

**MISSIONS ATLAS PROJECT
CARIBBEAN AREA
ST. KITTS AND NEVIS**

Snapshots Section

Country Name: St. Kitts and Nevis

Country Founded in: September 19, 1983

Population: 40,131

Government Type: parliamentary democracy and a member of the Commonwealth realm

Geography/location in the world: The geographic coordinates are 17 20 N, 62 45 W. There are two islands located in the Caribbean Sea.

Number of people groups: 4

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot:

Major Religion and % of population: Protestants 55.79%

All religions and % for each: (Gleaned from *Operation World*)

Protestants	55.79%
Anglicans	25.99%
Roman Catholics	6.50%
Marginal Christians	2.47%
Unaffiliated Christians	4.83%
Non-Religious/ Other	4.00%
Baha'i	0.42%

Government interaction with religion: The government allows people to choose the church of their choice. The government does support the practice of public prayer in schools once a day.

Country Profile

Basic Facts

Country Name: St. Kitts and Nevis

Demographics:

The estimated population of St. Kitts and Nevis is 40,131. Children up to fourteen years of age account for 26.3% of the population. Adults between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four years of age account for 65.9% of the population. In the last age category, sixty-five years and above, this group accounts for 7.9% of the population. The median age for males is 28.6 years, and the median age for females is 29.3 years. The population growth rate is 0.847%.

The birth rate is 17.67 births for every 1,000 people. There are an estimated 2.26 children born to every woman. The infant mortality rate is 13.94 deaths for every 1,000 live births. The death rate is 8.05 deaths for every 1,000 people. The life expectancy for the total population is 73.2 years.

There are approximately 4 different people groups. The majority of the population are of African descent. Other nationalities include British, Portuguese, and Lebanese.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sc.html>

Language:

English is the official language and is used in business and political arenas. Most islanders use a form of Creole English at home and in social gatherings. This Creole version predominantly uses English grammatical forms and words while adding in words of French and African derivation.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sc.html>

Society/Culture:

When greeting an islander, people should take their communication cues from the speaker. In business or political arenas, people could be somewhat more formal than during casual meetings. When meeting someone for fun or socially on the street, a local handshake known as the "bump" may be used. This handshake involves the two people making a fist with one of their hands and gently touching their knuckles one to another.

People are generally friendly and easy-going. They treasure a lifestyle known locally as "liming" which allows a person to take life's stresses in stride and emphasizes the importance of relaxing. Part of this type of philosophy also teaches people to highly value family ties and important celebrations in life. They focus on enjoying life instead of simply moving quickly through life always trying to accomplish the next major goal.

Families may come in many forms. Some familial units will solely consist of a parent or parents and children. More common, though, is the practice of combining extended family within one domicile. Often grandparents will help care for younger children while parents work. Uncles and aunts can also have extremely important roles in the lives of children.

There are traditional outfits that women and men still sometimes wear on special memorial occasions which reflect the combined heritage of African and European influences. Women wrap their head with a scarf to protect their heads from the intense heat of the sun. Their top will consist of modest corset top with cotton puffed sleeves. Their skirt will have two parts. The bottom layer will be a white skirt with a flared bottom. A shorter skirt usually made of a fabric called *crocus* is placed over the white skirt to protect the underneath layer from dirt. Women will carry a shawl-like wrap called a *madras* which they drape around their shoulders or hold loosely in their arms. They may carry a drawstring bag to hold their valuables. Men usually wear straw hats to protect their heads. They will wear a short-sleeve shirt made from cotton. Their pants will be ankle length and will be made from cotton.

Today most islanders continue to have fairly conservative ideals concerning dress. Women will usually wear skirts or dresses when going to work or to social events. Men will usually wear a shirt and tie to the office with jeans or casual slacks. The week-ends are a time when people usually dress in their best clothes.

In addition to having a national traditional dress, the islands also have an official set of national dishes. Stewed saltfish is the main course. It is made from a pound of saltfish combined with scallions, tomatoes, and spices such as garlic. Side dishes include spicy plantains, coconut dumplings, and seasoned breadfruit.

Several national holidays are celebrated on the islands. Christian holidays include Christmas, Good Friday, and Whit Monday. Independence Day is remembered on September 19th while the Prince of Wales' birthday is celebrated on November 19th. Boxing Day, on December 26, is a time of gift giving and receiving as well as time of feasting. Labor Day is May 1st.

