogo as President. In 1966 the people were unhappy with Yameogo's rule and this led to several strikes by trade union workers. In the same year the army led by Lt. Col.. Sangoule Lamizana seized control of the government. On June 14, 1970 a new constitution and an elected legislature was established, returning the country to civilian rule and in 1971 the government appointed Gerard Ouedraogo as the civilian President. In 1974 Lamizana again regained control of the government, suspending the constitution and dissolving the legislature. In 1977 a new constitution was adopted which restored civilian rule and in 1978 Lamizana was elected President. In 1980 a military coup led by Col. Saye Zerbo took control of the government and again suspended the constitution. In 1982 a coup of junior officers led by Capt. Thomas Sankara overthrew Zerbo's government to form a new government. In Aug. 1984 the country's name was officially changed from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso. In 1987 Sankara was assassinated after resentment towards his anti-corruption as well as his authoritarian drive and he was replaced by Blaise Compaore. In 1990 Pres. Compaore agreed to new presidential elections which were scheduled for Dec. 1991 with legislative elections scheduled for Jan. 1992. In June 1991 political parties were legalized after a national referendum and in Dec. 1991 Compaore was re-elected as President, although only around 25% of the voters went to the polls as a result of opposition party boycotts. Also in Dec, 1991 just after the elections Clement Oumarou Ouedraogo, an opponent of Compaore, was murdered while Tall Moctar, another opposition politician was attacked and wounded. In Jan. 1992, Pres. Compaore agreed after hard negotiations by the leaders of 42 opposition parties to convene a National Reconciliation Forum. On Feb. 11, 1992 three former heads of state and 380 delegates attended the three-week forum while legislative elections were delayed until May 24, 1992. The Organization for Popular Democracy-Labor Movement won the majority of seats with Youssouf Ouedraogo being elected prime minister. In April 1992, Pres. Compaore attended an international conference

on Liberia at Geneva, in an attempt to improve his international image. In 1993 the government implemented a Structural Adjustment Program which resulted in both foreign economic aid and protests by students and trade unions due to hardships caused by the program. In June 1993, Pres. Compaore unsuccessfully attempted to mediate in talks between Togo's president and the opposition coalition in an attempt to resolve their political crisis. Also during 1993 progress was made in negotiations between Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast to delineate their common border.

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**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the CFA Franc (Communaute Financiere Africaine-CFAF) divided into 100 Centimes.

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**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$2,928,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$1,093,000,000 (1993). Imports; CFAF 182,200,000,000 (1993). Exports; CFAF 76,500,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$8,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; CFAF - 104,600,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 4,836,000 or 49.1% of total population (1991). Unemployed; 0.9% (1991).

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**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partners are the USA, France, the Ivory Coast, Germany, Japan and the Netherlands.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Antimony, Bauxite, Bottling, Copper, Cotton, Gold, Ground Nuts, Lead, Livestock, Maize, Manganese, Marble, Millet, Mining, Nickel, Rice, Sesame, Shea, Sorghum.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Agriculture, Brewing and Bottling, Food Processing, Mining, Textiles, Tyre Manufacture.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Cotton, Ground Nuts, Hides and Skins, Livestock, Rubber Tyres, Sesame, Shea, Nut Products.

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**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; route length 495 km (308 mi) (1989), passenger-km 679,790,000 (422,402,000 passenger-mi) (1984), cargo ton-km 469,675,000 (321,680,000 short ton-mi) (1984). Roads; length 13,134 km (8,161 mi) (1991). Vehicles; cars 11,000 (1989), trucks and buses 13,000 (1991). Merchant Marine; nil. Air Transport; passenger-km 208,567,000 (129,597,000 passenger-mi) (1988), cargo ton-km N/A.

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 4 with a total circulation of 17,000 (1994). Radio; receivers 225,000 (1994). Television; receivers 45,500 (1994). Telephones; units 21,900 (1993).

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**MILITARY:** 5,800 (1995) total active duty personnel with 96.6% army, 0.0% navy and 3.4% air force while military expenditure accounts for 2.2% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).