**Grenada**

**Location**

Grenada is located at 12°07′N 61°40′W, which is in the southeastern Caribbean Sea. This small island nation lies on the southern edge of the hurricane belt.

Politically, the island is broken down into six parishes which are similar to states. Saint Andrew is the largest and is located on the eastern coast. Saint David is south of Saint Andrews and has an eastern coastline. Saint George holds the capital of Grenada. St. George’s is it the farthest south and has a southern and western coastline. Saint John has a western coastline and is midway up the west side of the island. Saint Mark is the smallest of the parishes and has a northwesterly coastline. Saint Patrick is the farthest north of the parishes with a north and eastern coast. The little islands just north of Grenada are called the Grenadines, and are a part of St Patrick.

**Geography**

The island is mostly mountainous in the inland and typically surrounded by a thin coastline. There are few inland bodies of water, but rain from the tropical mountain range provides lots of fresh water.

The island is tiny, with an area of 433 square kilometers. The shape of the island is oblong with a maximum width of thirty-four kilometers, and a maximum length of nineteen kilometers. The land is made of volcanic igneous rock, which allows for good filtration of the soil. The geography varies somewhat from parish to parish so descriptions will be broken down by parish. Saint George and Saint David have spectacular bays and ports but, unlike Saint David, which has no major cites and is somewhat secluded by mountains and tropical forest, Saint George holds the capital city of Grenada; St. George's. Saint John has a flatter coastline
with long beaches and many hotels, but was once known for the guava trees that grew everywhere. Saint Mark has the highest peak; Mount Saint Catherine at 840 m. The parish of Saint Mark is a popular destination for tourists. Hiking in the Lesser Antilles are mountain range where Saint Catherine lies is a popular day trip because it has beautiful waterfalls such as Tufton Hall Waterfall.

In the parish of Saint Patrick, there is a long coastline and islands just off shore as well as some scattered in the more open water. The land here is mostly used for agriculture, but is owned by only a few large estates that specialize in cocoa and nutmeg.

**History**

The island was “discovered” by Christopher Columbus in 1498. Columbus named the island, “Conception”. The island, has long been inhabited by two closely related people, the Kalinago and the Kariña. The Kariña were mainlanders while the Kalinago were mostly fishermen and lived on boats or on the coast and were also known as Island Caribs. The Karina “sold” the island to the French in 1650 after an attempted British settlement failed. Some Kalinago and Caribs of neighboring islands Dominica and St. Vincent feared loss of their trade routes near the island and fought with any French ships that came their way. In 1763, the island changed hands back to the British when it was ceded to them in the Treaty of Paris. In 1877, Grenada was made a Crown Colony. Grenada became an ”Associated State of the United Kingdom” in 1967. Becoming an associated state was a huge leap towards independence for the little island. As an associated state, it was now in charge of all internal matters leaving only its foreign affairs and protection to the British. Premier Sir Eric Matthew Gairy became the first Prime Minister of Grenada in 1974. However, he became more and more dictorial and
authoritarian until a coup developed in March of 1979 and brought him down. The New Jewel Movement, and their leader Maurice Bishop led the coup. After Bishop was executed, the United States invaded Grenada. Five other Caribbean nations participated in what was called ‘Operation Urgent Fury’. There is still much unrest over the invasion and the scandals that surrounded Maurice Bishop. On June 22, 1995, the current Prime Minister, Keith Mitchell, was put into office. On August the 9th 1996 the Governor, General Daniel Williams, was appointed.

In the past three years Grenada, suffered two natural disasters that destroyed almost every house, crop, and boat. The disasters were caused by hurricanes Ivan and Emily. On Sept 7th 2004, hurricane Ivan rolled threw and destroyed nearly 90% of the homes on the island. The following year, on July 14th. Emily hit the places where Ivan had caused the least damage, causing far less damage but still devastating numerous homes and crops island wide.

