

Wallis and Futuna

COUNTRY PROFILE

Historical profile

Around 1400 AD Polynesian navigators from Tonga landed on Uvea and Samoans on Futuna and Alofi.

Historical profile

1616 The islands of Futuna and Alofi were sighted by two Dutch navigators, Willem Cornelius van Schouten and Jacob le Maire, who re-named them the Hoorn Islands.

1767 Samuel Wallis, the English navigator, sighted the island of Uvea, and re-named it Wallis.

1820 The Takumasiva royal dynasty was restored in the kingdom of Uvea (Wallis).

1837 The first European settlers were French, led by missionaries.

1842 Wallis was granted French protection following a local rebellion.

1887 Queen Amelia of Uvea signed a treaty, establishing an official French protectorate.

1888, The Kings of Alo and Sigave (Futuna and Alofi) signed a treaty establishing an official French protectorate.

1924 The protectorates were annexed and became an official French colony

1942 US forces used Wallis as a strategic air base during the Second World War.

1959 Following a referendum, Wallis and Fortuna voted to become a Territoire d'Outre-Mer (TOM) (Overseas Territory).

1959 Tomasi Kulimoetoke II became the Lavelua (King of Uvea), ending a period of instability within the royal family.

1961 Wallis and Futuna became a TOM and adopted the French constitution.

1999 Sagato Alofi became the Tuiagaifo (King of Alo); Pasilio Keletaona became the Keletaona (King of Sigave).

2002 The ruling right-wing Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) (Rally for the Republic) and its affiliates retained a majority in the Territorial Assembly elections. Christian Job was appointed *administrateur supérieur*, replacing Alain Waquet. Wallis and Futuna's only newspaper, the weekly *Te Fenua Fo'ou*, closed down after being subjected to threats and raids from the local (traditional) authorities.

2003 Through a constitutional change, Wallis and Fortuna became a collectivités d'outre-mer (COM) (overseas collectivity). A limited census was undertaken.

2004 Xavier de Furst was appointed *administrateur supérieur*.

2006 Richard Didier was appointed *administrateur supérieur, Préfet*.

2007 Following parliamentary elections Pesamino Teputai became president of the territorial assembly. Tomasi Kulimoetoke II, the King of Uvea, died.

2008 Kapiliele (Gabriel) Faupala was chosen by members of the traditional council of ministers to succeed the late King Tomasi, who had designated him to follow him as king. Philippe Paolantoni was appointed *administrateur supérieur*. A census was undertaken recording a population of 13,484.

2009 The results of the 2008 census were published, which showed a decrease in the population (down by 1,460 since 2003), and an ageing population, with 11 per cent over 60 years (up from 7 per cent in 1996).

2010 In June, Micheal Jeanjean was appointed *administrateur supérieur*.

2011 In July, the Minister for Overseas Territories, Marie-Luce Penchard, joined the islands' ceremony in celebration of the fifty years since Wallis and Futuna became a French territory.

2012 The French presidential elections, held in April and May, were won by the socialist candidate, François Hollande, with 51.63 per cent of the vote; incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy had 48.37 per cent; turnout was 80.35 per cent. On 15 May François Hollande took office as president and head of state.

2013 The 2013 Pacific Mini Games were held in Mata-Utu from 2–12 September. Athletes from 22 Pacific countries and territories participated.

Political structure

Constitution

28 September 1958 (French Fifth Republic)

In 1961, Wallis and Futuna became a Territoire d'Outre-Mer (TOM) (Overseas Territory) of France.

Wallis and Futuna is administered by an administrator (*administrateur supérieur*) appointed by France and is represented in the French parliament by a deputy and a senator.

The islands are divided into three administrative districts based on the ancient kingdoms: *Uvea* (Wallis), *Alo* (Futuna) and *Sigave* (Futuna).

KEY FACTS

Official name: Wallis and Futuna

Head of State: President of France François Hollande (PS) (from 15 May 2012), represented by *Administrateur Supérieur*

Head of government: President of the Territorial Assembly Pesamino Taputai (DD) (from 11 Apr 2007)

Ruling party: Coalition of various political parties and independent members, of which non are dominant (since 2007)

Area: 144 square km – Wallis (or Uvea): 77.6km; Futuna: 64.4km

Population: 14,717 (2011)*

Capital: Mata Utu (on Wallis)

Official language: Wallisian, Futunian, French

Currency: Comptoirs Français du Pacifique franc (CFPF) = 100 centimes

Exchange rate: CFPf84.51 per US\$ (Jan 2009); (pegged CFPf119.25 per euro)

* estimated figure

Wallis and Futuna is the only French territory where a native system of monarchy has been allowed to survive. There are three traditional kings: the Lavelua (King of Uvea), the Tuiagaifo (King of Alo) and the Keletaona (the title of King of Sigave depends on family heritage, and therefore, he has the title of Tui Sigave, Tamolevai or Keletaona).

In Uvea, there is a kivalu, the equivalent of a prime minister, who is appointed by the King.