The last week of the year is when Carnival occurs. During this time, there are many cultural displays such as masquerades and performances by steel band musicians. People dance in the streets and hold talent shows.

There are a variety of cultural expressions on the islands. People enjoy listening to and performing reggae and gospel music. Dramatic presentations in the form of skits or plays are also quite popular. Weaving wall hangings from sea cotton is popular on the island of Nevis. Painting local island scenery in pastels and watercolors also occurs. Dame Eva Wilkin from the island of Nevis has been the most well-known island painter.

Masquerades are well-known dance troupes. They perform during Carnival and at other important events. They might choose to execute the *kwadril* which is derived from a traditional French dance. However, they also like to hearken back to the influence of their African ancestors and perform war dances.

People really enjoy watching or playing sports. Cricket is the national sport. When a match begins, most businesses close and people leave to go to the match. Horse racing is another popular event. National races occur on major holidays like Easter Monday and Labor Day.

The national flag of St. Kitts & Nevis reflects the spirit of the islanders. The green on the flag suggests their pride in their agricultural work while the yellow reminds people of the wonderful sunshine which can be enjoyed all twelve months. The black honors their African forbearers while the red poignantly signifies the struggle experienced by these forbearers during the years of slavery. Finally, the two white stars on a black bar remind the people of the importance of celebrating the ideals of hope and liberty.

<http://www.gov.kn/ct.asp?xItem=305&ctNode=59&mp=1>

<http://www.gov.kn/ct.asp?xItem=567&ctNode=59&mp=1>

<http://www.gov.kn/ct.asp?xItem=302&ctNode=59&mp=1>

<http://stkitts-guide.info/past.and.present/culture/>

Gall, Timothy L. *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Cultures and Daily Life: Americas*, Vol 2. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998.

<http://www.geographia.com/stkitts-nevis/>

Government:

The government is a parliamentary democracy. The islands of St. Kitts and Nevis have officially formed a federation. The islands elected to pursue independence from Great Britain in the 1980's and won it in 1983. Yet, they have remained a member of the Commonwealth. All law is based upon the traditions of English common law and the Constitution ratified in 1983. Suffrage is universal for everyone over the age of 18 years of age.

There are 14 different administrative divisions known as parishes. Nine of the parishes are located on St. Kitts while 5 are on Nevis. The capital is Basseterre.

The executive branch consists of several key figures. As a member of the Commonwealth, the chief of state is Queen Elizabeth II. Since 1996, her interests are represented locally by Governor General Cuthbert Montraville Sebastian. The head of the government is the Prime Minister. Since 1995, Dr. Denzil Douglas has served in this capacity. The Deputy Prime Minister is Sam Condor. Both of these positions are officially appointed by the governor general. Yet, the position of Prime Minister is usually given to the leader of the political party who has won the majority of the vote in the legislative branch.

The cabinet is an essential part of the executive branch. The cabinet is responsible for controlling the activities of the various departments of the government. They also ensure that the laws passed by Parliament are implemented and enforced. Members of the cabinet are generally appointed by the Governor General in conjunction with the wishes of the Prime Minister. Cabinet ministers must agree to a consensus regarding government policies. If a cabinet member cannot agree with the other members, he or she must resign.

The legislative branch consists of the National Assembly, which is sometimes called Parliament. There are 14 seats for representatives. Eleven of the members are elected while three senators are

appointed. Members usually serve for five years. Elections were scheduled to be held sometime in 2009.

The judicial branch has different levels. Magistrate courts will usually rule on cases involving petty theft. They also handle civil lawsuits. The upper level of courts is under the authority of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, which is located in St. Lucia. Two judges reside locally to oversee matters.

The island of Nevis has its own local government to oversee its affairs. It is called the Nevis Island Administration. This government operates along the same lines as that of the federation government.

<http://www.queencitynevis.com/govmin.cfm>

<http://www.gov.kn/ct.asp?xItem=462&CtNode=58&mp=1>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sc.html>

Gall, Timothy. *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Americas*. 12th edition. Farmington: Thomas Gale, 2007.

Economy:

Traditionally, the sugar industry provided the main source of revenue for the islands. That changed beginning in the 1970's. In 2005, the government officially closed the sugar industry due to a steady rate of decline. To offset the loss of the sugar industry, the government has promoted the growth of tourism and offshore banking. It has tried to help establish manufacturing companies which can produce items for export.

