**Macedonia**

**Location**

Macedonia is located in southeastern Europe, north of Greece. Its coordinates are 41°50' N, 22°00' E. Macedonia is bordered by Serbia to the north, Albania and Bulgaria to the east and west, and Greece to the south.

**Geography**

Macedonia has a total area of 25,333 sq km. This is approximately the size of Vermont. Of the 25,333 sq km of area, 477 sq km are water and 24,856 sq km of land. The country is mountainous and has deep basins and valleys with three large lakes and bisected by the Vardar River. Only 23.59% of the land in Macedonia is tillable and only 550 sq km of land is irrigated. The country is also landlocked making it a major transportation route from southern to western Europe. The highest point in the country is the Golem Korab Mountain at 2,753 m and the lowest point is the Vardar River at 50 m.

**Climate**

Macedonia is home to millions of people who enjoy warm, dry summers and cold winters with heavy snowfall. I’m sure they could fit right in Ohio, if it wasn’t for the frequent seismic risks that they encounter.

**History**

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In 1991, the independence of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was recognized internationally. This was approved by everyone except Greece who placed a trade blockade on them until 1995. There continues to be ethnic tensions between the Albanian minority and the neighboring country of Kosovo.

**Important dates**

Macedonia celebrates its national holiday on August 2 which is called uprising day. The country declared independence from Yugoslavia on September 17, 1991. Effective November 20, 1991, Macedonia became a country with a constitution and a bill in government protecting minorities’ rights.

**Population**

Macedonia is called home by 2,054,800 inhabitants. The age breakdown is as follows:

- 0-14 years (22.4%)
- 15-64 years (67.2%)
- 65 years and over (10.4%)

There is a booming .41% population growth rate and a –1.49 migrants per 1000 population. The life expectancy of the population is 74.26 years of age. The women average 76.68 years and the males 72.01 years.
Currency

The Macedonian currency is the Denar. Its current 2003 exchanges with the United States dollar are at a rate of one U.S. dollar = 69 Denar.

Education

The school system in Macedonia is similar to that of Romania’s. The kids spend eight years in elementary school until they move on to high school where they spend four years. This high school atmosphere can be a typical classroom, vocational programs, or schools that concentrate on art. They must pass examinations to qualify them to graduate. Then, they can go to other levels of higher education.

Language

Literary Macedonian is the official language of Macedonia and is recognized by all countries except Bulgaria where it is viewed as a regional norm and a mix of Greek dialects. The population’s use of languages is as follows: 70% Macedonian, 21% Albanian, 3% Turkish, 3% Serbo-Croatian, and 3% other.

Religion

Sixty-seven percent of the Macedonian population follows the Macedonian Orthodox religion and 30% are Muslim leaving only 3% for other faiths.
Agriculture

The Macedonian agricultural community produces various commodities on its small portion of the world’s tillable land. It produces rice, tobacco, wheat, corn, millet, cotton, sesame, mulberry leaves, citrus fruits, produce, beef, pork, poultry, and mutton, which are old lambs or ewes.

Trade

Macedonia produces 6.395 billion kwh of electricity annually. Six billion kwh is consumed and 30 million kwh exported. However, they also import electricity in the amount of approximately 75 million kwh every year. They export an average of $1.2 billion dollars worth of goods and are currently export partners with Yugoslavia, Germany, United States, Italy, and Greece. They also import $1.5 billion dollars worth of good from such countries as Germany, Ukraine, Greece, Russia, and Yugoslavia.

Food

The food in Macedonia resembles that of the Greek. A lot of salads, soups, and lamb or mutton are on the menu. They do, however, boast of some fine cuisines and entertainment in their country.

Landmarks

Some of Macedonia’s landmarks include beautiful mountain rivers and streams, spacious meadows, and prime ski resorts. They have old restored villages with characteristic stone walls and rustic buildings.

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