

American Samoa

Overview:

Settled as early as 1000 B.C., Samoa was "discovered" by European explorers in the 18th century. International rivalries in the latter half of the 19th century were settled by an 1899 treaty in which Germany and the US divided the Samoan archipelago. The US formally occupied its portion - a smaller group of eastern islands with the excellent harbour of Pago Pago - the following year

Territory:

Land: 199 sq km. Comprised of 5 volcanic islands and two coral atolls (Rose Island, Swain Island) Water: 0 sq. km. Total: 199 sq. km Coastline: 116 km. Highest Point: Lata, 966 m.

Location:

Oceania, group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean, about half way between Hawaii and New Zealand.

Latitude and Longitude:

14 20 S, 170 00 W

Time Zone:

GMT -11

Total Land Area:

199

EEZ:

200

Climate:

Tropical marine, moderated by southeast trade winds; annual rainfall averages about 3 m; rainy season from November to April, dry season from May to October; little seasonal temperature variation. Yearly average temperature is about 81 degrees F or 27 degrees C.

Natural Resources:

pumice, pumicite

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:	
2003	510,000,000.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	
	0.00 USD
2005	5,800.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
	%	%	%

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
	%	%	%
1990	34%	33%	33%

External Aid/Remittances:

Financial support from the US, more than \$40 million

Growth:

n/a

Labour Force:	
2000	13,785
2005	17,630

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
2000	6%

2005	29.8%
------	-------

Industry:

Tuna canneries, hand crafts, agricultural products such as bananas, coconuts, and pineapple

Niche Industry:

Tuna industry, pumicite

Tourism:

Imports and Exports:	
Tot. Value of Imports	309,000,000.00 US\$ (2006)
From Eu:	
Import Partners (EU:)	
Partners Outside EU:	Australia 66%, Samoa 13.8%, NZ 10.8% (2006)
Import Partners:	Australia 66%, Samoa 13.8%, NZ 10.8% (2006)
Tot. Value of Exports	446000000 US\$ (2006)
To Eu:	
Export Partners:	Indonesia 28.2%, India 22.3%, Australia 15.3%, Japan 11.2%, NZ 7.1% (2006)
Partners Outside EU::	Indonesia 28.2%, India 22.3%, Australia 15.3%, Japan 11.2%, NZ 7.1% (2006)
Export Partners:	
Main Imports:	materials for canneries 56%, food 8%, petroleum products 7%, machinery and parts 6% (2004 est.)
Main Exports:	canned tuna 93% (2004 est.)

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS

External:

Number of Airports: 1

There is only one paved airport (Pago Pago) in American Samoa with international connections

Number of Main Ports:

Pago Pago is one of the best natural harbours in the south Pacific, easily accessible by cargo ships.

Internal:

Air

Road:

There is only 185 km of roads, but car hire, taxis, and tour buses are available

Sea:

Other Forms of Transportation:

Economic Zones:

n/a

Energy Policy:

n/a

Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Type			Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Sector				
		Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)		Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)
2005	180	0	0	0	167	0	0	0	0	0

Official Currency:

US Dollar

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions:

Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:
Number of Insurance Companies:

Several mainland banks have branches on American Samoa with international connections, providing a wide range of financial services

Financial Services:

Communications/E-Commerce:

Open and outward. Websites and publications on economic data from both public and private institutions are available.

Public Ownership:

About 90 percent of the land is communally owned by aiga. The existing tenure law on communal lands prohibits alienation of any real property except freehold land to any person whose blood is less than one-half Samoan. Unless the Governor approves the transfer in writing, it is unlawful for any matai of a Samoan family to alienate any family lands to any person or lease it for any term more than 55 years. ASG estimates that 1.5625 square miles of American Samoa's total area of 76.1 square miles are freehold land.

