

Benin



Introduction Benin

Background: Present day Benin was the site of Dahomey, a prominent West African kingdom that rose in the 15th century. The territory became a French Colony in 1872 and achieved independence on 1 August 1960, as the Republic of Benin. A

succession of military governments ended in 1972 with the rise to power of Mathieu KEREKOU and the establishment of a government based on Marxist-Leninist principles. A move to representative government began in 1989. Two years later, free elections ushered in former Prime Minister Nicephore SOGLO as president, marking the first successful transfer of power in Africa from a dictatorship to a democracy. KEREKOU was returned to power by elections held in 1996 and 2001, though some irregularities were alleged. KEREKOU stepped down at the end of his second term in 2006 and was succeeded by Thomas YAYI BONI, a political outsider and independent.

Geography	Benin
Location:	Western Africa, bordering the Bight of Benin, between Nigeria and Togo
Geographic coordinates:	9 30 N, 2 15 E
Map references:	Africa
Area:	<i>total:</i> 112,620 sq km <i>land:</i> 110,620 sq km <i>water:</i> 2,000 sq km
Area - comparative:	slightly smaller than Pennsylvania
Land boundaries:	<i>total:</i> 1,989 km <i>border countries:</i> Burkina Faso 306 km, Niger 266 km, Nigeria 773 km, Togo 644 km
Coastline:	121 km
Maritime claims:	<i>territorial sea:</i> 200 nm
Climate:	tropical; hot, humid in south; semiarid in north
Terrain:	mostly flat to undulating plain; some hills and low mountains
Elevation extremes:	<i>lowest point:</i> Atlantic Ocean 0 m <i>highest point:</i> Mont Sokbaro 658 m
Natural resources:	small offshore oil deposits, limestone, marble, timber
Land use:	<i>arable land:</i> 23.53% <i>permanent crops:</i> 2.37% <i>other:</i> 74.1% (2005)
Irrigated	120 sq km (2003)

land:**Natural hazards:** hot, dry, dusty harmattan wind may affect north from December to March**Environment - current issues:** inadequate supplies of potable water; poaching threatens wildlife populations; deforestation; desertification**Environment - international agreements:** *party to:* Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands
signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements**Geography - note:** sandbanks create difficult access to a coast with no natural harbors, river mouths, or islands

People	Benin
Population:	7,862,944 <i>note:</i> estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)
Age structure:	<i>0-14 years:</i> 44.1% (male 1,751,709/female 1,719,138) <i>15-64 years:</i> 53.5% (male 2,067,248/female 2,138,957) <i>65 years and over:</i> 2.4% (male 75,694/female 110,198) (2006 est.)
Median age:	<i>total:</i> 17.6 years <i>male:</i> 17.2 years <i>female:</i> 18 years (2006 est.)
Population growth rate:	2.73% (2006 est.)
Birth rate:	38.85 births/1,000 population (2006 est.)
Death rate:	12.22 deaths/1,000 population (2006 est.)
Net migration rate:	0.67 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2006 est.)
Sex ratio:	<i>at birth:</i> 1.03 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.02 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 0.97 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.69 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 0.98 male(s)/female (2006 est.)
Infant	<i>total:</i> 79.56 deaths/1,000 live births

mortality rate: *male:* 84.09 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 74.88 deaths/1,000 live births (2006 est.)

Life expectancy at birth: *total population:* 53.04 years
male: 51.9 years
female: 54.22 years (2006 est.)

Total fertility rate: 5.2 children born/woman (2006 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 1.9% (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 68,000 (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths: 5,800 (2003 est.)

Major infectious diseases: *degree of risk:* very high
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever
vectorborne diseases: malaria, yellow fever, and others are high risks in some locations
respiratory disease: meningococcal meningitis (2005)

Nationality: *noun:* Beninese (singular and plural)
adjective: Beninese

Ethnic groups: African 99% (42 ethnic groups, most important being Fon, Adja, Yoruba, Bariba), Europeans 5,500

Religions: indigenous beliefs 50%, Christian 30%, Muslim 20%

Languages: French (official), Fon and Yoruba (most common vernaculars in south), tribal languages (at least six major ones in north)

Literacy: *definition:* age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 33.6%
male: 46.4%
female: 22.6% (2002 est.)

