

IVORY COAST



Country Dialling Code (Tel/Fax): ++225

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Capital: Yamoussoukro **Time:** UTC 0 (5 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Background: Close ties to France since independence in 1960, the development of cocoa production for export, and foreign investment made Cote d'Ivoire one of the most prosperous of the West African states, but did not protect it from political turmoil. In December 1999, a military coup - the first ever in Cote d'Ivoire's history - overthrew the government. Junta leader Robert GUEI blatantly rigged elections held in late 2000 and declared himself the winner. Popular protest forced him to step aside and brought Laurent GBAGBO into power. Ivorian dissidents and disaffected members of the military launched a failed coup attempt in September 2002. Rebel forces claimed the northern half of the country, and in January 2003 were granted ministerial positions in a unity government under the auspices of the Linas-Marcoussis Peace Accord. President GBAGBO and rebel forces resumed implementation of the peace accord in December 2003 after a three-month stalemate, but issues that sparked the civil war, such as land reform and grounds for citizenship, remained unresolved. In March 2007 President GBAGBO and former New Force rebel leader Guillaume SORO signed the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. As a result of the agreement, SORO joined GBAGBO's government as Prime Minister and the two agreed to reunite the country by dismantling the zone of confidence separating North from South, integrate rebel forces into the national armed forces, and hold elections. Several thousand French and UN troops remain in Cote d'Ivoire to help the parties implement their commitments and to support the peace process.

Location: Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Ghana and Liberia.

Map References: [Africa](#)

Area: total: 322,460 sq km, land: 318,000 sq km, water: 4,460 sq km

Climate: tropical along coast, semiarid in far north; three seasons - warm and dry (November to March), hot and dry (March to May), hot and wet (June to October).

Terrain: mostly flat to undulating plains; mountains in northwest.

Natural Resources: petroleum, natural gas, diamonds, manganese, iron ore, cobalt, bauxite, copper, gold, nickel, tantalum, silica sand, clay, cocoa beans, coffee, palm oil, hydropower

Population: 20,179,602 (July 2008 est.)

Nationality: noun: Ivoirian(s), adjective: Ivoirian.

Ethnic Groups: Akan 42.1%, Voltaiques or Gur 17.6%, Northern Mandes 16.5%, Krous 11%, Southern Mandes 10%, other 2.8% (includes 130,000 Lebanese and 14,000 French) (1998).

Religions: Muslim 38.6%, Christian 32.8%, indigenous 11.9%, none 16.7% (2008 est) *note:* the majority of foreigners (migratory workers) are Muslim (70%) and Christian (20%)

Languages: French (official), 60 native dialects with Dioula the most widely spoken.

Economy: Cote d'Ivoire is the world's largest producer and exporter of cocoa beans and a significant producer and exporter of coffee and palm oil. Consequently, the economy is highly sensitive to fluctuations in international prices for these products, and, to a lesser extent, in climatic conditions. Despite government attempts to diversify the economy, it is still heavily dependent on agriculture and related activities, engaging roughly 68% of the population. Since 2006, oil and gas production have become more important engines of economic activity than cocoa. According to IMF statistics, earnings from oil and refined products were \$1.3 billion in 2006, while cocoa-related revenues were \$1 billion during the same period. Cote d'Ivoire's offshore oil and gas production has resulted in substantial crude oil exports and provides sufficient natural gas to fuel electricity exports to Ghana, Togo, Benin, Mali and Burkina Faso. Oil exploration by a number of consortiums of private companies continues offshore, and

President GBAGBO has expressed hope that daily crude output could reach 200,000 barrels per day (b/d) by the end of the decade. Since the end of the civil war in 2003, political turmoil has continued to damage the economy, resulting in the loss of foreign investment and slow economic growth. GDP grew by 1.8% in 2006 and 1.7% in 2007. Per capita income has declined by 15% since 1999.

Industries: foodstuffs, beverages; wood products, oil refining, truck and bus assembly, textiles, fertilizer, building materials, electricity, ship construction and repair.

Railways: total: 660 km, narrow gauge: 660 km 1,000 meter gauge, note: an additional 622 km of this railroad extends into Burkina Faso (2006).

Currency: Communauté Financière Africaine franc (XOF); note - responsible authority is the Central Bank of the West African States.

Roadways: total: 80,000 km, paved: 6,500 km, unpaved: 73,500 km, note: includes intercity and urban roads; another 20,000 km of dirt roads are in poor condition and 150,000 km of dirt roads are impassable (2006).

Waterways: 980 km (navigable rivers, canals, and numerous coastal lagoons) (2006).

Airports: 34 (2007)

Visa: Visa not required for stay up to 90 days by most nationalities including Australia, USA and UK.

Duty Free: 200 cigarettes or 25 cigars or 250g of tobacco or 100 cigarillos.

One bottle of wine. One bottle of spirits. 0.5l of toilet water. 0.25l of perfume.

Health: The Ministry of Health of Côte D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) has recently reported an outbreak of yellow fever in and around the city of Abidjan. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) recommends that travellers get vaccinated against yellow fever and protect themselves from mosquito bites when going to this country.

HOTELS•MOTELS•INNS

ABIDJAN

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