Land Use:

arable land: 10% permanent crops: 15% other: 75%

Agriculture/Forestry:

bananas, coconuts, vegetables, taro, breadfruit, yams, copra, pineapples, papayas; dairy products, livestock

Marine Activity:

Fishing:

territorial sea: 12 nm exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Marine Life:

Critical Issues:

Limited natural fresh water resources; the water division of the government has spent substantial funds in the past few years to improve water catchments and pipelines. Small population and unstable labour force affects economic development.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:

Political System:

The American Samoa Constitution provides for an elected governor, lieutenant governor, and legislature. The governor and lieutenant governor are elected for four years. Up until 1951, the Governor of American Samoa was appointed by the U.S. Department of the Navy. In 1956, the Secretary of the Interior appointed the first native Samoan Governor, the Honorable Peter Tali Coleman. In 1977 American Samoa, for the first time, elected their own governor and lieutenant governor by popular vote. The bicameral legislature of American Samoa, known as the Fono, is comprised of a Senate and House of Representatives. The Senate consists of 18 members who are chosen according to Samoan custom in each of the 14 political counties. Senators hold office for a four-year term, and representatives, for a two-year term. The House of Representatives consists of 20 members who are elected by popular vote. Swains Island has one non-voting member who is elected in an open meeting of the island residents. The legislature convenes for 45-day sessions twice yearly. The Member of Congress from American Samoa, possesses in the standing Committees of the House, the same powers and privileges as regular Representatives, with the exception of voting on the House floor.

Political Parties:

Democratic Party, Republican Party

Important Legislation:

Constitution of American Samoa, approved June 2, 1967. This document outlines specific powers, structures, jurisdiction, and rights of the American Samoan government and citizens. Important document to outline specific structures and responsibilities of the government.

Principal Taxes:

n/a

Associated Power:

United States

Citizenship:

US

Paradiplomacy:

Interpol (subbureau), International Olympic Committee (IOC), Universal Postal Union (UPU)

HUMAN RESOURCES

Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
--------	---------------	------------	-----------------------

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
2000	22212	9,699	18,435	5,044	1,901

Migration:



Net Migration (2004): -20.7 migrants/1 000 population

Crude Birth Rate:	
2007	21.83%

Life Expectancy:

total population: 75.62 years male: 72.05 years female: 79.41 years

Crude Death Rate:	
2007	3.24%

Ethnicity:

Samoaan (Polynesian) 89%, Caucasian 2%, Tongan 4%, other 5%

Class Division:

n/a

Languages:

Samoaan (closely related to Hawaiian and other Polynesian languages), English note: most people are bilingual

Religion:

Christian Congregationalist 50%, Roman Catholic 20%, Protestant and other 30%

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write total population: 97% male: 98% female: 97%

Education System:

In 1996, American Samoa had 102 educational institutions, including private and public institutions and pre-schools. In the same year, 18,497 students were enrolled in grades I-II). American Samoa Community College (1,463 enrollees as of fall term 1994) is a two-year institution which also provides a four-year program leading to a bachelor of science degree in education.

Total Pre-schools:(1996)	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	
Second Level:	
Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island:										
	Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv
American Samoa	29	11	35	35		6	6	1	1	6

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University
2006	2,038	12,416	5,074	0	1,607

Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			
2006	140	45	460	0	213	0	0

Medical Services:

LBJ Medical Center, a 140-bed hospital on the island of Tutuila, provides dental, general medical, and emergency care services to the residents of American Samoa. Persons requiring extensive special health care are transferred to Hawaii or New Zealand.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

