



BARBADOS



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.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

President Sandra MASON

Head of Government

Prime Minister Mia MOTTLEY

Government Type

parliamentary republic; a Commonwealth realm

Capital

Bridgetown

Legislature

bicameral Parliament consists of the Senate (21 seats) and the House of Assembly (30 seats)

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

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.)

