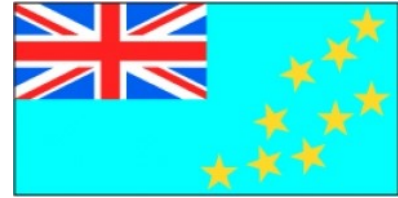




# Tuvalu

*Joined the Commonwealth 1978 - visited by the Queen in 1982*



**Tuvalu is a tiny Polynesian island nation south of the equator in the western Pacific**

Pop: (2013) 10,000

Capital: Funafuti

Area: 26 sq km

Tuvalu (formerly known as the Ellice Islands) is made up of 8 islands and a number of atolls that extend in a chain 595 km long. None of the islands is over 4.5m high and there is only 8 km of road in the entire country. There is a deep water lagoon at Funafuti offering shelter for ships and the ferries that ply between the islands. Hot and humid year round, Tuvalu depends on its high rainwater or desalination for drinking water there are no streams and the ground water is not safe to drink.

Tuvalu, one of the smallest countries in the world, has few resources and is too scattered and remote for any major tourism though diving and swimming with turtles is popular among visitors, mainly backpackers. One source of income is the lease, until 2026, of its internet domain to a US company. Ship registry and the issue of stamps are other sources of revenue.

*A young mangrove plantation to protect the island's shores from erosion*

