

The Republic of Vanuatu

Where is Vanuatu?

The Republic of Vanuatu is a small country made up of 14 major islands and around 65 lesser uninhabited islands. The archipelago sits east of Australia between the Coral Sea and the South Pacific Ocean. Vanuatu is north-east of New Caledonia and west of Fiji.



What is the weather like in Vanuatu?

Due to its geographical position so close to the equator, Vanuatu has a tropical climate and is subject to regular cyclones. Annual temperatures range from 20-32°C. The rainy season runs from December to May but heavy rain can fall throughout the year.

Fact about Vanuatu

The islands of Vanuatu were formed millions of years ago as a result of underwater volcanic activity. Vanuatu has several active volcanoes and eruptions are common. Most of the islands are steep and mountainous with little fresh water. Only 9% of the land is used for agriculture.



Vanuatu

The capital of Vanuatu

The capital of Vanuatu is **Port Vila**. Port Vila is located on the island of Efate. The currency is the vatu. Vanuatu's primary



industries are agriculture, tourism, offshore financial services and raising cattle.

Major export crops include copra (dried coconut flesh), kava (a fermented drink), beef, cocoa and timber.



Coat of arms

Population of Vanuatu

The population of Vanuatu is 243,304 (2019), the majority of which live in rural areas. The people of Vanuatu are called **Ni-Vanuatu**. Ni-Vanuatu people are predominantly Christian (82%). The national language is Bislama, which is a creole language based on English. Official languages are Bislama, English and French. There are an additional 113 indigenous languages spoken throughout the islands.



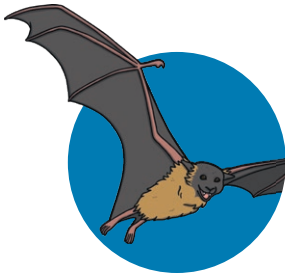
What do people eat in Vanuatu?

Fish, root vegetables and coconut milk are common ingredients found in traditional Vanuatu dishes as well as a wide variety of tropical fruits. The national dish of Vanuatu is **lap-lap**. Lap-lap is made from grated root vegetables, like **taro** or yam, and mashed banana, layered into a dough with coconut milk and cabbage. The dough is wrapped in banana leaves and cooked in an outdoor rock oven.



Vanuatu

What is the Wildlife like in Vanuatu?



The coast of Vanuatu's islands is rocky and surrounded by colourful coral reefs that drop to a deep ocean floor. Vanuatu has limited animal life but is home to 61 species of birds. Bats are the only large native mammals found in the islands, of which there are 11 species.



What are the cultural traditions in Vanuatu?

Cultural traditions in Vanuatu are known as **kastom**. The islands have rich and varied cultural traditions that differ across the regions. Most villages have a **nakamal**, a meeting place for men to drink **kava**, and a **nasara**, a dancing ground. Music and dance are important elements of Vanuatu **kastom**.

Traditional art forms in Vanuatu include music in the form of percussion drums, gongs and rattles, as well as dances performed by men and women. It also incorporates the weaving of coconut and pandanus leaves or burao bark to make clothes, mats, baskets, hats and headdresses.

Traditional clothes include a skirt made of natural fibre or bark for women and loincloths for men. During ceremonies, masks, headdresses, floral crowns and face paints are sometimes worn.