In 2008, the Gross Domestic Product was \$759.5 million. Its real growth rate was 2.4%. Per capita the GDP was \$19,100. Agriculture accounted for about 3.5% of the GDP while industry equaled about 25.8%. The largest contributor was service related endeavors.

In 2003, budget revenues equaled \$89.7 million, but expenditures equaled \$128.2 million. The inflation rate was 4.5% in 2007.

About 18,170 people comprised the labor force. Many more people choose to travel overseas and send home remittances to help family members who elect to remain on the islands. The unemployment rate in 1997 was 4.5%.

People over the age of 16 can enter the work force. In 2001, the minimum wage for unskilled workers was about \$67 dollars per week while skilled laborers could demand as much as about \$166 per week. People generally worked about five days a week or 40 hours within a seven day period. Two weeks of vacation a year are mandated by law. The government has also worked to enact laws which will protect the health and safety of local workers.

Sometimes people hold part-time jobs in the tourist or industrial sector while also participating in small time agricultural endeavors. Peanuts and sugarcane were two common crops grown on St. Kitts. Sea Island cotton and coconuts were produced on Nevis. People also grow vegetables and catch fish for their own consumption or to sell in small markets to neighbors.

At this point, the primary industry (as has been mentioned above) is tourism. The government actively promotes the islands as a prime destination for tourists interested in scuba diving and ocean viewing. Other industries include the production of shoes and garments and electronic parts.

In 2006, exports equaled \$84 million. About 65.7% of the exports were sent to the United States while 7.5% went to Azerbaijan. The islanders sold machinery and electronics as well as foods, beverages, and tobacco.

In 2006, imports equaled \$383 million. About 46.8% of them came from the United States while 14.8% arrived from Trinidad and Tobago. They included fuels, foodstuffs, machinery, and manufactured products.

The local currency is the East Caribbean dollar. In 2007, the exchange rate in U.S. dollars was 2.7. At that time, the exchange rate had held steady for 4 years.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sc.html>

Gall, Timothy. *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Americas*. 12th edition. Farmington: Thomas Gale, 2007.

Literacy:

The literacy rate, which includes anyone over the age of fifteen who can read and write, was 97.8% in 2003. Education is mandatory for all children between the ages of 5 and 14. At one time, there were about 30 primary schools and 8 secondary schools. The government was planning to build more vocational schools to help people with more educational opportunities. For collegiate studies, people usually need to leave the island.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sc.html>

Gall, Timothy L. *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Cultures and Daily Life: Americas*, Vol 2. Detroit: Gale Research, 1998.

Land/Geography:

The islands are considered to be part of the Leeward Islands chain. They lie about 124 miles south of Anguilla in the middle of the Caribbean Ocean. A narrow strait separates the two from each other.

St. Kitts is the largest island with an area of 168 square kilometers. Approximately 31,880 people live there. It is oval in shape, but has a long tail which extends southwards towards Nevis. The tail of the island is fairly flat and consists of beaches and salt ponds along with a series of mangrove swamps and marshes. The northern half of the island is more mountainous. The highest point on the island, Mount Liamuiga, is actually the top of a dormant volcano. Rain forests and evergreen forests partially cover the island.

The island of Nevis is about 35 square miles, which means it is about 7 miles long and 5 miles wide. It lies about 200 miles south of Puerto Rico. Approximately 10,000 people live on the

Island of Nevis. The soil is not as fertile as its neighbor, but water is plentiful. While there is no official rainy season, there can be heavy rain showers which adequately nourish the vegetation.

The climate tends to be tropical although trade winds help to moderate the heat somewhat. Most days the temperature is around 78° to 80°F. However, the humidity is usually around 70%. The islands may receive as much as 40 inches of rain annually.

Two major natural disasters plague the islands. First, earthquakes may occur due to the presence of volcanoes on and around the islands. Secondly, hurricanes can blow through the islands from July to September.

Other challenges to the islands' ecology include water pollution and erosion. Sewage, along with pollution from the emissions of the cruise ships, has caused problems in the past. The government is currently working to rectify these issues. As for erosion, most of the island was once fairly fertile, but a lack of crop rotation and overgrazing has caused the soil to deplete and erosion to occur.

