

**MISSIONS ATLAS PROJECT
AREA OF THE WORLD
COUNTRY**

Snapshots Section

Country Name: Montserrat

Country Founded in: The first inhabitants came to the island in 1632.

Population: 5,097

Government Type: The island is still an overseas territory of Great Britain and as such is under the supervision of the British government. There is an executive and legislative council that oversees local affairs.

Geography/location in the world: Montserrat is part of the Leeward Islands group in the Caribbean.

Number of people groups: 6

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot:

Major Religion and % of population: Protestant 42.7%
All religions and % for each:

Protestant	42.7%
Pentecostal Assemblies	4.05%
Anglican	27.03%
Catholic	8.11%
Marginal	.57%
Unaffiliated	13.04%
Non-Religious	2.5%
Baha'i	2.0%

Government interaction with religion: The government provides for freedom of religion.

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

Johnstone, Patrick and Jason Mandryk. *Operation World*. Tyrone: Authentic Media, 2005.

Country Profile

Basic Facts

Country Name: **Montserrat**

Demographics:

The estimated population of Montserrat is 5,097. Children up to fourteen years of age account for 27.6% of the population. Adults between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four years of age account for 65.5% of the population. The last age category, sixty-five years and above, accounts for 6.9% of the population. The median age for males and females is 28.5 years old.

The birth rate is 12.36 births for every 1,000 people. There are an estimated 1.23 children born to every woman. The infant mortality rate is 16.08 deaths for every 1,000 live births. The death rate is 8.44 deaths for every 1,000 people. The life expectancy for the total population is 72.76 years. The life expectancy for males is slightly higher at 74.74 years while the life expectancy for females is slightly lower at 70.68 years.

The majority of the people are of mixed African and European descent. Other ethnic groups include the British, the French, Spaniards, and the Indo-Pakistanis.

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

Language:

English is the official language. Most people speak a type of Creole English which mixes various words from French, English, and African languages.

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

Society/Culture:

The people of Montserrat adopted customs derived from African, Irish, and British cultural ideals. The strongest influences remain the Irish and African ideals. Christian rituals such as baptisms and weddings are times of celebration. Church services serve as a gathering place for most communities and allow people to form strong bonds with each other.

Family life has always been important. Like many African societies, extended family is an important influence in children's lives. Grandparents may tend young children while parents work. Most couples in the upper classes can afford to marry immediately while couples from lower classes may cohabit until they can financially afford to marry. Divorce is frowned upon.

Some people join Christian churches while still participating in certain superstitious rites. For example, the jumbie dance is an important cultural ritual. Flutes, triangles, and drums are played to produce a unique type of music. People usually end up in trances. The dancers often seek

relief from ills or the lifting of a curse. People may also go to natural healers who will give them types of amulets to help them recover.

For entertainment, people who can afford satellite use it to view United States and European television programming. Others listen to the national radio station or other radio programs from nearby islands. Many enjoy reading the weekly *Montserrat Reporter*.

There are a variety of types of cuisine on the island. Frog legs, known as “mountain chicken” are a popular dish. Also, goat water, which is a stew made with large chunks of goat meat, is a local delicacy. Rum and drinks made from a variety of tropical fruits serve as island beverages.

There is one main hospital on the island. It was built in St. Johns. Some surgical emergencies can be handled there. Doctors also have private practices. Most serious injuries require the patient to be airlifted to Antigua or Guadeloupe.

There are many public holidays on the island. Carnival is held between Boxing Day on December 26th and January 1st. St. Patrick's Day on March 17th allows residents to commemorate their pride in their Irish heritage. It also serves as a memorial day of a slave revolt. The Queen's Birthday is commemorated on the second Saturday in June. Labor Day is May 1st.

<http://www.visitmontserrat.com/index.php?categoryid=27>

<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Templates/YearbookInternal.asp?NodeID=140427>

"**Montserrat.**" *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2009. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 16 Oct. 2009

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/391125/Montserrat>

Government:

Montserrat is an overseas territory of Great Britain. Its capital was at Plymouth, but has been moved to Carr's Bay or Little Bay temporarily due to the volcanic activity that destroyed Plymouth. The island is divided into three main administrative divisions known as parishes. They are Saint Anthony, Saint Georges, and Saint Peter. Suffrage is universal for all people over the age of 18.

