Andorra

Location
Andorra is a country in southwestern Europe between France and Spain. As a result they were ruled by both France and Spain. Located 42 30 N, 1 30 E, the country has no coastline. The capital of the country is Andorra la Vella(42 30 N, 1 31 E).

Geography
The country is made up of many mountains and deep valleys. The lowest point is Rue Runer at 840 m comparing with the highest point of Coma Pedrosa which is 2,946 m. land that could be used for agriculture and farming only makes up less than 3%. The rest of the land is not usable. Because of the snowy mountains, avalanches can be very dangerous to any tourist. Overgrazing has also leaded to soil erosion.

Climate
The climate is quite snowy with winters that are very cold and summers that are hot and dry.

History
There is a lot of French and Spanish influence since the country was once ruled by these 2 superpowers. It is very interesting that long after their independence that they did not have a constitution until April 28, 1993. Andorra was once part of the Roman Empire. It survived invasions such as the Moor Invasion from Spain. After that, it was ruled on and off by Spain and France.

Important Dates
There independence from France and Spain was back in 1278. Their national holiday is called Our Lady of Meritxell Day, which is every year on September 8 and started way back in 1278. Epiphany is January 6, Constitution is March 14, and Labor day is May 1.

Population
As of July 2008, the population is 72,413. About 71% is 16-74 years old. Males outnumber women by about 2000. The population growth rate is about 0.797%. The life expectancy is about 84 years. To describe the people, you would call them Andorrans. The population is made up of Spanish (which are the majority), Andorran, Portuguese, and French.

Currency
Euros can actually be used in this country since it is part of Europe. The exchange rate is 0.7345 per US dollar.

Education
100% of the population is actually literate.

Language
The official language is Catalan which is spoken along with other languages such as French, Castilian and Portuguese.

Religion
Roman Catholic is the main religion of the country which carries over from the French and Spanish influence.

Agriculture

Raising sheep has been an important part of the agriculture in this country. As mentioned before, not much of its land can be used for agriculture and as a result a lot of their food supply has to be imported from other countries. Less than 1% of the population works in agriculture since Andorra is a tourist country, most of them work in the service area instead. Therefore, there are not that many farmers that are around still. Products that they actually produce are rye, wheat, barley, oats, and vegetables along with sheep. They also do some cattle raising.

Trade

Accounting for more than 80% of the country’s GDP, tourism is a major money making business in this country. Cigarettes, cigars and furniture are some of the products that they produce for export. What they mostly import are consumer goods, food and electricity since they have very little hydropower.

Food

As mentioned before, the country raises a good amount of sheep, therefore, lamb is quite popular in this part of the world. Catalan and French influence is strong due to the heritage. Pasta and vegetables are a major part of every meal. Besides consuming lamb as part of the diet, other meats include pork, chicken and rabbit meat. Cabbage, potatoes and tomatoes accompany every meal.

Landmarks

If you like skiing and hiking, the hills of Andorra would be a great place to do so. There are also a lot of museums that you could go to visit the national treasures of Europe. The Romanesque churches would also be another great designation to visit. Also try the small villages on the countryside that include El Serrat, Soldeau, Encamp, Les Escaldes and Sant Julià de Lòria.