The Samoan people are Polynesians whose ancestors settled the archipelago about 3,000 years ago. The people who brought the Lapita Cultural Complex to the Samoan archipelago were seafarers who had occupied islands at least as far west as the Admiralties off the north shore of New Guinea. Archaeological sites dating from the early period of occupation are primarily habitation sites and are expected to be mostly coastal (e.g., Kirch & Hunt eds. 1993; Clark & Michlovic 1996). Material remains in these sites can include some or all of the following: pottery (the classic Lapita pottery is decorated with motifs impressed into the clay with dentate stamps), basalt flakes and tools, volcanic glass, shell fishhooks and tools for their manufacture, shell ornaments, and faunal remains. The colonizers of these islands brought domesticated pigs, dogs and chickens with them, and probably also the Polynesian rat (*Rattus exulans*). Domesticated plants were transported for cultivation. This period is represented in American Samoa by deeply stratified archaeological sites such as To'aga on Ofu (Kirch & Hunt eds. 1993) and 'Aoa on Tutuila (Clark & Michlovic 1996). While early sites on some other islands in Polynesia are now beneath water (e.g., the Mulifanua Lapita Pottery site on 'Upolu [Green & Davidson 1967]), the evidence to date indicates that early sites in American Samoa will be found on the shores of prehistoric embankments that have subsequently filled in with sand. No sites from this period are listed on the National Register, although the two mentioned above both meet National Register Criteria A and D. Archaeological sites representing the early occupation of Samoa will be targeted for future National Register nominations. It has been conventionally accepted that pottery manufacture ceased in Samoa sometime shortly after A.D. 300 (see Clark & Michlovic 1996 for a summary of the conventional view; A.D. 800 is proposed in Kirch & Hunt eds. 1993). However, recent research by Clark in 'Aoa valley has revealed pottery in stratigraphic contexts dating as late as the 16th century (Clark & Michlovic 1996). This might explain why there was an apparent "dark ages" in Samoan prehistory - pottery bearing sites were all assumed to date to the earliest period of Samoan prehistory and hence charcoal was often not collected from upper pottery bearing deposits for dating. Therefore the period between about A.D. 300 and 1000 requires further definition in the study of Samoan prehistory before typical site types can be discussed. One site type that was probably utilized during this period are the stone quarries. To date 4 large and about 6 smaller quarries have been identified on Tutuila Island. One of the large quarries, Tatagamatau, is listed on the National Register and two others are being nominated. Basalt from Tutuila has been found in Taumako, Tokelau, Fiji, Western Samoa, the Manu'a Islands (Best et.al. 1992) and the Cook Islands (Walter 1990; Kirch & Weisler pers. comm. 1994). The quarries continued to be utilized into the early historic period, when iron tools introduced by Europeans began to replace the locally made stone tools. One of the significant stone tool type manufactured from basalt extracted from these quarries were adzes. Large quantities of basalt debris have been found in various village sites (e.g., Maloata [Ayers & Eisler 1987] and Tulauta [Frost 1978; Clark 1980; Brophy 1986]). Polishing the adzes was a final step in their production; large basalt boulders were used for this finishing. Boulders used for this activity generally have smooth dish-shaped concave areas on them and sometimes grooves in which the adz bits were sharpened. These boulders are found in archaeological sites (such as Maloata and Tulauta), in streams, and elsewhere on the island landscape. Grinding stones have been found in the Manu'a islands. No quarries have been identified in Manu'a, though researchers have looked. Most of the prehistoric surface remains in American Samoa date to the later period of Samoan prehistory. During this period, warfare over titled positions on the islands of Western Samoa influenced events on Tutuila. Tutuila was at times under the jurisdiction of the eastern districts of 'Upolu, and Tutuilans may have been required by chiefs on 'Upolu to fight in their wars. Warfare was also prevalent among the Manu'a islands. Oral traditions in the Manu'a islands refer to leaders of islands to the west (Fiji, Western Samoa, etc.) visiting Manu'a on sometimes hostile missions. Defensive fortification sites, often located high on ridges and mountains, are characteristic of this period. These fortifications were used as refuges to which those individuals not directly involved moved and where the warriors retreated when necessary (Williams 1984). A large defensive wall on the Tafuna Plain, Tutuila Island, is currently being nominated to the National Register, and a fortification site on Ofu will be nominated in FY97. When not at war in later prehistory Samoans lived in villages; in American Samoa these were mostly in coastal areas. Many of these villages are still occupied today. In some cases the remains are still visible on the surface while in other places the evidence of prehistoric