Laws are based upon a Constitution that came into effect in 1989 and upon the traditions of English common law and statutory law. The judicial system has a supreme court that is actually based on system used on the island of Saint Lucia, another overseas territory of Great Britain.

As an overseas territory of Great Britain, Queen Elizabeth II is officially the chief of state. Her Majesty's interests have been represented since 2007 by Governor Peter A. Waterworth. The official head of the local government since 2009 is Chief Minister Rueben Meade. The executive council which oversees the local affairs of the island is headed by Her Majesty's governor and the Chief Minister. There are 3 other ministerial positions on the council as well as a position for the Attorney General and a financial secretary. The governor is always appointed by Queen Elizabeth. The chief minister is usually the leader of the political party which gained the most seats in the legislative branch.

The legislative branch consists of a Council. There are 11 seats. Nine of the representatives who fill these seats are elected in a popular election. The Attorney General and the financial secretary serve as unofficial members. Members normally hold office for five years at a time. The last elections were held in 2009 and the next ones are scheduled for 2014.

<http://www.gov.ms/?p=600>

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

Economy:

In 2002, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was \$29 million. The real growth rate was -1%. The inflation rate was 2.6%. About 1.2% of the GDP came from agriculture while 23.7% came from industrial endeavors. Industries include tourism and the production of rum, textiles, and electronic appliances. An overwhelming 75.7% came from the service sector.

About 4,521 people were part of the work force. The average GDP per capita was \$3,400. Many were involved in subsistence farming activities in addition to holding other small part time jobs. The construction industry employs many while tourism provides seasonal jobs. Fishing provides a steady livelihood. The unemployment rate was 6% in 1998.

People involved in agriculture grew crops like cabbage, tomatoes, and peppers. They also raised different types of small livestock like goats. The lack of arable land remains a problem. Most of the best land was in the southern part of the island which is now uninhabitable. Some arable land remains viable in the Centre Hills area.

The island gains money through exporting goods and services or through inviting tourists to come to spend money to boost the economy. In 2001, exports equaled \$700,000. Commodities such as apparel, plastic bags, and limes were sent overseas.

Money also comes into the country from various sources. Imports equal \$17 million. Imports included foodstuffs, fuels, and machinery. Many people chose to immigrate after the disasters and send remittances back to remaining family members. Most of all, the British Crown has provided a large amount of disaster relief funds to help with re-building efforts.

"Montserrat." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2009. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 16 Oct. 2009

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/391125/Montserrat>

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

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/3666590.stm

Literacy:

Ninety-seven percent of the people above the age of fifteen can read and write. Most students attend school until they are about fifteen or sixteen years old. About 3.3% of the GDP is spent on education.

School starts at age five and continues for ten years. About 99% of the population attended primary school in 2006. Roughly 96% attended secondary school. People who wish to pursue a college education must leave the island for Barbados, Jamaica, or Trinidad.

<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Templates/YearbookInternal.asp?NodeID=140427>
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mh.html>

Land/Geography:

Montserrat is a volcanic island in the middle of the Leeward Islands in the Caribbean. Redonda, Nevis, and St. Kitts lie to the north or west. Guadeloupe and Antigua lie to the south.

The island is only about 39 square miles—11 miles in length and 7 miles in width. Today the people remaining on the island largely live on the northern edge in the area known as the Silver Hills or along the coast. Few may live on the edge of the Centre Hills, but no one is allowed in the southern portion known as the Soufriere Hills due to the fear of volcanic activity.

The island basically consists of these three mountainous areas with narrow areas of coastal plains extending down to the sea. The southern area of the island, known as Soufriere Hills, once held the capital city of Plymouth and most of the population. However, now only scientists are allowed there due to the danger.

Most of the island's water supply once came from this area as it had the most lush vegetation and abundant rainfall. Centre Hills also gets a good amount of rain and has thick vegetation. This area has been unaffected by the volcanic eruptions so far. The northern portion of the islands, Silver Hills, is more arid and has less vegetation.

