INTRODUCTION
The island was uninhabited when first settled by the British in 1627. By 1720, Barbados was no longer a dominant force within the sugar industry, having been surpassed by the Leeward Islands and Jamaica. Social and political reforms in the 1940s and 1950s led to complete independence from the UK in 1966. On 30 November 2021, Barbados became a republic.

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
import-driven economy; dependent on US trade; maintains a pegged exchange rate to the US dollar; high Human Development Index; heavy tourism; reducing government debt to improve fiscal health; launched major agricultural subsidy program to improve food security

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $3.7 billion (2020 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $12,900 (2020 est.)

Industries - tourism, sugar, light manufacturing, component assembly for export

Agricultural products - sugarcane, poultry, vegetables, milk, eggs, pork, coconuts, pulses nes, sweet potatoes, tropical fruit

Exports $485.4 million (2017 est.)
rums and other hard liquor, ships, orthopedic appliances, cement, packaged medicines (2019)
partners: US 21%, Poland 14%, Jamaica 8%, Guyana 6%, Trinidad and Tobago 6% (2019)

Imports $1.52 billion (2017 est.)
refined petroleum, ships, cars, shipping containers, packaged medicines (2019)
partners: US 35%, Trinidad and Tobago 14%, China 9%, Netherlands 5% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population 301,870 (July 2021 est.)
Population Growth 0.28% (2021 est.)

Ethnicity
African descent 92.4%, mixed 3.1%, White 2.7%, East Indian 1.3%, other 0.2%, unspecified 0.3% (2010 est.)

Language
English (official), Bajan (English-based creole language, widely spoken in informal settings)

Religion
Protestant 66.4%, Roman Catholic 3.8%, other Christian 5.4%, Rastafarian 1%, other 1.5%, none 20.6%, unspecified 1.2% (2010 est.)

GEOGRAPHY
Area
Total: 430 sq km
Land: 430 sq km
Water: 0 sq km

Comparative: 2.5 times the size of Washington DC

Climate
tropical; rainy season (June to October)

Natural Resources
petroleum, fish, natural gas

Note
easternmost Caribbean island

as of November 2021