Senegal

Location:
Senegal is located in western Africa, bordering the Atlantic Ocean, between the countries Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania. It is located at 14 00 N, 1400 W.

Geography:
Senegal is 196,190 sq km, which is slightly smaller than South Dakota. The capital is Dakar. Senegal is made up of 11 regions: Dakar, Diourbel, Fatick, Kaolack, Kolda, Louga, Matam, Saint-Louis, Tambacounda, Thies, and Ziguinchor.

Climate:
The climate in Senegal is mostly tropical, hot, and humid. The rainy season is from May to November. During the dry season, which is December to April, the climate is dominated by hot, dry, winds.

History:
In 1959, Senegal and the French Sudan merged and formed the Mali Federation. The Mali Federation became independent and signed an agreement with France on April 4, 1960. The first president of Senegal, after independence from France, was Léopold Senghor. The Federation broke up on August 20, 1960 due to internal political problems. After the break up, Sudan and Senegal proclaimed their individual independence. In 1982, Senegal and Gambia formed the confederation of Senegambia. This region became known as Casamance. Casamance consisted of Senegal and the southern part of Gambia including the Casamance River. Abdou Diouf was the president from 1981-2000. Diouf encouraged political participation; made Senegal’s diplomatic engagements widespread, and even tried to reduce the government involvement in their economy. In 2000, Abdoulaye Wade became president after Diouf served 4 terms. On December 30, 2004 Wade, signed the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance. This was a peace treaty that would hopefully put an end to Western Africa’s civil conflicts. Soon
after the treaty was signed refugees began to return home but recently in the beginning to 2007 Senegalese troops have witnessed refugees fleeing again with fears of another outbreak.

**Important Dates:**
Independence Day is April 4 the date when Senegal received their independence from France.

**Population:**
The population (2008) is 12,521,851. Fifty four percent of the population lives under the poverty line.

**Currency:**
The currency is the Communaute Financiere Africaine franc. Its value currently (2008) is 481.83 francs equals 1 US dollar.

**Education:**
Education is compulsory between ages 7-13. In 1999, due to a lack of facilities only 62% of children were enrolled in schools. The adult literacy rate is 39.3%. The main college in Senegal is Cheikh Anta Diop University, better known as the University of Dakar.

**Language:**
The official language is French, but Wolof, Pulaar, Jola, and Mandinka are spoken.

**Religion:**
Ninety four percent of the population is Muslim, 5% are Christian, and 1% has indigenous beliefs.

**Agriculture:**
The major agricultural products of Senegal are peanuts, millet, corn, sorghum, rice, cotton, tomatoes, green vegetables, cattle, poultry, pigs, and fish. Seventy percent of the working population is involved in farming and only 11% of Senegal’s total land is cultivated. Millet is planted on 40% of the cultivated land and peanuts on 36%. Most farms are in the Peanut Basin, which is located east of Dakar.

**Trade:**
Exports of Senegal are fish, peanuts, petroleum products, phosphates, and cotton. Their
export partners are Mali, France, India, Gambia, Spain, and Italy. Senegal imports food and beverages, capital goods, and fuels. Their import partners are France, UK, Thailand, China, and Spain. Natural Resources of Senegal are phosphates, marble, basalt, sandstone, limestone, and iron ore.

**Food:**
The main starch in majority of the meals served in Senegal is rice or couscous. Seafood is the mains stay of their diet and meat is eaten less frequently. There is no pork served in Senegal because the majority of the population is Muslim. Overall, Senegalese food is considered some of the best of Africa.

**Landmarks:**
The Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary is one of the largest in the world. This is located in the Senegal River region and one of the most well protected habitats for birds. The best months to visit are from November to February. The Dakar Rally is located in Lisbon. This is where over 400 drivers compete in a 15-day race over thousands of miles between Senegal and Portugal. Competitors drive a mixture of buggies, 4x4’s, motorbikes, and more. One of Senegal’s most famous yet strange landmarks is The Pink Lake. It is also known as the Lac Rose. This completely natural phenomenon is bright pink due to deposits of feldspar minerals. The salt crystals that make up the lake’s crust are one of the main reasons for the lake’s popularity.

Burzynski Alex