Form of state

Territoire d'Outre-Mer (TOM) (Overseas Territory) of France

The executive

The President of the French Republic is the head of state, represented by an appointed *administrateur supérieur*, *Préfet* (supreme administrator) who exercises executive power with the right of veto over some of the territorial assembly decisions.

National legislature

The Assemblée Territoriale (Territorial Assembly) has 20 members, elected by popular vote for five-year terms, (13 from Wallis and seven from Futuna). The assembly deals with local affairs although the administrator has the right of veto over many of the Assembly's decisions.

As Collectivités d'Outre-mer (COM) (overseas collectivity) Wallis and Fortuna is a first-order administrative division of France and citizens vote in French elections for president and return a representative for Wallis and Fortuna to both the French National Assembly and Senate. It is divided into three districts that exactly match the traditional chiefdoms, Uvea, Sigave and Alo.

Legal system

French law is applied while the traditional kings deal with customary law.

Last elections

1 April 2007 (territorial assembly)

Results: Parliamentary: Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) (Union for a Popular Movement) won four seats (out of 20); Divers Droite (DD) (Various Right groups) won seven seats; Parti Socialiste (PS) (Socialist Party) four seats; Divers Gauche (DG) (Various Left groups) one seat; and unlisted candidates four seats. Turnout was 74.98 per cent.

Next elections

2012 (territorial assembly)

Political parties

Ruling party

Coalition of various political parties and independent members, of which non are dominant (since 2007)

Population

15,507 (July 2012)*

Many people emigrate to New Caledonia for work.

Last census: According to the 2008 census the population was 13,445, a decrease of 1,460 since 2003. It also showed an ageing population with 11 per cent over 60 years (a growth from 7 per cent in 1996), due in large part to the many young workers who leave to search for employment in New Caledonia.

Population density: 55 inhabitants per square km.

Annual growth rate: 1 per cent (2003)

Ethnic make-up

Polynesian

Religions

Roman Catholic

Education

Compulsory education is provided free-of-charge. Primary education is either provided by public funds or by Roman Catholic missionaries. Secondary education is publically provided.

Compulsory years: Five to 14

Health

Healthcare is publically funded. There is a 60-bed hospital on Wallis and a 23-bed hospital on Futuna; severe emergency medical cases are evacuation to New Caledonia or Australia.

Life expectancy: 73 (estimate 2003)

Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000): 21 per 1,000 live births.

Welfare

While there is no social security benefits offered to the general community, the state assist in the care of old aged pensioners.

Main cities

Mata Utu, on Wallis (capital, estimated population 1,400 in 2012), Alele (1,144), Toloke (810), Aka'aka (804); Kolia (on Futuna) (455).

Languages spoken

Official language/s

Wallisian, Futunian, French

Media

The islands maintain international and local contacts for news and information through electronic media.

Broadcasting

Radio: The French RFO (<http://wallisfutuna.rfo.fr>) service provides overseas radio programmes for broadcasting.

Economy

The economy is based on subsistence agriculture and fishing and it has been estimated that up to 25 per cent of the economy is based on the barter system. Public administration (through grants from France) is the single largest source of economic activity, followed by licensing of fishing rights, import taxes and remittances from migrant workers.

Although tourism could be an important source of foreign exchange, it is an under-developed sector due to the isolation of the islands and the distances for visitors plus the lack of amenities on the islands.

External trade

As a Territoire d'Outre-Mer (TOM) of France, Wallis and Futuna is integrated as an outermost region of the European Union and EU trade agreements may apply.

Imports

Principal imports are chemicals, machinery, vehicles and consumer goods.

Main sources: France (typically 97 per cent of total), Australia (2 per cent), New Zealand (1 per cent).

Exports

Exports are copra, chemicals and construction materials.

Main destinations: Italy (typically 40 per cent of total), Croatia (15 per cent), US (14 per cent), Denmark (13 per cent)

Agriculture

Approximately 80 per cent of the labour force depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The soil of the main islands is volcanic and rainfall is adequate.

Tuna is fished for local consumption. Licensing of fishing rights to Japan and South Korea provide an important source of revenue.

The typical annual fish catch, for local consumption, is 300t with 4t other seafood.

Timber is logged for local consumption and some pine reforestation has been undertaken.

Industry and manufacturing

Industrial activity is limited to handicrafts.

Tourism

Tourism is underdeveloped, as the islands are difficult to get to and lack many amenities. There are four hotels and three private lettings on Wallis, plus a few restaurants in Mata Utu; there are two hotels on Futuna. However there is only one bank in the territory, which is a subsidiary of BNP Paribas; the branch on Fortuna is only opened on two days per month. Activities such as tennis, scuba diving and fishing are available through local associations.

Hydrocarbons

There are no known hydrocarbon reserves; all needs are met by imports.

Energy

Total installed generating capacity is around 6KW.

Banking and insurance

The only bank is Banque de Wallis et Futuna (a subsidiary of BNP, the French multinational bank).

Central bank

The Paris-based Institut d'Emission d'Outre-Mer (IEOM) provides all central banking services except foreign exchange reserves.

