GEOGRAPHY

Tonga is an archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean. It is located south of Samoa and about two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand. Only about 40 of Tonga’s some 170 islands are inhabited. Geologically, the Tongan islands are of two types: most have a limestone base formed from uplifted coral formations, whereas others consist of limestone overlaying a volcanic base. Tonga’s high volcanic and low coral forms give the islands a unique character. Some volcanoes are still active, for instance, Falcon Island is a submerged volcano that erupts periodically, its lava and ash rising above sea level forming a visible island which disappears when the eruption is over.

CLIMATE

Tonga’s climate is tropical, but slightly cooler than in most tropical areas. Average monthly temperatures range from 23 to 27 °C. The warm season lasts from December to April with highs above 32 °C. During the cooler months, temperatures rarely rise above 27 °C. The tropical cyclone season mostly coincides with the warm and rainy season from November to April. Average annual rainfall is below 1,700 mm, with February and March the wettest months. (World Bank, 2020) Tonga is second on the list of countries most at risk according to the United Nations University (2020) World Risk Index.

ECONOMY

All land is owned by the Tongan monarchy, but some plots have been divided among the country's nobles. Tonga has a large non-monetary sector and is heavily dependent on remittances sent by the country's population living and working abroad. Remittances accounted for almost 35 per cent of GDP in 2019 (UNCTAD, 2021). The country attracted 94 thousand tourist arrivals in 2019 with an inbound tourism expenditure of 10 per cent over GDP (UNWTO, 2021). Manufacturing consists of handicrafts and a few other very small-scale industries. Agriculture, forestry and fishery provides 24 per cent of employment (ILO, 2020a) and almost the same share of GDP (UNCTAD, 2021). Agricultural products include bananas, coconuts, coffee beans, vanilla beans and root crops such as cassava, sweet potato and taro. The main export destinations include New Zealand, the United States of America and China.

CULTURE

Religion is an important aspect of Tongan society, and most Tongan families are members of a Christian church. Tongan ritual surrounding the drinking of kava, a mildly narcotic drink, has survived despite western influence. Traditional dancing is an important part of ceremonies and parties. In the popular paddle dance, called me’etu’upaki, dancers carry paddle-shaped boards painted or carved with likenesses of the human body.

Tongans quite literally live from the land. They are highly self-reliant and eat many locally grown and hand-picked fruits, such as breadfruits, coconuts, bananas, mandarins, papayas, lemons, passion fruits and guavas. Lemon leaves are also used for tea. Vegetables such as taro, cassava, kumara and yam are diet staples. Tongans also depend on the ocean, which provides fish, octopus, clams, shellfish and sea cucumbers. Fresh coconut milk is often used in cooking.

Rugby is the national sport in Tonga. Sumo wrestling is also very popular. Tongan athletes have competed at both Summer and Winter Olympics.
**ECONOMIC TRENDS**

**Gross domestic product**  
US dollars at constant prices (2015) in millions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GDP per capita**  
2019  
US$4,865

**Productive Capacity Index**  
2018: 33.0

**Economic and environmental vulnerability index**  
2019: 43

**Consumer Price Index growth**  
2019: 3.3%

**Unemployment rate**  
2018: Total 3.1%
Female 3.6%, Male 2.6%

**Main economic sectors, 2019**  
Percentage of GDP

- Services
- Industry
- Agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing

**Tourist arrivals**  
Thousands of tourists, percentage of GDP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of tourists</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of GDP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**External financial resources**  
Percentage of GDP

**Public debt as % of GDP**  
2018: 42.9%
## MARITIME TRANSPORT

### Fleet size
Number of ships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ship type</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total fleet</td>
<td>1,407</td>
<td>1,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil tankers</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk carriers</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General cargo</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container ships</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other types of ships</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Port performance
Ranked by 2019 data within SIDS group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>SIDS Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of port calls</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median time in port (days)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age of vessels</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average size (GT) of vessels</td>
<td>7,227</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bilateral connectivity index, 2019
Top 5 partners

- Samoa: 0.00
- American Samoa: 0.00
- Fiji: 0.10
- Vanuatu: 0.07
- French Polynesia: 0.00

### Container port throughput
2019: 76,854 TEU

### Liner shipping connectivity index
Maximum China Q1 2006=100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1 2006</th>
<th>Q1 2008</th>
<th>Q1 2010</th>
<th>Q1 2012</th>
<th>Q1 2014</th>
<th>Q1 2016</th>
<th>Q1 2018</th>
<th>Q1 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POPULATION

Total population
Thousands of people, share of urban population

Population development indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty headcount (% of population)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human development index</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human assets index</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy rate (15+ years, both sexes %)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender inequality index</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Life expectancy at birth 2019: 71 years
Population density 2019: 145 persons per km²
Dependency ratio 2019:
- Child: 59.5
- Old-age: 10.1

Age structure by gender, 2019
Percentage of total population
INTERMATIONAL TRADE

Merchandise and services trade
US dollars in millions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2019 (% of GDP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise exports</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise imports</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services exports</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services imports</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trade openness
Goods and services
2019

Export concentration
index
2019

Food import
dependency
Average
2015-2019

40% of GDP
0.38
18.91

Top 5 partners in merchandise trade, 2019
Exports in millions US dollars

- New Zealand
- United States of America
- China, Taiwan Province of
- Korea, Republic of
- Japan

Merchandise exports by product group, 2019

Services exports by category, 2019

No data available

Agricultural raw materials
All food items
Fuels
Manufactured goods
Ores, metals, precious stones and non-monetary gold
ENVIRONMENT

**CO₂ emissions per capita**
Kg per capita

**CO₂ emissions per GDP**
Kg per 2010 US$ of GDP

Renewable energy share in total energy consumption, 2017
Percentage of total energy consumption

Disasters indicators
Data not available

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade in ICT goods</th>
<th>Trade in ICT services</th>
<th>Share of internet users</th>
<th>Fixed broadband vs Mobile broadband subscriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Number of subscriptions per 100 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports: 0.8%</td>
<td>Exports: 16.3%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports: 10.2%</td>
<td>Imports: 6.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports: 16.3%</td>
<td>Exports: 6.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>Fixed: 0, Mobile: 75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COUNTRY PROFILES

Development and Globalization: Facts and Figures 2021

Tonga

Sources
Source of data: UNCTAD (2021) except indicators listed below.
- Adult literacy rate: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2021)
- Distance to nearest neighbour: [NO_PRINTED_FORM] (Package “cshapes,” 2016) https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/cshapes/index.html
- Economic losses due to disasters: United Nations (2021) https://www.sdg.org/datasets/e3adb24062e2e452b81f3f654a276f6c5ca_0
- Material footprint: UNEP (2021) https://environmentlive.unep.org/indicator/index/12_2_1
- Number of people affected by disasters: United Nations (2021) https://www.sdg.org/datasets/1beb260e9c1a14754b391b815e4874990_0