

# Fairtrade: a World of Difference

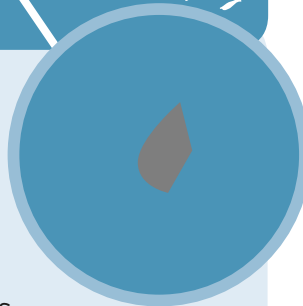
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Mauritius, Craft Aid, Sugar

# Mauritius



**Geography:** The Republic of Mauritius is an island nation in the Indian Ocean to the East of Madagascar, part of the African continent. Besides the largest island of Mauritius, the republic also includes the islands of Cargados Carajos, Rodrigues and the Agalega Islands to the North and East of Mauritius. The island of Mauritius is surrounded by extensive coral reefs. 46% of the land is low-lying plains and towards the centre of the island is a higher plateau, referred to as the tablelands. In some places the tablelands are bordered with mountains.



### Quick Creole lesson:

Hello - Boniou (bon-jew)  
Goodbye - Orevwa  
(or-eh-vwah)

### Language

English is one of the official languages, although it is spoken by very few people. The other official language is French but over 80% of the population speak Creole. 12.1% speak Bhojpuri which reflects the large Indian population on the island. There are also three traditional African languages which are spoken.

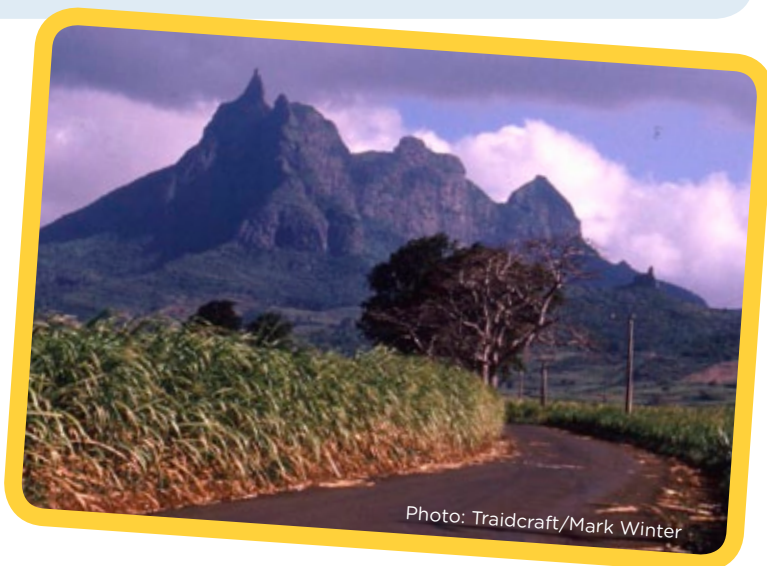


Photo: Traidcraft/Mark Winter

### Did You Know?

Sega, the local folklore music which has African roots is unique to Mauritius. The traditional instruments for making music are goat-skin percussion instruments called ravane and metal triangles.

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### Did You Know?

Inspired by the Dodo, a rare bird found only on Mauritius in the 17th century, Lewis Carroll published his famous book "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" in 1865.



### Meaning of the Flag

This has been the flag of Mauritius since independence in 1968. The red reflects independence, blue represents the colour of the Indian Ocean, yellow symbolizes a bright future, and green represents the lush vegetation and agriculture on the island throughout the year.



Population: **1.3 million**

Population Density: **603 people per sq km**

Literacy: **87.5%**

Children enrolled in Primary Education: **93.1%**

Children enrolled in Secondary Education: **80.1%**

HIV/AIDS prevalence in population (15-49 years old): **1.7%**



**Climate** Mauritius has a tropical climate with two main seasons; a dry season with little rain from May to November with the coolest month being July, when temperatures average between 16° C and 22° C and a wet season from November to May, with the hottest month being February when temperatures increase to an average of between 22°C and 27° C.

Average rainfall for the whole island is 200 cm per year. Besides the seasonal variations there are also regional variations between the low lying areas 'lowland plains' and the higher 'table lands' in the centre of the island.

**Religion:** Mauritius has no majority religion. 48% of the population are Hindu, 23.6% are Roman Catholics, a further 16.6% are Muslim, and 8.6% have other Christian beliefs.

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### History

10th Century	1598	1715	1810
Island uninhabited, visited by Phoenicians, Malays, Swahili and Arab seamen.	Dutch claim island but settlement fails	French claim Mauritius through the French East India Company, and found settlement.	British invade and take over
1964	1968	1979	1990
Ethnic rioting between Hindus and Creoles	Mauritius gains independence from Britain	Mauritius seeks assistance with massive deficit from the IMF and World Bank	Mauritius becomes a republic, and Cassam Uteem is the first elected president

### Country Focus: Sugar

**History of Sugar Production:** The tropical climate of Mauritius is good for sugar production. Sugar production was introduced to Mauritius during Dutch settlement in the 17th century, and plantations were expanded during French and British rule during the 18th and 19th centuries. Large areas of indigenous forest were cleared to make way for the plantations, to the detriment of many local species. However, sugar cane offers good ground surface cover which reduces soil erosion.



**The Mauritian Sugar Industry:** Approximately 90% of the cultivated land surface of Mauritius is dedicated to sugar production. Each year Mauritius produces 630,000 tonnes of sugar, of which 500,000 tonnes is exported. In the 1960s the economy was vulnerable as it was largely reliant on sugar, however the revenue from sugar has helped to develop other sectors such as manufacturing, which is now responsible for 40% of export earnings. Sugar export provides 25%.