**Tuvalu**

**Location**

A small country located about 1,050 kilometers to the south of the Fiji Islands and is southeast of Samoa. These islands were part of the British Gilbert and Ellice Island Colony and were formally known as Ellice Island. These islands are located between the Hawaii Islands and Australia in the South Pacific Ocean; and more specifically with geographic coordinates of 8 00 S, and 178 00 E.

**Geography**

The total area of the country is only 26 sq. km one tenth the size of Washington D.C. The capital of this country is an atoll called Funafuti and the whole country is composed of a chain of nine low-lying coral islands, five of them are atolls -- Funafuti, Nanumea, Nui, Nukufetau, and Nukulaelae. And the other four are islands and named; Nanumaga, Niutao, Vaitupu, and Niulakita.

**Climate**

This is a tropical country and is warm and humid almost all year with ambient temperature dithering around 30 degrees Celsius. The rainfall is variable with the southern part of the islands usually getting more rain than the northern part. But on an average the islands get about 120 inches of rain every year. These islands also lie outside the major cyclone zone belt.
History

Archaeological evidence suggests that Tuvalu has been inhabited by humans since 500 A.D. Spanish voyager Álvaro de Mendaña de Neira, discovered two of the islands during his voyages in 1568 and 1595. And in 1819, Arent De Peyster, a British Captain named the two other islands he found as Ellice Islands. For five decades between 1820 and 1870, American and British whalers settled in these islands. In the 1850’s the United States of America claimed four of the southern islands and started extracting guano. Slave trade plagued these islands during the same time and labor recruiters called blackriders took 400 slaves to work in Peru mines. During the Second World War, United States military occupied part of the island and constructed an airstrip there. In 1979, the United States gave up its claim over the four southern islands and in 1992 the British association also gave up their claim over these islands.

Religion

The majority of the population is protestant Christians.

Language

Almost all of the people are bilingual and most of them are ethnic Polynesians and speak English and Tuvaluan, an Austronesian language.

Economy

The main food of this island is fish and some bit copra is also exported. But this country relies heavily on economic aid from Australia and New Zealand. The currency is the Australian dollar.

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