The climate of the island is fairly tropical. Temperatures range from lows of 70°F to highs of 86°F. About 57 inches of rain fall within in a year's time.

The threat of hurricanes is highest from June to November. Hurricane Hugo hit the island in the 1989 and caused much damage. The volcanoes located in the southern portion continue to remain active and thus serve as an ecological threat.

<http://www.caribbeanchoice.com/montserrat/culture.asp>
<http://www.caribnationtv.com/montserrat.html>
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/391125/Montserrat/224449/Cultural-life>

History

The first inhabitants of the island were Arawak Indians, but raids by the Caribs decimated the settlements there so that the island became largely uninhabited. The first modern settlements occurred in 1632 when English and Irish colonists migrated from St. Kitts to establish farms. Many of the Irish were actually brought as indentured servants or slaves after the English conquest of Ireland. Ironically, the influence of these Irish settlers is still strongly felt on the island. Many of the current inhabitants' surnames are of Irish origin.

The islanders soon developed a plantation economy which depended upon slavelabor. While Irish were still sent there as servants in the 1600's, African slaves were also imported as workers. The cultures of the Irish and the Africans mixed to form a unique Creole culture which survives today.

The French took possession of the island temporarily in 1664, 1667, and 1782. However, ultimately the British regained control of the island in 1783 through the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. British settlers remained in power until the abolition of slavery in 1834. With the ending of slavery, other races had the opportunities to seek economic advancements. For the most part, the original British plantation owners held power, but the possibility of advancement still existed.

By the mid 1800's, the island's economy had diminished due to the decline in the sugar market and the effect of natural disasters. A wealthy philanthropist named Joseph Sturge bought many of the almost abandoned plantations and gave them to people so that they could build small farms. He also encouraged the growing of limes, which remains a viable economic product to this day.

Montserrat has continued to be governed by the British Crown although changes in its status have occurred throughout the previous centuries. Between 1871 and 1956, it was part of the Leeward Islands colony. Then, when that Federation dissolved in 1956, it became part of the short-lived Federation of the West Indies before a new territorial constitution was enacted in 1960. The current government is under the authority of a governor appointed by Her Royal Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's government.

In the late 1980's and throughout the 1990's a series of natural disasters struck the island and caused massive upheavals. First, Hurricane Hugo swept through the island in 1989 and destroyed many buildings. Then, in 1995, Chance's Peak, a dormant volcano, erupted for the first time in 350 years. In 1997, the Soufriere Hills volcano became active and its devastation left about two-thirds of the island uninhabitable. Eruptions occurred again in 2001 and 2003. The volcanoes are still active today.

With the advent of so many natural disasters, especially the eruption in 1997, islanders were forced to flee their homes. At first, they existed by living in safe zones on the portion of the island that remained unaffected. However, in 1996, the British government offered sanctuary to the islanders by offering them residency for two years in Great Britain. Many chose to accept this offer and migrated elsewhere in the British realm. Then, in 1998, the Crown offered the Montserratans permanent residency. Finally, in 2002 the British Overseas Territories Act gave the islanders full British citizenship.

In 2005, Princess Anne supported and attended the opening of a new airport. The British government poured money into the economy in an attempt to help the island recover. Yet, by 2009, although the island had begun to rebuild and recover somewhat, it still remained highly under populated. Also, two-thirds of the island was unsafe for human habitation due to the continued threat of volcanic eruptions.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/3666590.stm
<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Templates/YearbookInternal.asp?NodeID=140427>

Christian History

Irish Catholics were the first people to bring Christianity to the islands. They were followed by the Methodists in 1820. Methodists proved popular among the people of mixed or African descent because of their insistence that slavery should be abolished. The Anglican Church arrived in 1842 and was also a strong influence.

Other Christian groups arrived in the early part of the 20th century. Pentecostal groups came around 1910 and Seventh Day Adventists from the United States arrived in 1926. The Southern Baptists sent missionaries for a time around 1975.

Barrett, David B. *World Christian Encyclopedia Volume I*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Religion

All information is gleaned from *World Christian Encyclopedia Volume I* and *Operation World*. Due to the mass exodus of people from the island after the volcanic eruptions in 1995, 1997, and 2003, some numbers are speculative and may have changed.

