

MAURITANIA

HOTELS•MOTELS•INNS



Country Dialling Code (Tel/Fax): ++222

Ministere du Commerce de L'artisanat et du Tourisme: BP 182 Nouajchott
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Capital: Nouakchott Time: GMT+0

Background: Independent from France in 1960, Mauritania annexed the southern third of the former Spanish Sahara (now Western Sahara) in 1976, but relinquished it after three years of raids by the Polisario guerrilla front seeking independence for the territory. Opposition parties were legalized and a new constitution approved in 1991. Two multiparty presidential elections since then were widely seen as being flawed; Mauritania remains, in reality, a one-party state. The country continues to experience ethnic tensions between its black minority population and the dominant Maur (Arab-Berber) populace.

Location: Northern Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Senegal and Western Sahara

Map References: Africa

Area: total: 1,030,700 sq km land: 1,030,400 sq km water: 300 sq km

Climate: desert; constantly hot, dry, dusty

Terrain: mostly barren, flat plains of the Sahara; some central hills

Natural Resources: iron ore, gypsum, fish, copper, phosphate

Population: 2,667,859 (July 2000 est.)

Nationality: noun: Mauritanian(s) adjective: Mauritanian

Ethnic Groups: mixed Maur/black 40%, Maur 30%, black 30%

Religions: Muslim 100%

Languages: Hasaniya Arabic (official), Pular, Soninke, Wolof (official), French

Economy: A majority of the population still depends on agriculture and livestock for a livelihood, even though most of the nomads and many subsistence farmers were forced into the cities by recurrent droughts in the 1970s and 1980s. Mauritania has extensive deposits of iron ore, which account for almost 50% of total exports. The decline in world demand for this ore, however, has led to cutbacks in production. The nation's coastal waters are among the richest fishing areas in the world, but overexploitation by foreigners threatens this key source of revenue. The country's first deepwater port opened near Nouakchott in 1986. In recent years, drought and economic mismanagement have resulted in a buildup of foreign debt. In March 1999, the government signed an agreement with a joint World Bank-IMF mission on a \$54 million enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF). The economic objectives have been set for 1999-2002. Privatization remains one of the key issues. Mauritania is unlikely to meet ESAF's annual GDP growth objectives of 4%-5%.

Industries: fish processing, mining of iron ore and gypsum

Currency: 1 ouguiya (UM) = 5 khoums

Railways: total: 704 km (single track); note - owned and operated by government mining company standard gauge: 704 km 1.435-m gauge (1995)

Highways: total: 7,660 km paved: 866 km unpaved: 6,794 km (1996 est.)

Waterways: mostly ferry traffic on the Senegal River

Ports and Harbors: Bogue, Kaedi, Nouadhibou, Nouakchott, Rosso

Airports: 26 (1999 est.) Airports - with paved runways: total: 8 2,438 to 3,047 m: 3 1,524 to 2,437 m: 4 914 to 1,523 m: 1 (1999 est.) Airports - with unpaved runways: total: 18 2,438 to 3,047 m: 2 1,524 to 2,437 m: 5 914 to 1,523 m: 9 under 914 m: 2 (1999 est.)

Visa: required by all

Duty Free: goods permitted: 200 cigarettes or 25 cigars or 450g of tobacco, 50g of perfume, 250ml of eau de toilette

Health: a yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from all travelers over one year of age coming from infected areas. Malaria risk exists. All water should be regarded as potentially contaminated

NOUAKCHOTT

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