

# Grenada



## KEY FACTS

Joined Commonwealth:	1974
Population:	104,000 (2009)
GDP p.c. growth:	3.1% p.a. 1990–2009
Official language:	English
Time:	GMT minus 4hr
Currency:	Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC\$)

## Geography

Area:	344.5 sq km
Coastline:	121km
Capital:	St George's

Grenada consists of the island of Grenada, the most southerly of the Windwards in the Eastern Caribbean, and some of the southern Grenadine islands, the largest of which is Carriacou (33 sq km). Its Caribbean neighbours include St Vincent and the Grenadines (which includes the more northern Grenadines) and Trinidad and Tobago.

**Main towns:** St George's (capital, pop. 5,200 in 2009), Gouyave (3,000), Grenville (2,400), Victoria (2,300), St David's and Sauteurs on Grenada; and Hillsborough (800) on Carriacou.

**Topography:** Mountains, chiefly of volcanic origin, form a backbone stretching the 33km length of the island and rise to 840m at Mount St Catherine. The terrain slopes down to the coast on the east and south-east. The island is watered by its many streams and springs, and a small lake, Grand Etang, occupies an old crater at 530m.

**Climate:** The tropical climate is especially pleasant in the dry season (February to May) when the trade winds prevail. The rainy season runs from June to December, when hurricanes may occur and in some years – for example, Hurricane Ivan in 2004 – cause extensive damage. The temperature and rainfall vary with altitude, with much heavier rainfall in the mountains.

**Vegetation:** The natural vegetation is tropical rainforest (about 75% of surviving natural forest is state-owned) and brushwood. Species include the gommier, bois canot and blue mahoe. There are also mangrove swamps and stunted woods. Forest covers some 12% of the land area.

**Wildlife:** Mainly smaller species, such as the mona monkey, agouti, armadillo and mongoose. There is a large variety of birds; the Grenada dove and hookbilled kite (an endangered species) are unique to the island.

## did you know?

Grenada is an archipelago comprising the island of Grenada – the most southerly of the Windward Islands in the Eastern Caribbean – and some of the Southern Grenadines.

Grenada is the world's second largest producer of nutmeg after Indonesia; a symbol of a clove of nutmeg is on the national flag.

**Transport:** There are 1,127km of roads, 61% paved. In the mountainous terrain roads are often narrow and winding.

St George's is a deep-water port. Anchorage and facilities for yachts are offered at St George's (at the Lagoon), Prickly Bay on the south-east coast and Secret Harbour, south of St George's. The port for the Grenadine island of Carriacou is at Hillsborough and ferry services run between Grenada and other islands.

Point Salines International Airport is 11km south of St George's in the south-west of Grenada and there is a small airport at Lauriston on Carriacou.

## Society

### KEY FACTS 2009

Population per sq km: 301  
 Life expectancy: 76 years  
 Net primary enrolment: 93%

**Population:** 104,000 (2009); 39% lives in urban areas; growth 0.3% p.a. 1990–2009; birth rate 20 per 1,000 people (28 in 1970); life expectancy 76 years (64 in 1970).

Most of the population is of African (82% in 1991 census) or mixed African/European descent (13%). The remainder is made up of small European and Asian groups.

**Language:** English is spoken by almost everyone. A French-based Creole is also spoken.

**Religion:** Mainly Christians (Roman Catholics 45%, Anglicans 14%, Seventh Day Adventists, Methodists).

**Media:** There are no daily newspapers, but *The Grenada Guardian*, *The Grenada Informer*, *The Grenada Times* and *The Grenadian Voice* are weeklies; all in English.

A public–private partnership, the Grenada Broadcasting Network, provides radio and television stations. MTV is privately owned and there are several privately-owned radio stations.

There are 241 internet users per 1,000 people (2009).

**Education:** There are 12 years of compulsory education starting at age five. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five. The school year starts in September.

Tertiary education facilities include the T A Marryshow Community College, a branch of the extra-mural department of the regional University of the West Indies and St George's University, an offshore American university specialising in medicine. The University of the West Indies has its main campuses in Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Other post-secondary institutions include the Grenada National College, the Technical and Vocational Institute, the Teacher Training College and the Institute for Further Education.

