

SOLOMON ISLANDS



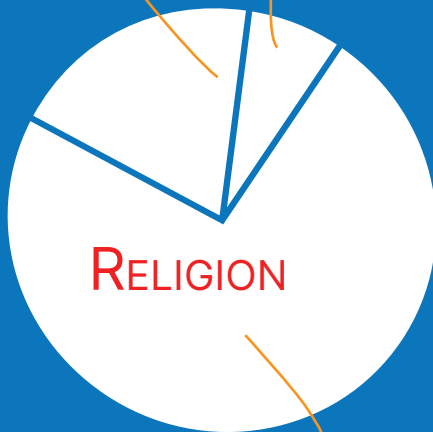
27,986 SQ KM
IN LAND SIZE

POPULATION OF
686,461

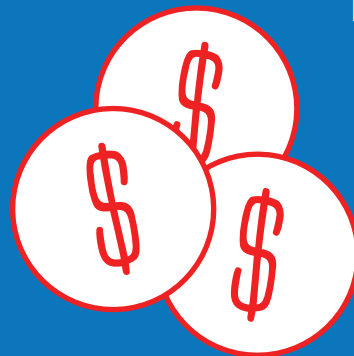


19.6%
CATHOLIC

7%
OTHER



73.4%
PROTESTANT



SOLOMON ISLANDS
DOLLAR



LANGUAGES

MELANESIAN PIDGIN,
ENGLISH & 120 INDIGENEOUS
LANGUAGES

MAJOR INDUSTRIES:
AGRICULTURE
FORESTRY
FISHING

52%
OF POPULATION
ARE UNDER
24 YEARS OLD



FAVOURITE SPORTS:
SOCCER
RUGBY LEAGUE
RUGBY UNION

SOLOMON ISLANDS



Dining hall of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Secondary School.



Unfinished dormitory for growing school population.

Geography

The Solomon Islands are an archipelago of 992 tropical islands and atolls, scattered in the South Pacific Ocean and extending some 1800 kilometres from the Shortland Islands in the west to Tikopia and Anuta in the east.

The country has a tropical monsoon climate, with little seasonal changes. The terrain is mostly rugged mountains with some low coral atolls.

History

The islands have been settled for at least 30,000 years. They were named in 1568 by Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendana after the wealthy biblical King Solomon in the mistaken belief they contained great riches. In the 1890s, the UK established a protectorate over the country. Some of the most brutal fighting of WWII occurred on this archipelago. The Guadalcanal Campaign (Aug 1942 – Feb 1943) was a turning point in the Pacific War.

Self-government for the Solomon Islands came in 1976 with independence two years later. Ethnic violence, government wrongdoing, endemic crime, and a narrow economic base undermined stability and civil society, and, in 2003, then Prime Minister Sir Allan Kemakeza sought the assistance of Australia. The Australian Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) ended in June 2017 and was generally effective in restoring law and order and rebuilding government institutions. The country is still a part of the British Commonwealth.

Culture

Music, songs and dances are an integral part of the country's culture. Folk songs and dances are performed during traditional ceremonies, and many of the islanders are natural song composers. Group and solo vocals are common forms of traditional Melanesian performances. Slit-drums and panpipe ensembles produce the music.

A growth of tourism in the Solomon Islands has encouraged a thriving craft industry. Stone carvings, weaved baskets and bags, tribal jewelry and indigenous pottery cater to the thriving souvenir markets.

Family ties are very important to Solomon Islanders. Extended families are more common than nuclear ones. Infants are highly pampered and usually not left with members outside the family.

AMS Projects in the Solomon Islands – St Martin's Rural Training Centre

St Martin's Rural Training Centre was established in 1976 by a Marist Father and the Marists are still involved in the centre today. The centre also has boarding facilities for all students and provides teacher accommodation.

St Martin's is in Tenaru, about 16 km east of Honiara. It currently has 116 students, made up of 36 females and 80 males. The Centre experienced a 25% drop in numbers due to COVID-19 but expects to return to higher student numbers in 2021. St Martin's offers these students, aged from 20-35 years, an opportunity to develop vocational skills.

The courses taught are Carpentry, Life Skills, Mechanics and Agriculture. The centre offers two-year courses in each of these subjects with up to 80 new students starting each year.

Work is also currently planned to upgrade the school's infrastructure over a three-phase development. This would include a renovation of the school's dining room and building teacher accommodation.

Further reading/resources:

SBS Cultural Atlas (www.culturalatlas.sbs.com.au)

World Atlas (www.worldatlas.com)

<https://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/solomon-islands>