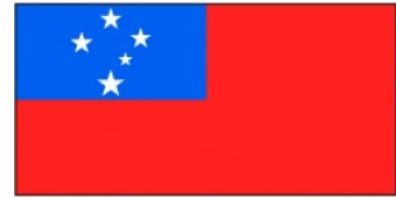




# Samoa

*Joined the Commonwealth 1970 - visited by the Queen in 1977*



**Samoa is a small Polynesian island nation in the South Pacific**

Pop: (2013) 190,000

Capital: Apia

Area: 2,831 sq km

Samoa is an archipelago of 9 islands of which only 4 are inhabited. They are formed of volcanic rock with coral reefs surrounding their coastlines. Most inhabitants live on Upolu Island where cultivation is possible along the coast. The hot, wet tropical maritime climate is cooled by the trade winds from May to November. Wildlife is restricted to bats and lizards but there are 53 species of birds including the rare tooth-billed pigeon.

Being subject to tsunamis and cyclones which have in the past wiped out both coconut and banana plantations, the government has encouraged diversification. Fish farming, new manufacturing industries, offshore financial services and tourism, have all been developed. These, together with remittances from Samoans living abroad, have helped the economy.

In recent years Samoans have undergone two important changes. In 2009 the islanders changed to driving on the left rather than the right and in 2011 the local calendar missed out December 30<sup>th</sup> to move to the west of the International Date Line. This placed Samoa in the same time zone as its major trading partners and not 22 hours ahead, as before.



*Piula Cave Pool on Upolu is a fresh water pool formed by a natural spring. It is joined by a submerged tunnel to a smaller cave and is popular with swimmers and divers*

