



Sierra Leone

Joined the Commonwealth in 1961 - visited by the Queen in 1961



Sierra Leone is a West African nation on the Atlantic coast

Pop: (2013) 6,092,000 Capital: Freetown Area: 71,740 sq km

The coastal belt of Sierra Leone which stretches up to 110km inland, has magnificent beaches with mangrove swamps along the coast. Away from the coast, savanna plains give way to the Guinea highlands where hardwoods, such as teak and mahogany, grow. The hot, dry harmattan wind creates more arid conditions in the extreme north-west. The climate is hot and humid all year round though it is cooler on the coast. There is a varied wildlife including the rare bong antelope and the pygmy hippopotamus.

With offshore reserves of oil and natural gas, Sierra Leone is also rich in resources such as diamonds, gold, rutile (an oxide of titanium), and bauxite but commercial development of these is slow due to its unstable economy. Despite its wildlife and sandy beaches, Sierra Leone has not developed a tourist industry. It remains a country with much potential still to be harvested.

Outamba-Kilimi National Park in northern Sierra Leone has one of the largest concentrations of chimpanzees in West Africa

