



South Sudan

POP 12.39 MILLION / 211

Includes ➔

Understand South Sudan	546
South Sudan Today	546
History	546
Culture	548
Environment	548

Fast Facts

Capital Juba

Population 12.53 million

Languages English, Arabic, numerous tribal languages

Area 644,329 sq km

Currency South Sudanese pound (SSP)

Introduction

In July 2011 Africa's largest country, Sudan, split into two and with that South Sudan, the world's newest country, was born.

The birthing process was a violent and bloody one. For decades the people of South Sudan have known little but war as they fought for independence from the north – and sadly it didn't take long for the infant nation to turn on itself, with a civil war erupting between the new government and various rebel groups.

South Sudan is one of the poorest and least developed nations on the planet, but the very fact that South Sudan remains such an unknown is the thing that will likely attract the first visitors back here. Until stability is established, however, even the most intrepid travellers will have to wait to be amazed by its wealth of tribal groups and excited by its national parks packed with vast numbers of large mammals.

South Sudan at a Glance

Boma National Park This vast wilderness is home to huge quantities of wildlife, including migrating herds of over a million antelope.

Nimule National Park Home to hippos, Ugandan kobs, elephants, buffaloes and beautiful scenery.

Bandingalo National Park A paradise for giraffes, hippos and wild dogs, this park also welcomes hundreds of thousands of migrating antelope.

Juba The capital is a bustling boom town with busy markets and the grave of John Garang, the former leader of the South Sudan independence movement.

Tribal people Possibly no other corner of Africa has such a wide diversity of tribal peoples, many of whom continue to live a largely traditional lifestyle.

UNDERSTAND SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan Today

With the resumption of civil war, South Sudan's fledgling economy has stuttered to a halt, development has foundered and, by almost all measures, South Sudan remains one of the world's most unfortunate nations. There are almost no surfaced roads, and outside the main towns virtually no hospitals or medical centres, few schools and little industry. Almost all South Sudanese survive by subsistence agriculture. According to the World Bank, 65.9% of the population live in extreme poverty.

South Sudan is the most oil-dependent country on earth, with oil accounting for almost all its exports and around 60% of its GDP, and yet with the current fighting oil exports are down (and even at normal rates of use, oil reserves are expected to have almost dried up by 2035). This decline in oil revenue has led to a financial crisis and an inflation rate of 730% (up to August 2016). This, combined with the civil war and a catastrophic drought in 2016, has meant that the cost of basic food items has spiralled upwards to the point where a majority of

households can no longer afford even the most basic of foodstuffs.

By February 2017 the situation had become so bad that UN agencies declared South Sudan was in a state of famine, with 100,000 people on the verge of starvation, nearly five million people (more than 40% of the population) in urgent need of help and a million of those people on the brink of famine. Aid agencies say that the famine is almost entirely caused by humans and that a million children under five years of age are already acutely malnourished and that 1.5 million people have fled the country.

Whatever way you look at it, the future for the world's newest nation is looking precariously grim.

History

The history of South Sudan is very much tied up with that of its northern neighbour, Sudan.

Early History & the British

We know little of the history of early South Sudan, although there is evidence that transhumant cattle-raisers have inhabited the region for around 5000 years. Around the 1500s Nilotic-speakers such as the Dinka

South Sudan