**Population**

The population of Grenada is 89,018 (July 2000). The population is dominated by descendants of black slaves brought to Grenada by the Europeans totaling about 80% of the population. Twelve percent of the population is made up of Indians from surrounding islands. The rest of the population is a mixture of African, Indian and European blood. There are no surviving people of pure indigenous blood.

The census determined that about two thirds of the people born in Grenada move off the island, half of which, move to surrounding islands and half to first world countries such as the United States and England.

**Government**

Grenada is still considered a commonwealth of the United Kingdom which means that Queen Elizabeth II is head of state. The Queen has a governor general who represents her
decisions, but the prime minister and the cabinet influence the governor general. The prime minister is the head of the winning party. They have a system similar to U.S. where there are two major parties that have platform issues. The difference is that they have a parliamentary democracy. The prime minister is a member of the cabinet as well as ministers of executive departments. The house of assembly oversees the cabinet. The governor general, prime minister and the head of the runner up party, appoint the head justice for their supreme court. An informed judiciary board chooses the other members of the supreme court.

The legislative branch of Grenada is parliament, which has two parts to it; the House of Representatives with 15 elected members, and The Senate having ten members appointed by the government and three appointed by the head of the runner up party.

The people of Grenada have a constitution granting many of the same civil and political rights as the United States including freedom of speech, press, worship, movement, and association. There is also universal suffrage.

**Religion**

The majority of people are Christian. About 53% of the people are Roman Catholic and the most popular Protestant sect is Anglican with followers totaling 13.8%. Other Protestant religions such as Presbyterian and Seventh Day Adventist make up the other 33.2%. The last bit of the population is Muslim or Rastafarian.

**Culture**

Compared to other Caribbean nations, Grenada has little French culture left except surnames and the names of places where the remains of French architecture still stand. Music is very important to the culture; the most popular types of music are soca, calypso, and reggae. This love for music has kept their ancestors culture alive as well; due to the fact that most Grenadines
that are descendants of Africa still know their ancestor’s tribes and the music and dances for those tribes.

**Food**

The national dish is called Oil Down. It is made by mixing breadfruit, coconut milk, and turmeric (saffron), with a meat of choice or a mixture of meats which include saltfish, pickled pork, smoked herring, pickled pork, or chicken. The meal is cooked in a cast-iron pot and is covered by a banana leaf and left to simmer for hours.

Food usually consists of rice or peas. Fruit such as the blugoe; a type of banana is also found in many dishes or eaten alone. Fish is the most abundant food resource and is eaten in many ways. Hunting on the mainland is only done during hunting season and usually brings armadillo and possum to the table.

**Economy**

Currently, the labor force consists of services 62%, agriculture 24%, and industry 14%. Service jobs include indirect agriculture and travels services. Agriculture is extremely important with the primary crops being bananas, cocoa, nutmeg, mace, citrus, avocados, root crops, sugarcane, maize, and vegetables. Much of the food is exported to the United Kingdom, United States, and the Netherlands. Industry involves textiles, light assembly operations and construction. Due to devastating hurricanes, many crops were lost, but construction work has boomed.

**Language**

English is the principal language spoken, but some French surnames are still used and some places have French names. Some Rastafarians speak Jamaican Creole as a supplementary language.
Education

Churches have their own denominational schools, but typically anyone is welcome. The literacy rate for people over the age of 15 is between 98 – 100 %.

Currency

Grenada is a member of both the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB). The ECCB issues a common currency and manages monetary policy, regulates and supervises commercial banking activities in its member countries. The currency used is the East Caribbean dollar (EC$) and, like ours, is broken into 100 cents. The exchange rate is every one American dollar is equal to 2.7000 east Caribbean dollars

Climate

The climate is tropical with temperatures averaging 29°C year round. There is a wet season from June through November when it is particularly rainy with a chance of hurricanes. The island was hurricane free for forty-nine years but made up for it with two devastating hurricanes, Ivan in 2004 and Emily in 2005, together destroying almost every home on the island twice.

Stacy Rourked