

OFFICIAL NAME: Jamaica

CAPITAL: Kingston

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Constitutional Monarchy

AREA: 10,991 Sq Km (4,244 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 2,768,400



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Jamaica is the third largest island located in the Caribbean Sea. In general, the island contains a coastal plain and is divided by the eastern New Mountain Range and the central and western limestone plateau as well as the hills of the interior. The principal rivers are the Plantain Garden Hope, Yallahs, Rio Pedro, Rio Minho, Milk, Cabaritta, Rio Grande, Wag Water, White, Martha Brae, Montego, Great and the Black. The island has over 100 small rivers that are narrow and fast flowing. Major Cities (pop. est.); Kingston 587,800, Spanish Town 92,400, Portmore 90,100, Montego Bay 83,400 (1991). Land Use; forested 17%, pastures 24%, agricultural-cultivated 20%, other 39% (1992).

CLIMATE: Jamaica has a tropical climate at sea-level and a temperate climate towards the highlands of the interior. There are four seasons, two rainy seasons from May to June and September to November as well as two dry seasons from July to August and December to April. The hurricane season is from May to August or September. Average annual precipitation is 1,950 mm (77 inches) and average temperature ranges in Kingston are from 19 degrees Celsius (66 degrees Fahrenheit) to 32 degrees Celsius (99 degrees Fahrenheit) all year.

PEOPLE: Approximately 92% of the population are of Black African descent, of which around 76% are pure blooded and 15% are Mulattoes who are of mixed White and Black African descent. Other ethnic minorities include East Indians and Afro-East Indians who account for 3.4%, Whites who represent 3.2% and Chinese and Afro-Chinese who constitute 1.2%.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 220 persons per sq km (570 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 52.3% urban, 47.7% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 49.9% male, 50.1% female (1991). Life Expectancy at Birth; 70.4 years male, 74.8 years female (1985-90). Age Breakdown; 34% under 15, 31% 15 to 29, 16% 30 to 44, 9% 45 to 59, 6% 60 to 74, 4% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 24.8 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 5.1 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 19.7 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 27.0 per 1,000 live births (1989).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians with 10% of the population Baptist while 18% are Church of God, 10% are Anglican, 5% are Roman Catholic, 7% are Seventh Day Adventist, 5% are Methodist and 5% are Presbyterian. Other minorities include Rastafarians and Hindus.

LANGUAGES: The official language is English, although a form of Jamaican English, which is a combination of archaic English and Africa words, is more widely spoken.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 3.2%, primary 79.8%, incomplete secondary 15.0%, secondary and higher 2.0% (1982). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 1,630,000 or 98.4% (1990).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1944 Britain granted Jamaica a new constitution that provided for limited internal self government. In 1959 Jamaica became a member of the West Indies Federation until Britain dissolved it in 1962. On Aug. 6, 1962 Jamaica gained full independence within the Commonwealth with Alexander Bustamente as the country's first Prime Minister. In the same year Jamaica joined the UN and in 1969 joined the Organization of American States (OAS). In 1967 Bustamente retired and was succeeded by Donald Sangster, who in turn was succeeded by Hugh Shearer after his sudden death. During 1968 there were the Rodney Riots and associated allegations of corruption. In 1972 Michael Manley was elected Prime Minister and embarked on a radical land and social reform program which involved closer foreign policy ties with Cuba. In 1980 following growing economic difficulties, Manley called for a general election which resulted in violent riots between various armed gangs who supported each of the two main parties. Over 700 people were killed and in Oct. 1980 Edward Seaga won the elections. Prime Minister Seaga reversed many of his predecessor policies and cut diplomatic relations with Cuba. In 1983 Jamaica and several other Caribbean nations joined the US in the invasion of Grenada, to overthrow its socialist government. In the same year Prime Minister Seaga called for general elections which were boycotted by the main opposition party and Seaga was re-elected. In Feb. 1989 Manley won the general elections and was returned to office. In Nov. 1990 a new plan for privatization of some public services was announced. In June 1991 Jamaica entered into a new agreement with the IMF that allowed for a US \$59 million standby arrangement and some US \$21 million in compensatory finance. In Sept. 1991 the government announced plans to allow Jamaicans to hold foreign currency accounts in an attempt to stifle the black market while it also continued its program of economic liberalization and deregulation. In Oct. 1991 a 10% consumption tax was introduced to replace 8 other taxes and duties. In 1992 there were gun battles between rival political supporters of the PNP and the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) after the death in custody of a JLP activist, Lester Coke and the murder of his son that result in the deaths of 8 people. In March 1992 Prime Minister Michael Manley and leader of the People's National Party (PNP) for 23 years left politics due to ill health and was succeeded by Percival J. Patterson. In the same month sugar workers went on two weeks strike while civil servants threatened to strike in protest to the planned loss of some

8,000 jobs. In Sept. 1992 demonstrators blocked roads and burned tires in protest to the increase in public transport fares and school fees. In March 1993 Prime Minister Patterson and the PNP won general elections convincingly while the JLP announced it would boycott the Parliament in protest to the "fraudulent" election conduct and the "partisan" role of the police. In June 1993 the government announced its budget which included the increase of the consumption tax from 10% to 12.5%. In July 1993 the JLP leader, Edward Seaga called of the boycott after the government announced electoral reforms and appointed a new police chief.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Dollar (JD) divided into 100 Cents.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$3,927,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$3,604,000,000 (1993). Imports; USD \$2,177,200,000 (1994). Exports; USD \$1,219,500,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$915,000,000 (1994). Balance of Trade; USD -\$957,700,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 1,090,500 or 43.4% of total population (1994). Unemployed; 15.4% (1993).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the USA, the UK, Canada, Norway, Venezuela, the Netherlands Antilles and other CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Common Market) countries.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Bananas, Bauxite, Citrus Fruits, Cocoa, Coconuts, Coffee, Ginger, Gypsum, Limestone, Molasses, Pimiento, Sugar.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Cement, Chemical Products, Garments, Mining, Molasses, Petroleum Refining, Rum, Sugar Refining, Tobacco Products, Tourism.

MAIN EXPORTS: Alumina, Bananas, Bauxite, Chemicals, Citrus Fruits and Vegetables, Cocoa, Petroleum Products, Rum, Sugar.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 339 km (211 mi) (1989), passenger-km 36,146,000 (22,460,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 104,395,000 (71,500,000 short ton-mi) (1989). Roads; length 14,994 km (9,317 mi) (1987). Vehicles; cars 93,000 (1989), trucks and buses 16,000 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 12 (1990), deadweight tonnage 21,317 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 1,433,000,000 (890,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 20,682,000 (14,165,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 3 with a total circulation for 2 of 130,400 (1993). Radio; receivers 995,000 (1994). Television; receivers 484,000 (1994). Telephones; units 255,200 (1993).

MILITARY: 3,320 (1994) total active duty personnel with 90.4% army, 4.5% coast guard and 5.1% air force while military expenditure accounts for 1.1% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).