There are a variety of different types of animals that make their homes on the islands. The brown pelican is the national bird. These birds may migrate in small flocks as they feed on fish or may be by themselves. They build their nests in groups in low-lying trees and bushes. Green Vervet monkeys and whales are two other common animals found in the area.

There are many different types of exotic trees and flowers on the islands. One example is the national flower called the Poinciana. This flower was given its name in honor of the first French governor who brought it to the islands for cultivation. The red and yellow flowers with black seedpods are quite distinctive. Usually people can enjoy the blooms of these flowers between May and August.

The coconut palm and palmettos are also important. The coconut palm offers a source of food as well as functioning as a source of building materials for traditional houses.

<http://www.stkittstourism.kn/DiscoverStKitts/Facts.asp>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cxtoc.html#cx0177>

<http://www.gov.kn/ct.asp?xItem=304&ctNode=59&mp=1>

<http://www.gov.kn/ct.asp?xItem=303&ctNode=59&mp=1>

Gall, Timothy. *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Americas*. 12th edition. Farmington: Thomas Gale, 2007.

History

The first inhabitants of the islands were the Carib Indians. They were known to be fierce warriors. This indigenous population was totally wiped out by a joint French and English force in the Battle of Bloody Point.

The British, under the leadership of Thomas Warner, came to the island of St. Kitts in 1624. At that time the island was officially known as St. Christopher, having been named so by Christopher Columbus in honor of his patron saint. The settlers began to establish a plantation

society that depended upon slave laborers captured and enslaved from Africa. They expanded their settlements to the island of Nevis as more people immigrated to the area.

The French, led by a privateer named Pierre Belain, landed on the islands about a year later. They decided to cultivate tobacco. The French co-existed peacefully with the British settlers until world events and competition for resources led to conflict. For the next 100 years, the islands would be owned by either the British or the French depending upon whose forces were able to exert stronger control. In 1783, under the Treaty of Versailles, the British gained permanent control.

The islands continued to import slave labor to work on sugar plantations until the abolition of slavery in 1834. Even after slaves had been freed, they often found themselves tied to former owners because of the economic necessity for making a living by harvesting sugarcane. The islands dependence upon the sugar industry would last until 2005 when the government closed it officially.

St. Kitts and Nevis along with Anguilla were placed under the authority of the British Virgin Islands in 1816 and remained thus until 1871 when the British authorities created an entity known as the Leeward Islands Federation. Later, between 1958 and 1962, administrative control was given to the Federation of the West Indies.

In 1967, the British gave St. Kitts, Nevis, and Anguilla some autonomy and enacted a constitution. However, Anguilla seceded in 1971. The British recognized the independence of Anguilla in 1980. The islands of St. Kitts and Nevis decided to pursue independence peacefully somewhat later and received official recognition in 1983. They chose to remain part of the Commonwealth. The current government, as has been stated above, is a parliamentary democracy.

<http://stkitts-guide.info/past.and.present/history/>
<http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/s/121261.htm>

Gall, Timothy. *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Americas*. 12th edition. Farmington: Thomas Gale, 2007.

Christian History

British settlers arrived in the early 1600's. Around 1634, Anglican chaplains began to visit various Caribbean islands in order to meet the spiritual needs of the settlers. In 1795, the Slave Conversion Society began work among Africans who had been enslaved by plantation owners. In 1824, the islands were put under the authority of the bishopric of Bardados. At the same time, St. Kitts and Nevis was grouped with Antigua to form an archdiocese. This status was elevated in 1842. In 2005, there were about 5,000 Anglicans on the islands.

Other Protestant groups followed. Moravians were the next major missionary group to come to the islands. They began work among the slave population around 1777. Methodists came around 1786.

Catholics arrived between 1850 and 1860. They were under the authority of the diocese of St. John's in Antigua.

<http://caribbean.injesushands.org/category/saint-kitts-and-nevis/>
<http://www.prolades.com/historical/lee-chron.pdf>
<http://vikratistos.com/knh.html> \
<http://www.stkittsanglicanchurch.org/about.php>

Religion

Non Christian

Baha'i—About 0.42% of the population are of this faith.

Catholic—Priests began work around 1861. In 2005 there were 10 congregations and 1,786 people attending mass.

<http://www.gov.kn/ct.asp?xItem=1391&ctNode=52&mp=1>

Islam—There are reports of a small minority of Muslims on the island, but no other information appears to be available.

