



Country Profile: Lesotho

Lesotho is a constitutional monarchy with a democratically elected lower house of parliament. The upper house, the Senate, is comprised of appointed hereditary chiefs and politicians. A Prime Minister is the head of the government. Geographically, Lesotho is an extremely mountainous developing nation completely surrounded by the country of South Africa. The capital, Maseru, is at 5,000 feet (1,500M) above sea level, and the mountains reach to 11,400 feet (3,500M). Facilities for tourism are limited. A limited number of restaurants are available in Maseru. Read the Department of State [Background Notes](#) on Lesotho for additional information.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW



Country Name:	Lesotho
Continent:	Africa
Capital City:	Maseru
Boundary Countries:	South Africa
Recommended Hospitals in Capital:	Maseru: Maseru Private Hospital, Queen Elizabeth II Hospital
Main Cities:	Maseru, Leribe, Qacha's Nek, Quthing, Mochale's Hoek, Mafeteng, Thaba-Tseka, Teyateyaneng, Mokhotlong
Country Size:	30,355 sq km
Population:	2,125,262

COUNTRY GENERAL INFORMATION

Language:	Sesotho (southern Sotho), English (official), Zulu, Xhosa
Currency:	Lesotho Loti (LSL); South African Rand (ZAR)
Predominant Religions:	Christian 80%, indigenous beliefs 20%
National Holidays:	Independence Day, 4 October (1966)
Economic Status:	Small, landlocked, and mountainous, Lesotho relies on remittances from miners employed in South Africa and customs duties from the Southern Africa Customs Union for the majority of government revenue. The extreme inequality in the distribution of income remains a major drawback.
Security:	Lesotho Defense Force (LDF): Army and Air Wing
US Presence:	U.S. Embassy in Maseru P.O. Box 333 Maseru 100 Lesotho Tel: +266 22 312 666
Major Airports:	Airports: 28, Airports w/paved runways: 3 Maseru – Moshoeshoe International Airport (MSU/FXMM) Maseru Airport, Lesotho, PO Box 629, Maseru, 100, LESOTHO Tel: +266 (0)22 350777 Fax: +266 (0)22 310188 Customs, hours: 05:00 – 16:00 UTC

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