Central African Republic

Location

Central African Republic is a landlocked country that is located in Central Africa. There are several countries that border Central African Republic, including Sudan, which borders the east, Chad that borders the north, Cameroon, which borders the west and Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo which each, border on the south.

Geography

As stated before, Central African Republic is landlocked in the middle of Africa. It is about 500 miles north of the equator. Most of the northern part of the country is very flat, whereas in the western part of the country, the land is set on high granite plateaus. Central African Republic is the world’s 43rd-largest country at 240,519 mi². This country also borders the Nile River watershed.

Forested area is limited and is estimated to be of about 8% forest range. Even though there is not a large amount of forest, the forest is very highly diverse and includes several species that are very important commercially. These species include Ayous, Sapelli, and Sipo. This country is also known worldwide for the lowland gorilla population.

There are many rivers located in Central African Republic, but the largest are the Ubangi and the Shari. The highest point in Central African Republic is Mt Kayagangiri, which stands 4,660 feet high. The lowest point is the Oubangui River, which is 1,099 feet.

Climate

The climate in the Central African Republic is tropical. There are some areas, that are northern that have strong winds, which are hot, dry, and carry a lot of dust. The northern areas also have some desertification and the northeast is desert. There is also a problem
with the rest of the country flooding from the rivers that are nearby. Usually the winters are hot and dry and the summers are mild to hot and very wet.

**History**

Central African Republic appears to have been settled in the least part of the 7th century by overlapping empires, including the Kanem-Bornou, Quaddai, Baguimi and Dartour groups based in the lake Chad and the upper Nile area.

Until the 1800’s, the people of this country lived in the Sudanic Zone of Africa and had little contact with northern economics. Central African Republic gained independence on August 13, 1960, but soon after that in December of 1976, the Central African Republic became the Central African Empire. The empire was overthrown in September of 1979 and the name of the county was changed back to its original name.

In December of 2004, a new constitution was approved and elections were held in March of 2005. The country’s current ruler is Francois Bozize. In 2006 there was widespread violence in the Northern part of Central African Republic and thousands of people fled there homes.

**Important Dates**

There are several important dates in this country. The most important date is August 13, 1960, which is the day that Central African Republic gained independence. Also in December 2004, a new constitution was implemented.

Several holidays that are celebrated in the Central African Republic are the same as the celebrations in the United States such as New Year’s Day, Easter Monday, and Labor Day. On March 29th Boganda Day is celebrated, this is the anniversary of the death of an independence leader. They also celebrate the day after Republic Day on December 2.
Population

Since the Central African Republic’s independence in 1960, the population has doubled and has a current (2008) population of 4,302,360. There are 95 males for every 100 females. Unfortunately, this country is stricken with HIV. The United Nations estimated that 12.9% of adults between the ages 15-49 are living with HIV/AIDS. There are over 80 ethnic groups with each group having their own language. The largest ethnic groups are the Baya and the Banda.

The life expectancy of a male is 42 years of age, and a female is 45 years of age. Almost half of the populations of woman give birth before the age of 18, and most women give birth to at least five children.

Currency

The current currency in the Central African Republic is the franc. The franc is the currency of six independent states in central Africa. The franc is subdivided into 100 centimes. The franc coins include 1, 2, 5,10,25,50,100, and the 500 francs. Bank notes include 500,1000,2000,5000, and 10,000 francs.

Education

Unfortunately, 20% of the children die before the age of 5, which is the start of their schooling. Also only 30-35% of girls attend primary schools. Usually only 61% of the eligible children in Central African Republic obtain a primary education. Only 10% of children are enrolled in the limited amount of secondary facilities. There is one university in Central African Republic, which is called University of Bangui. Approximately 2,900 students attend this university. Sadly, only 68.5% of the population is literate.

Language

This nation is divided into 80 ethnic groups, with each of these groups having their
own language. Therefore, you can imagine that there are a lot of different languages in this country. While there are many languages, there is a main language, which is Sangho. Sangho is the official and national language in Central African Republic.

**Religion**

There are many religions in this country. Protestants and Roman Catholics both are 25%, put together these two religions make up half the population. Muslim is at 15% and indigenous beliefs 35%. The people in Central African Republic are free to choose their own religion.

**Agriculture**

Central African Republic is dominated by subsistence crops. This country’s population lifeline is within agriculture. Agriculture employs about 74% of the labor force. Manioc is the basic food crop and it is raised on about 500,000 acres of land. Bananas come in as the second major food source and Central African Republic produces around 115,000 tons of bananas. Other food crops include corn, millet, and sorghum. Some fruits are produced but in smaller quantities, these include oranges, lemons and limes.

Some important cash crops include coffee and tobacco. Cotton is also produced in this country. The first production of cotton took place in 1924. The cotton is grown in the Bamingui and Gribingui river valleys.

The livestock that this country produces includes cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and poultry. These livestock are mainly produced for local consumption.

**Trade**

The Central African Republic economy is 48.2% free; this makes it the world’s 141st freest economy. The government restricts imports of sugar and coffee and imposes import and export taxes. There are also weak regulatory and inadequate customs administration, which includes fraud and inefficiency.

**Food**
Western food is only available in the capital, which is Bangui. The local food is very basic. Many dishes contain okra; some other popular ingredients include rice, bananas and cassava. Some of the dishes that are served in Central African Republic include chicken with palm oil and okra, chicken and cumin stew and palm butter soup. Two of the more popular drinks are Palm Wine and Banana Wine.

**Landmarks**

Mount Kayagangiri is a mountain in Central African Republic and it stands 1420 miles high. Besides this landmark, I could not find any other landmarks in Central African Republic.

Danielle Hitchcock