**Health:** There are three hospitals: General Hospital (St George's), Princess Alice Hospital (St Andrew's) and Princess Royal Hospital (Carriacou). There are homes for handicapped children and geriatric patients. Health centres and district medical stations undertake maternity and child welfare work under the charge of a nurse/midwife. Government hospitals and clinics provide free medical and dental treatment. There is a piped-water supply to all the towns and to many of the villages. Infant mortality was 13 per 1,000 live births in 2009.

**Communications:** Country code 1 473; internet domain '.gd'. Coin- and card-operated payphones are widely available. There are internet cafes in St George's. The main post office is in St George's.

There are 275 main telephone lines and 616 mobile phone subscriptions per 1,000 people (2009).

**Public holidays:** New Year's Day, Independence Day (7 February), Labour Day (1 May), Emancipation Day (first Monday in August), Carnival (second Monday and Tuesday in August), Thanksgiving Day (25 October), Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

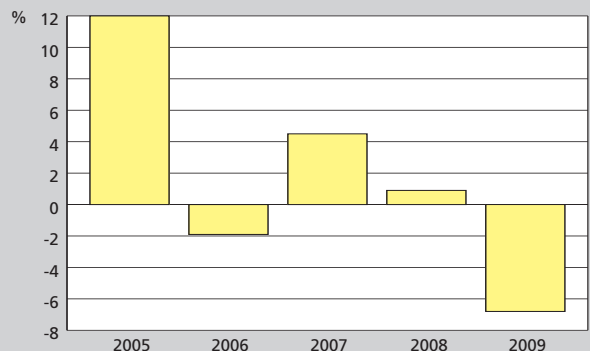
Religious festivals whose dates vary from year to year include Good Friday, Easter Monday, Whit Monday and Corpus Christi.

## Economy

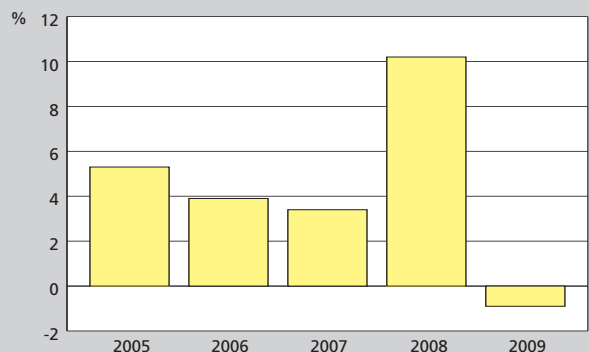
### KEY FACTS 2009

GNI: US\$580m  
 GNI p.c.: US\$5,580  
 GDP growth: 1.6% p.a. 2005–09  
 Inflation: 4.3% p.a. 2005–09

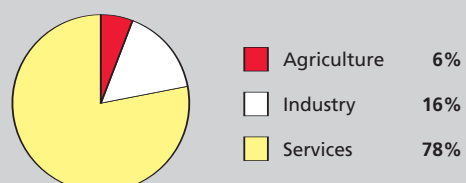
Real Growth in GDP



Inflation



GDP by Sector (2009)



**Overview:** The economy of Grenada (the ‘spice island’) is based on agriculture, notably nutmeg and mace, and tourism. Consequently it has an outward-looking and open economy, and enjoyed strong growth during the 1990s, even though the world market for spices was sluggish during most of the decade and tourism became increasingly competitive. Grenada is nonetheless vulnerable, its economy being so small, and high public expenditure has brought fiscal difficulties.

An IMF-backed economic adjustment programme was put in place in the 1990s, with fiscal reform, privatisation and staff reductions in the public sector to reduce the deficit, and improve the debt position. The government has encouraged development of industry to broaden the country’s economic base, but Grenada’s small scale and high costs hinder progress.

A small offshore sector was established in the 1990s including internet gaming companies, but it failed to flourish in the 2000s. A US university, St George’s University, with 800 mainly North American students, also brings in substantial foreign exchange.

After three years of strong growth, the economy stalled in 2001, reflecting the US economic downturn and fall in tourism, only picking up again in 2003. In September 2004 Grenada was devastated by Hurricane Ivan and the economy stalled again. In 2005, despite the impact of another hurricane, Emily, economic growth resumed, driven by construction activity including reconstruction and new tourism projects. However, by 2008 Grenada’s economy was feeling the impact of the global recession and, in 2009, there was a sharp fall in tourism.