Hinduism—There are reports of a number of Hindus on the islands, but no reliable sources have been found to confirm these reports.

Jehovah's Witness—This group began efforts around 1940. In 2001 there were 3 churches and 216 members.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)—Missionaries first began work in 1984. The number of members or churches is unknown.

<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/56621/St-Kitts-members-blessed-by-gospel.html>

Non-religious—About 4% of the population are reported to be non-religious.

Rastafarians—The International Religious Freedom Report states that there are some people of this persuasion. No accurate statistics have been found.

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108537.htm>

Christian/Evangelical

Anglican—This denomination started work around 1634. In 2005 there were 10 congregations and 5,000 members.

<http://www.stkittsanglicanchurch.org/>

Antioch Baptist Church—This congregation formed about 1963. Its headquarters are in Basseterre. In 2001 there were 3 congregation and 160 members.

Baptist Association—This work was founded in 1969 by Southern Baptists from the U.S. In 2005 there were 5 churches and 800 members.

Christian Brethren—In 2005 this denomination had 12 congregations and 280 members.

Church of God of Prophecy—In 2005 this church had 12 congregations and 650 congregants.

Church of God (Anderson)—This church started around 1946 as a mission of the Church of God from the United States. In 2005 there were 4 congregations and 250 members.

Church of God Cleveland—This denomination started around 1943. In 2005 there were 4 churches and 272 members.

Church of the Nazarene—The denomination began missions work around 1983. In 2001 there were 2 congregations and 68 members.

Methodist—This group began work around 1787. In 2005 there were 28 congregations and 4,750 members.

http://www.mcca-lid.org/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=17&MMN_position=35:3

Moravians—This group were some of the first missionaries to the area. They began evangelistic efforts in 1777. In 2005 there were 3 congregations and 848 members.

Salvation Army—In 2001 there was 1 congregation with 60 members.

Seventh Day Adventist—This group supports a private school. In 2005 there were 10 churches and 1,062 members.

Wesleyan Church—This denomination began its missionary endeavors around 1902. In 2005 there were 19 churches and 650 members.

Other Protestant Denominations—In 2001 there were about another 15 groups that had 19 churches and 1,100 members.

Other Black Indigenous Churches—There were about 8 groups and 800 members in all.

People Groups

16410

British (500)

The British colonized the islands and though now the islands are independent, they still are part of the Commonwealth. British currently living on the islands are either descendents of earlier colonists or more recent immigrants who have come to the area for business purposes. They primarily speak English and thus have easy access to the complete Bible and the *Jesus* film.

About 87% of the people have some type of religious convictions. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

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East Indian (1,400 approximate)

The East Indians living on the islands may have migrated there as workers during the days of British colonialism. They speak Hindi, but are probably familiar with English. The complete Bible has been translated into their language. The *Jesus* film and other Christian resources are readily available. The people are predominantly Hindus. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

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French (50)

The French living on the islands have probably migrated there for business or political reasons. They speak French and thus have access to the complete Bible and the *Jesus* film. About 80% of the people have some type of religious affiliation. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

16411

Mulatto or Afro-Kittitians (40,000)

The majority of the population is descendents from Africans who were originally brought as slaves to the New World. They have formed a unique and vibrant culture which blends the cultural ideals of their African roots with those of the Europeans. The people speak a form of Creole English which is similar to that found in other places in the Caribbean.

They have access to the Bible written in Creole, but the *Jesus* film has not been reproduced in this dialect of English. About 97% have some type of religious beliefs. Approximately 22% are evangelical Christian.

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should relate to the churches that are experiencing trouble with nominalism. Evangelicals should pray for church goers to have an authentic experience with Jesus Christ. Evangelicals should strive to help local persons who are merely attending church due to cultural practices or constraints to experience true salvation and repentance.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should aid local believers and congregations, helping to provide leadership training to local residents. Few international missionaries serve on the islands.

3. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to provide motivation and possibilities for church planting efforts on Nevis Island where there are few churches.

Pictures



<http://www.nevisisland.com/>

Links

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sc.html>

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108537.htm>

<http://www.gov.kn/ct.asp?xItem=31&CtNode=63&mp=1>

<http://www.stkittstourism.kn/>

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2341.htm>

<http://stkitts-guide.info/>

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119171.htm>

<http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/s/121261.htm>