use is all below the ground surface. The late prehistoric sites at Maloata (Ayers & Eisler 1987) and Fagatele Bay (Frost 1978), both on Tutuila, and Faga on Ta'u, are village sites from this time period that are being nominated to the National Register. The ideal layout of a Samoan village was a central open space, called a malae, surrounded by meeting houses, chiefs' houses, other residences and cooking houses. Quarries continued to be used during this time period. The final prominent site type from late prehistory are *tia seu lupe*, called star mounds in English. These mounds were usually constructed of stone, had one or more rays, and were used for the sport of pigeon catching by chiefs. No star mounds have been nominated to the National Register to date, though they are eligible. The first recorded European contact occurred in 1722, when Dutch navigator Jacob Roggeveen sighted several of the islands. He was followed by French explorers Louis-Antoine de Bougainville in 1768 and Jean-François de La Pârouse in 1787. A monument in Aasu, Massacre Bay, to the 12 members of La Pârouse's crew who were killed there, is on the National Register. The first European Christian missionary, Englishman John Williams of the London Missionary Society, arrived in 1830. He and his followers had a profound impact on the Samoans and their culture. The National Register sites Atauloma Girl's School and Fagalele Boy's School at the western end of Tutuila were built by the LMS for the education of Samoan children in Christian life. Other Pacific Islanders came to Samoa as missionaries during this period (e.g., Society and Cook Islanders working with the London Missionary Society, Tongans working with the Methodists). European traders and military personnel also affected Samoans. Historic properties in American Samoa that are associated with Euro-Americans, both military (discussed below) and otherwise, are usually distinctive in their use of some sort of concrete materials. Historic properties from the last two centuries that are associated primarily with Samoans tend to be very much like prehistoric Samoan remains. Fortifications, ceased to be used once the European powers eliminated local warfare. Quarries were abandoned with the introduction of metal tools, and star mounds ceased to be used due to the influence of the missionaries; however, villages retained their basic structure. When the Samoan Islands were partitioned according to the provisions of the Tripartite Convention in 1899, the United States acquired the eastern islands, while Germany took control of 'Upolu, Savai'i, Manono and Apolima, whose total area is 1,120 square miles. These islands now comprise the Independent State of Western Samoa, which New Zealand forces wrested from the Germans in 1914, maintaining control of them until 1962. Under U.S. Navy control from 1900 to 1951, American Samoa was initially a coaling station for the fleet in the Age of Steam. During World War II, the "U.S. Naval Station Tutuila", now a Historic District listed on the National Register, was the headquarters of the Samoan Defense Group, which included several adjacent island groups, and was the largest of the Pacific defense groups. As the war moved north and west, American Samoa became a strategic backwater. Historic properties from World War II are found throughout the islands in the form of military facilities such as medical facilities, the Tafuna Air Base, the Marine Training facility in Leone, and pillboxes that dot the coastlines. In the postwar era, American Samoa's military importance continued to decline, and in 1951, the Territory was transferred to the Department of the Interior, under whose control it remains. In 1954 the Van Camp Seafood Co. of California opened a cannery on the eastern shore of Pago Bay, followed some years later by Starkist Inc. The canneries make significant contributions to the economy of American Samoa and employment opportunities draw people from Western Samoa. The fishing industry has also involved other minority groups, such as Japanese and Korean fishermen. From 1951 until 1977, Territorial Governors were appointed by the Secretary of the Interior; since 1977, they have been elected by universal suffrage.

Referenda:

n/a

Recent Significant Events:

n/a

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

Sources:

CIA World Factbook. 'American Samoa.' May 17, 2005. Available Online. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/aq.html>. May 2005.
Department of the Interior; Office of Insular Affairs. Available online. <http://www.doi.gov/oia> Government of American Samoa. Available online. <http://www.asg.gov.net/> OIA Statistics Online. Available online. <http://www.pacificweb.org/> Pacific Regional Information System (PRISM). Available online. <http://www.spc.int/prism/index.htm>

American Samoa Statistical Yearbook 2006 <http://www.asdoc.info/fnl06yrbkhome.pdf>



Useful Links:

IslandStudies.ca
www.upei.ca
www.google.ca

Please address queries to:
Institute of Island Studies
University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI)
550 University Ave
Charlottetown, PE, Canada, C1A 4P3

Copyright 2007. Institute of Island
Studies, UPEI. Educational and
Non-Commercial Use Only