Time

GMT plus twelve hours

Geography

Wallis and Futuna consists of two islands groups – Wallis Island (also known as Uvea) and 22 islets on the surrounding reef, and, to the south-east, Futuna (or Hooru), comprising the two small islands of Futuna and Alofi. Combined, the area of the islands is 274 square kilometres and are 230km apart. They are north-east of Fiji and west of Samoa.

The islands are volcanic with the tallest peak, Mont Singavi (on Futuna) at 765 metres. The main islands had lush rain forests covering them but have been seriously denuded since wood is the major source of fuel. Deforestation has resulted in soil erosion particularly on Futuna. Alofi has no source of fresh water and does not have any permanent settlements.

Hemisphere

Southern

Climate

Hot and humid, although May–October can be dry and cooler. Rainy season from November to April. Average temperature 27 degrees Celsius.

Entry requirements**Passports**

Required by all except certain French nationals.

Visa

Required by all, except citizens of EU, North America, Australasia and Japan, for stays up to one month; this includes business trips by representatives of foreign entities with an invitation from a local company or organisation. Proof of adequate funds for stay, an itinerary, a guarantee of repatriation if necessary and return/onward ticket are also required. For further exceptions, full details and a copy of the application form visit www.diplomatie.gouv.fr and follow the link *Getting to France to Getting a Visa*.

Currency advice/regulations

As there are only two banks in the country (none at the airport), it is advisable to enter the country with cash, the most practical being the local currency, Comptoirs Français du Pacifique franc (CFPf). Travelers cheques can be exchanged at the banks, but each transaction is accompanied by a large commission; the banks will give advances on Visa or MasterCard.

Health (for visitors)**Mandatory precautions**

Vaccination certificates required for yellow fever if travelling from an infected area.

Advisable precautions

Vaccinations for diphtheria, tuberculosis, hepatitis A and B, polio, tetanus and typhoid are recommended. Rabies risk.

Hotels

There are only four hotels with 26 rooms available, all located in Mata Utu on Wallis. Holiday residences are available.

Public holidays (national)**Fixed dates**

1 Jan (New Years Day), 28 Apr (Saint Pierre Chanel), 1 May (Labour Day), 8 May (Victory Day 1945), 14 Jul (National Day), 29 Jul (Territory Day), 1 Nov (All Saints Day), 11 Nov (Armistice Day), 25 Dec (Christmas).

Holidays that fall at the weekend are not taken *in lieu*.

Variable dates

Good Friday (Mar/Apr), Ascension (Apr/May) Assumption (Aug).

Working hours**Banking**

Mon–Fri: 0730–1545.

Business

Mon–Fri: 0730–1130, 1330–1730. Sat: 0730–1130.

Government

Mon–Fri: 0730–1130, 1215–1600.

Shops

Mon–Fri: 0730–1100, 1400–1800. Half-day Sat and Sun.

Telecommunications**Telephone/fax**

Communications are by satellite, although a limited radio link is maintained.

Electricity supply

220V, 50 Hz with round, either two or three pin-plugs.

Weights and measures

Metric system

Getting there**Air**

Scheduled but only weekly flights are via either New Caledonia or Fiji, provided by Aircalin. Book well in advance.

National airline: Wallis and Futuna is planning to set up its own airline.

International airport/s: Wallis Hihifo Airport (WLS), 6km from Mata Utu; *bureau de change*, bars, VIP lounge, duty-free, pharmacy, tourist help desk.

Surface

Water: There are no regular passengership services to the islands.

Main port/s: Mata Utu; Leava

Getting about**National transport**

There is no public transport or taxis.

Road: There are surfaced roads in Mata Utu and a road network links the main towns on Wallis.

Buses: Minibus services operate on Wallis.

Car hire

Car hire is available on Wallis.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

Telephone area codes

The international direct dialling (IDD) code for Wallis and Futuna is +681 followed by the subscriber's number.

Banking

Banque de Wallis et Futuna, PO Box 59, Mata Utu (tel: 722-124; fax: 722-156; internet: www.bnpparibas.com).

Central bank

Institut d'Emission d'Outre-Mer (IEOM), 5 rue Roland Barthes, 75598 Paris Cedex 12, France (tel: (+33 1) 5344-4141; fax: (+33 1) 4347-5134; e-mail: contact@ieom.fr).

Travel information

Aircalin, 8 Rue Frédéric Surleau, BP 3736, Noumea 98846 New Caledonia (tel: (+687) 265-500; fax: (+687) 265-561).

Aircalin, BP 49, Matu Utu, 98600 Wallis (tel: 720-000; fax: 722-711; internet: www.aircalin.com).

Aircalin, BP 50, 98620 Futuna (tel: 723-204; fax: 723-439).

Wallis Hihifo Airport, BP 1, Mata Utu 98600 (tel: 721-200; fax: 721-203; email: aviation.sna@wallis.co.nc).

Other useful addresses

Service des Postes et Télécommunications, BP 00 98600, Mata Utu (tel: 720-700; fax: 722-500; e-mail: spt.get@wallis.co.nc).

Internet sites

Wallis and Futuna (in French): www.wallis.co.nc