Non Christian

Hinduism—A small percentage of the people living on the island may be of Indo-Pakistani descent and some may be Hindu.

Baha'i—About 2.0% of the people are of this faith.

<http://www.eli.bahai.org/montserrat.html>

Non-religious—About 2.5% of the population have no religious beliefs.

Catholic—About 8.11% of the population are Catholic. The churches on the island are under the authority of the St. John's diocese on Antigua. In 1995 there were 4 churches with about 1,000 members.

<http://www.irish-society.org/Hedgemaster%20Archives/montserrat.htm>

Jehovah's Witnesses—In 1995, 1 church serve some 30 members.

Christian/Evangelical

Anglican Church—This church started around 1842. In 2005 there were 2 churches and 500 members.

Baptist Association—Southern Baptists started work around 1975. In 2005 there was one church with 70 members.

Church of God of Prophecy—This Pentecostal body formed around 1951 after leaving the Assemblies of God church. In 2005 there were 3 churches and 100 members.

Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas—This church started around 1820. In 2005 there was 1 church with 160 members.

http://mcca-lid.org/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=13&MMN_position=31:3

Pentecostal Assembly in the West Indies—This church started around 1910 and is associated with Canadian churches. In 2005 there were 2 churches and 250 members.

Seventh Day Adventist Church—This denomination began around 1926. There are no longer reported churches in the area although in 1995 there were 2 congregations with 650 members. All members may have left after the natural disasters. Not enough information is available.

Wesleyan Church—In 1995 there were 2 churches and 150 members.

Other Protestant bodies—In 1995 there were 10 other congregations with about 300 members.

Other Black Indigenous Churches—There were about 20 other churches with about 500 members.

People Groups

All information is gleaned from www.joshuaproject.net and www.peoplegroups.org

16395

British (437)

The island is a British overseas territory so the people living there are either descendents of earlier settlers or more recent immigrants who chose to move there for scientific or economic purposes. The people are predominantly Protestant. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Since English is their primary language, many Christian resources including the *Jesus* film and the Bible are available.

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Deaf (Unknown)

The deaf living on the islands probably use a form of sign language to communicate. Those who are wealthy may have access to cochlear implants if they can travel to international destinations where this surgery is performed. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

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French (30)

The French moved there for business or political purposes. They speak French and thus have easy access to Christian resources including the *Jesus* film and the Bible. About 75% have some type of religious belief. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

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Indo-Pakistani (10)

The Indo Pakistani people migrated there to find work. They are mainly Hindu. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. They speak Hindi, but are most likely familiar with English or Creole. The *Jesus* film and the Bible have been translated into their language.

16396

Mulatto or Monserratan (majority of population; around 4,000 people)

The majority of the population descended from Irish and African immigrants. They have blended their cultural identity into a proud heritage which celebrates the best of both of these cultural roots. They speak Creole English.

Most people have some type of religious belief system. About 19.32% are evangelical Christians.

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Spaniards (10)

About 10 Spaniards live on the island. They speak Spanish, but probably use Creole English. They have access to the *Jesus* film and the Bible in their own language. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should aid the churches on Montserrat in areas of Christian growth and discipleship. These efforts would help overcome the situation caused by many of the people attending church as little more than a social activity.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should rejoice at the large proportion of the people who claim to be Christian, but also remember that only 19.32 % of the Monserratan people group is evangelical Christian. This statistic means, obviously, that over 80% of this people group on Montserrat is not evangelical. Attention should be directed toward this 80% of the population (over 3200 persons).
3. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to meet the physical, social, and educational needs of Montserrat. Some of this aid would seek to alleviate the needs caused by the physical disasters of recent years.
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to locate and evangelize the many Monserratan people who are living in other regions.

Pictures



http://www.montserratnationaltrust.ms/index.php?option=com_ponygallery&Itemid=83&func=viewcategory&catid=9

http://www.montserratnationaltrust.ms/index.php?option=com_ponygallery&Itemid=83&func=viewcategory&catid=12

Links:

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<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/country-profiles/north-central-america/montserrat/>

<http://www.everyculture.com/Ma-Ni/Montserrat.html>