Government	Benin
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Country name: *conventional long form:* Republic of Benin
conventional short form: Benin
local long form: Republique du Benin
local short form: Benin
former: Dahomey

Government type: republic

Capital: *name:* Porto-Novo (official capital)
geographic coordinates: 6 29 N, 2 37 E
time difference: UTC+1 (6 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)
note: Cotonou (seat of government)

Administrative divisions: 12 departments; Alibori, Atakora, Atlantique, Borgou, Collines, Kouffo, Donga, Littoral, Mono, Oueme, Plateau, Zou

Independence: 1 August 1960 (from France)

National holiday: National Day, 1 August (1960)

Constitution: December 1990

Legal system: based on French civil law and customary law; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Executive branch: *chief of state:* President Thomas YAYI Boni (since 6 April 2006); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government
head of government: President Thomas YAYI Boni (since 6 April 2006)
cabinet: Council of Ministers appointed by the president
elections: president elected by popular vote for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); runoff election held 19 March 2006 (next to be held March 2011)
election results: Thomas YAYI Boni elected president; percent of vote - Thomas YAYI Boni 74.5%, Adrien HOUNGBEDJI 25.5%

Legislative branch: unicameral National Assembly or Assemblée Nationale (83 seats; members are elected by direct popular vote to serve four-year terms)
elections: last held 30 March 2003 (next to be held March 2007)
election results: percent of vote by party - NA%; seats by party - Presidential Movement (UBF, MADEP, FC, Alliance MDC-PC-CPP, IPD, AFP, MDS, RDP) 52, opposition (PRB, PRD, E'toile, and 5 other small parties) 31

Judicial branch: Constitutional Court or Cour Constitutionnelle; Supreme Court or Cour Supreme; High Court of Justice

Political parties and leaders: Alliance of Progress Forces or AFP; African Movement for Democracy and Progress or MADEP [Sefou FAGBOHOUN]; Democratic Renewal Party or PRD

[Adrien HOUNGBEDJI]; Impulse for Progress and Democracy or IPD; Key Force or FC; Movement for Development and Solidarity or MDS; Movement for Development by the Culture-Salute Party-Congress of People for Progress Alliance or Alliance MDC-PS-CPP; New Alliance or NA; Rally for Democracy and Progress or RDP; Renaissance Party du Benin or RB [Nicephore SOGLO]; The Star Alliance (Alliance E'toile) [Sacca LAFIA]; Union of Tomorrow's Benin or UBF [Bruno AMOUSSOU]

note: approximately 20 additional minor parties

Political pressure groups and leaders:

NA

International organization participation:

ACCT, ACP, AfDB, AU, ECOWAS, Entente, FAO, FZ, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICCT, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO (correspondent), ITU, ITUC, MIGA, MONUC, NAM, OIC, OIF, ONUB, OPCW, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNMIL, UNMIS, UNOCI, UNWTO, UPU, WADB (regional), WAEMU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Cyrille Segbe OGUIN
chancery: 2124 Kalorama Road NW, Washington, DC 20008
telephone: [1] (202) 232-6656
FAX: [1] (202) 265-1996

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Gayleatha B. BROWN
embassy: Rue Caporal Bernard Anani, Cotonou
mailing address: 01 B. P. 2012, Cotonou
telephone: [229] 30-06-50
FAX: [229] 30-06-70

Flag description:

two equal horizontal bands of yellow (top) and red (bottom) with a vertical green band on the hoist side

Economy	Benin
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Economy - overview:

The economy of Benin remains underdeveloped and dependent on subsistence agriculture, cotton production, and regional trade. Growth in real output has averaged around 5% in the past six years, but rapid population growth has offset much of this increase. Inflation has subsided over the past several years. In order to raise growth still further, Benin plans to attract more foreign investment, place more emphasis on tourism, facilitate the development of new food processing systems and

agricultural products, and encourage new information and communication technology. Many of these proposals were included in Benin's \$307 million Millennium Challenge Account grant signed in February 2006. The 2001 privatization policy continues in telecommunications, water, electricity, and agriculture in spite of government reluctance. The Paris Club and bilateral creditors have eased the external debt situation, with Benin benefiting from a G8 debt reduction announced in July 2005, while pressing for more rapid structural reforms. Benin continues to be hurt by Nigerian trade protection that bans imports of a growing list of products from Benin and elsewhere, which has resulted in increased smuggling and criminality in the border region.

GDP (purchasing power parity):	\$8.931 billion (2006 est.)
GDP (official exchange rate):	\$4.622 billion (2006 est.)
GDP - real growth rate:	4% (2006 est.)
GDP - per capita (PPP):	\$1,100 (2006 est.)
GDP - composition by sector:	<i>agriculture: 32.8%</i> <i>industry: 13.7%</i> <i>services: 53.5% (2006 est.)</i>
Labor force:	3.211 million (1996)
Unemployment rate:	NA%
Population below poverty line:	33% (2001 est.)
Household income or consumption by percentage share:	<i>lowest 10%: NA%</i> <i>highest 10%: NA%</i>
Inflation rate (consumer prices):	3% (2006 est.)
Investment (gross fixed):	19.1% of GDP (2006 est.)
Budget:	<i>revenues: \$836.8 million</i> <i>expenditures: \$1.064 billion; including capital expenditures</i>

of \$NA (2006 est.)