**Trade:** Main exports are manufactured goods, bananas, nutmeg, mace, cardamom, fish and cocoa.

## Constitution

<b>Status:</b>	Monarchy under Queen Elizabeth II
<b>Legislature:</b>	Parliament
<b>Independence:</b>	7 February 1974

Grenada is a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as head of state. She is represented by a governor-general. A parliamentary democracy, Grenada has a bicameral legislature. The House of Representatives has 15 members elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term, and the Senate 13 members appointed for a five-year term by the governor-general in consultation with the prime minister and the leader of the opposition. The prime minister appoints the cabinet.

## Politics

<b>Last elections:</b>	July 2008
<b>Next elections:</b>	2013
<b>Head of state:</b>	Queen Elizabeth II, represented by governor-general, Sir Carlyle Arnold Glean (2008–)
<b>Head of government:</b>	Prime Minister Tillman Thomas
<b>Ruling party:</b>	National Democratic Congress

In the elections in 1990 no single party gained an overall majority and another merger, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), formed the government under Nicholas Brathwaite.

The 1995 elections, contested by seven parties, were narrowly won by the New National Party (NNP), now led by Dr Keith Mitchell, who became prime minister. The NNP gained eight seats, the NDC, now led by George Brizan, five and the Grenada United Labour Party (GULP), two seats.

Two no-confidence motions following the elections were unsuccessful. However, in May 1997, five opposition parties, including the NDC, GULP and the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) formed an alliance to provide a common front against the NNP, leaving the government with a majority of one.

In November 1998 the foreign and legal affairs minister and party chairman, Raphael Fletcher, defected to GULP, leaving NNP with only seven of the 15 seats in the House of Representatives and obliged to call elections in January 1999, 17 months before the end of its full five-year term. The government’s record of economic management, reflected in the growing economy, was rewarded by a landslide victory with 62% of the votes – it was not only the first time a party had taken all 15 seats, but also the first time for any party to have won two successive elections.

In another early election in November 2003 Mitchell and NNP were returned for a third term. NNP won eight seats, with 48% of the votes, and NDC seven, with 46%, following a recount in two constituencies where the margin was very small.

In the July 2008 election, Mitchell failed in a bid to secure an unprecedented fourth consecutive term. In a relatively peaceful election, monitored by a strong contingent from the Organization of American States, where the main issues were concerned with management of the economy, NDC took 11 of the 15 House of Representatives seats and 51% of votes; NNP won four seats and 48% of votes. Tillman Thomas – NDC leader since 2000 – became prime minister.

## International relations

Grenada is a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, Association of Caribbean States, Caribbean Community, Non-Aligned Movement, Organization of American States, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, United Nations and World Trade Organization.

## Traveller information

**Local laws and conventions:** British, French and African cultures combine in the local culture of Grenada, and the Roman Catholic Church has a strong influence on the way of life.

Dress is casual but beachwear must be confined to the beach and not worn in town. It is an offence for anyone, including children, to dress in camouflage clothing.

There are very severe penalties for all drug offences. Visitors must ensure they pack their own luggage and do not carry anything for a third party.

All business correspondence is in English and dress should be formal for business appointments. There are a number of hotels that offer meeting facilities. Office hours are Mon–Thur

0800–1500, Fri 0800–1700. Government offices are generally closed from 1200–1300.

**Immigration and customs:** Visas are not required for citizens of the EU, USA and Australia for visits of up to three months. Entry requirements should be checked.

Passports need to be valid for six months from the date of departure from Grenada. Visitors are advised to copy the photopage and the entry stamp from their passport and to keep their passport with them at all times or in a hotel safe. There is a departure tax.

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required by all travellers who have come from infected areas.

Narcotics, arms and ammunition, fruit, vegetables, meat and soil are prohibited imports. Licensed firearms must be declared and a local licence obtained from the police.

**Travel within the country:** Driving is on the left and visitors will need to purchase a local driving permit (around EC\$30 for three months) after presentation of a full driving licence. Drivers must be over the age of 25. Four-wheel drive vehicles can be hired and are

recommended given the terrain. Many roads are steep with hairpin bends.

Minibuses are a relatively cheap and fast means of travel. Standard fares do exist but it is best to confirm the price with the driver. Taxis are available from the airport and most hotels and are the most efficient means of transport. Buses are inexpensive but slow.

