INTRODUCTION
Polynesians from Tahiti and Samoa first settled the islands around A.D. 900. They are named for British explorer Capt. James COOK who spotted one of the islands in 1773. In 1901, the UK placed them in the New Zealand Colony and in 1915, organized the Cook Islands into one political entity.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
Queen ELIZABETH II; represented by Sir Tom J. MARSTERS; New Zealand Acting High Commissioner Ms. Rachel BENNETT

Head of Government
Prime Minister Mark BROWN

Government Type
parliamentary democracy

Capital
Avaru

Legislature
unicameral Parliament (24 seats)

GEOGRAPHY
Area
Total: 236 sq km
Land: 236 sq km
Water: 0 sq km

Climate
tropical oceanic; moderated by trade winds; a dry season from April to November and a more humid season from December to March

Natural Resources
coconuts (copra)

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
high-income self-governing New Zealand territorial economy; tourism-based activity but diversifying; severely curtailed by COVID-19 pandemic; copra and tropical fruit exporter; recently received economic recovery support from Asian Development Bank

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $299.9 million (2016 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $16,700 (2016 est.)

Industries - fishing, fruit processing, tourism, clothing, handicrafts

Agricultural products - vegetables, coconuts, roots/tubers, cassava, papayas, tomatoes, pork, fruit, sweet potatoes, mangoes/guavas

Exports $3.125 million (2011 est.)
fish products, recreational boats, precious metal scraps, fruit juice, chemical analysis instruments
partners: Japan 37%, Thailand 21%, France 17%

Imports $109.3 million (2011 est.)
ships, refined petroleum, recreational boats, cars, flavored water
partners: New Zealand 41%, China 21%, Italy 12%, Fiji 10%

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
8,130 (July 2022 est.)

Population Growth
-2.39% (2022 est.)

Ethnicity
Cook Island Maori (Polynesian) 81.3%, part Cook Island Maori 6.7%, other 11.9% (2011 est.)

Language
English (official) 86.4%, Cook Islands Maori (Rarotongan) (official) 76.2%, other 8.3% (2011 est.)

Religion
Protestant 62.8% (Cook Islands Christian Church 49.1%, Seventh Day Adventist 7.9%, Assemblies of God 3.7%, Apostolic Church 2.1%), Roman Catholic 17%, Church of Jesus Christ 4.4%, other 8%, none 5.6%, no response 2.2% (2011 est.)

Urbanization
urban population: 75.9% of total population (2022)
rate of urbanization: 0.52% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)

as of April 2022