Agriculture - products:	cotton, corn, cassava (tapioca), yams, beans, palm oil, peanuts; livestock
Industries:	textiles, food processing, construction materials, cement
Industrial production growth rate:	8.3% (2001 est.)
Electricity - production:	82 million kWh (2004)
Electricity - production by source:	<i>fossil fuel:</i> 14.2% <i>hydro:</i> 85.8% <i>nuclear:</i> 0% <i>other:</i> 0% (2001)
Electricity - consumption:	576.3 million kWh (2004)
Electricity - exports:	0 kWh (2004)
Electricity - imports:	500 million kWh (2004)
Oil - production:	0 bbl/day (2004)
Oil - consumption:	14,000 bbl/day (2004 est.)
Oil - exports:	NA bbl/day (2001)
Oil - imports:	NA bbl/day (2001)
Oil - proved reserves:	4.105 million bbl (1 January 2002)
Natural gas - production:	0 cu m (2004 est.)
Natural gas - consumption:	0 cu m (2004 est.)
Natural gas - proved reserves:	1.133 billion cu m (1 January 2005 est.)
Current account balance:	-\$342.7 million (2006 est.)
Exports:	\$563.1 million f.o.b. (2006 est.)
Exports - commodities:	cotton, crude oil, palm products, cocoa

Exports - partners: China 31.3%, Indonesia 8.1%, India 7.4%, Niger 6%, Togo 4.8%, Thailand 4.8%, Nigeria 4.6% (2005)

Imports: \$927.3 million f.o.b. (2006 est.)

Imports - commodities: foodstuffs, capital goods, petroleum products

Imports - partners: France 21.8%, Ghana 7.1%, Cote d'Ivoire 7%, China 6.7%, UK 5.2%, Belgium 4.9%, Togo 4.5%, Thailand 4.2%, Nigeria 4% (2005)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold: \$607.3 million (2006 est.)

Debt - external: \$1.6 billion (2000)

Economic aid - recipient: \$342.6 million (2000)

Currency (code): Communauté Financière Africaine franc (XOF); note - responsible authority is the Central Bank of the West African States

Currency code: XOF

Exchange rates: Communauté Financière Africaine francs (XOF) per US dollar - 513.168 (2006), 527.47 (2005), 528.29 (2004), 581.2 (2003), 696.99 (2002)

Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications Benin

Telephones - main lines in use: 76,300 (2005)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 386,700 (2005)

Telephone system: *general assessment:* NA
domestic: fair system of open-wire, microwave radio relay, and cellular connections
international: country code - 229; satellite earth station - 7 (Intelsat-Atlantic Ocean); fiber optic submarine cable (SAT-3/WASC) provides connectivity to Europe and Asia

Radio broadcast stations: AM 2, FM 9, shortwave 4 (2000)

Radios: 660,000 (2000)

Television broadcast stations: 1 (2001)

Televisions: 66,000 (2000)

Internet country code: .bj

Internet hosts: 867 (2006)

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 4 (2002)

Internet users: 425,000 (2005)

Transportation Benin

Airports: 5 (2006)

Airports - with paved runways: *total:* 1
1,524 to 2,437 m: 1 (2006)

Airports - with unpaved runways: *total:* 4
2,438 to 3,047 m: 1
1,524 to 2,437 m: 1
914 to 1,523 m: 2 (2006)

Railways: *total:* 578 km
narrow gauge: 578 km 1.000-m gauge (2005)

Roadways: *total:* 16,000 km
paved: 1,400 km
unpaved: 14,600 km (2005)

Waterways: 150 km (on River Niger along northern border) (2005)

Ports and terminals: Cotonou

Military Benin

Military branches: Army, Navy, Air Force

Military service age and obligation: 21 years of age for compulsory and voluntary military service; in practice, volunteers may be taken at the age of 18; both sexes are eligible for military service; conscript tour of duty - 18 months (2004)

Manpower available for military service: *males age 21-49: 1,295,230*
females age 21-49: 1,301,936 (2005 est.)

Manpower fit for military service: *males age 21-49: 749,774*
females age 21-49: 751,329 (2005 est.)

Manpower reaching military service age annually: *males age 18-49: 76,661*
females: 75,068 (2005 est.)

Military expenditures - dollar figure: \$100.9 million (2005 est.)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP: 2.3% (2005 est.)

Transnational Issues	Benin
Disputes - international:	Benin and Burkina Faso military clash in 2006 over sections of riverine boundary involving disputed villages and squatters; much of Benin-Niger boundary, including tripoint with Nigeria, remains undemarcated; in 2005, Nigeria ceded thirteen villages to Benin as a consequence of a 2004 joint task force to resolve maritime and land boundary disputes, but clashes among rival gangs along the border persist; a joint boundary commission continues to resurvey the boundary with Togo to verify Benin's claim that Togo moved boundary stones
Refugees and internally displaced persons:	<i>refugees (country of origin): 26,632 (Togo) (2006)</i>
Illicit drugs:	transshipment point for narcotics associated with Nigerian trafficking organizations and most commonly destined for Western Europe and the US; vulnerable to money laundering due to a poorly regulated financial infrastructure