There are regular flights from Grenada to Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Water taxis operate from St George's and there are daily ferry services to the other islands.

**Travel health:** It is recommended that visitors have comprehensive travel insurance that includes an air ambulance, as serious medical conditions may require evacuation. Dengue fever is endemic to Latin America so visitors will need insect repellent and loose-fitting clothing to discourage mosquito bites.

Immunisation against Hepatitis B should be considered and rabies is present. Current advice on the latest immunisation requirements should be checked before travel.



## History

Before the 14th century, Grenada was settled by Caribs, who displaced the earlier population of Arawaks. Christopher Columbus visited the island in 1498 and named it 'Concepcion' (later being named by the Spaniards after their own city, Granada). European settlement was slow to follow, due to the fierce resistance of the warlike Caribs, although Britain and France in particular competed for control. A company of London merchants tried and failed to form a settlement in 1605. The French launched more concerted attacks until, by 1674, they had subdued the Caribs and gained control of the island. By 1753, Grenada was a flourishing French possession, with 100 sugar mills and 12,000 enslaved Africans working the industry. The Caribs had been exterminated.

Britain took over from France in 1763 under the Treaty of Paris and again (having meanwhile lost control) in 1783 under the Treaty of Versailles. Britain introduced the cultivation of cacao, cotton and nutmeg; by the time of the emancipation of slaves (1833), the slave population had reached 24,000.

National political consciousness developed through the labour movement, with the formation of the Grenada Manual and Mental Workers Union. In the new environment, a union organiser, Eric Matthew Gairy, formed the first political party, the pro-union, pro-independence Grenada United Labour Party (GULP). In 1951, GULP won the elections and Gairy became leader of the assembly. The Grenada National Party (GNP), led by Herbert Blaize held power between 1957–61 and 1962–67.

Grenada joined the Federation of the West Indies in 1958. When that was dissolved in 1962, it evolved first into an associated state with full internal self-government (1967), and then towards independence, the core of the GULP platform.

Independence was achieved in 1974; Grenada became a constitutional monarchy, with Gairy as prime minister, and Queen

Elizabeth II as head of state, represented by a governor-general. Strikes during the independence preparations, which almost prevented the transition, were suppressed by, it was claimed, 'Mongoose Gangs' operating in the manner of Haiti's 'Tonton-Macoutes'.

In 1979, while absent in the USA, Gairy was deposed in a coup by opposition leader Maurice Bishop, who took the New Jewel Movement (NJM) into power as the People's Revolutionary Government. The new government created state farms and industries, and forged links with the socialist world. With Cuba's assistance, it began construction of the modern international airport at Point Salines. Within the government, there was discontent on the far left about the pace of change. In 1980 there was an abortive plot to murder Bishop, and anti-government violence increased.

In October 1983, after a military coup in which Bishop, two other ministers, two union leaders and 13 bystanders were killed, Bishop's deputy, Bernard Coard, took control and set up a Revolutionary Military Council. At the request of OECS, in late 1983, the USA then invaded Grenada, supported by a token force of 300 police from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines. The governor-general, Sir Paul Scoon, took control of an interim administration, (almost fully) reinstated the 1974 constitution and organised elections for a new government.

The New National Party (NNP), a four-party merger led by Herbert Blaize and supported by the neighbouring islands, easily defeated Gairy's GULP at the December 1984 general election, and Blaize became prime minister. In the following six years the NNP became increasingly strained by its different components, and Blaize's government came under attack for its use of the Emergency Powers Act of 1987.

Mains water is generally safe and bottled water is widely available. Milk is pasteurised.

**Money:** Barclays Bank, Grenada Bank of Commerce, Grenada National Bank, National Commercial Bank and Scotia Bank are all present in Grenada. American Express, Diners Club, Mastercard and Visa and other major cards are accepted by most shops, car hire companies and hotels. ATMs are available. Banking hours are Mon–Thur 0800–1500, Fri 0800–1700.

There were 113,000 tourist arrivals in 2009.

## Further information

Grenada Government Web Portal: [www.gov.gd](http://www.gov.gd)

Commonwealth Secretariat: [www.thecommonwealth.org](http://www.thecommonwealth.org)

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