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## General

The Comoros (Iles Comores), a group of four islands, lie W of the N end of Madagascar, in the middle of the N entrance to the Mozambique Channel.

The islands are of volcanic origin and their interiors vary from low hills to steep mountains. The climate is tropical, with a wet season from November to April.

## Buoyage System

The IALA Buoyage System (Region A) is in effect. See Chart No. 1 for further IALA Buoyage System information.

## Cautions

### Fishing

Fishing with traps, handlines, gillnets, longlines, and purse seine nets, as well as by trolling and trawling, is carried out in the vicinity of all of the islands.

## Buoyage

Buoyage around the three westernmost islands cannot be relied upon and navigational lights on the coasts are frequently reported to be extinguished or irregular.

## Currency

The official unit of currency is the Comorian franc, consisting of 100 centimes.

## Government

### Comoros



**Flag of Comoros**

The Federal Islamic Republic of Comoros consists of Grand Comore, Moheli, and Anjouan. These three islands, the westernmost of the group, gained independence from France in 1975 after a referendum.

Under the 1992 constitution, the President is the Chief of State and is directly elected for a 5-year term. There is a Ministerial Council of Government, appointed by the President.

The legislature consists of two houses. The Senate (upper house) consists of 15 members (five from each island) selected by regional councils for 6-year terms. The Federal assembly (lower house) consists of 43 members elected to 4-year terms. It should be noted that the legislature was suspended following a 1999 coup.

Each of the three islands is administered by a Governor, appointed by the President.

As of 2001, there have been 19 coups or attempted coups in the history of this island group.

The legal system is based on French and Muslim law in a new consolidated code.

The capital of the republic is Moroni (11°42'S., 43°15'E.).

### Mayotte

Mayotte (Ile Mayotte), the easternmost island of the group, remains a French dependency (Territorial Collectivity).

After referendums in 1976, the island rejected inclusion into the Federal Islamic Republic of Comoros.

The island is attached for administrative purposes to La Reunion.

### Holidays

The following holidays are observed in the Comoros:

New Year's Day	January 1
Anniversary of ex-President M. Cheikh	March 16
Labor Day	May 1
Liberation of the Comorian People	May 13
National Independence Day	July 7
Christmas Day	December 25

Islamic holidays, which are subject to the appearance of the moon, include Eid Al-Fitr (End of Ramadan), Eid Al-Adha (End of Pilgrimage), Hijrah (Islamic New Year), Ashoora, and the Prophet's Birthday.

The following holidays are observed in Mayotte:

New Year's Day	January 1
Easter Monday	Varies
Labor Day	May 1
Ascension Day	Varies
Whit Monday	Varies
National Holiday	July 14
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	August 15
All Saints' Day	November 1

1918 Armistice Day November 11

Christmas Day December 25

Several Islamic holidays are also observed.

### Industries

Agriculture, livestock raising, and fishing are important industries.

The major crops include essential oils for perfume essences, vanilla, copra, cloves, sugar cane, maize, and coffee. Other crops are coconuts, cinnamon, bananas, rice, and sweet potatoes. The main industries are perfume distillation, food processing, chemicals, plastics, textiles, and tourism.

### Languages

The official languages are French and Arabic. Comoran, a blend of Swahili and Arabic, is also used.

### Regulations

Foreign fishing vessels that have traditionally fished in the waters around the Comoros are permitted to do so, but only at a distance of 6 miles or more from the coasts. Other foreign vessels are prohibited from fishing inside the territorial waters.

### Time Zone

The Time Zone description is CHARLIE (-3). Daylight Savings Time is not observed.

#### World Time Zone Chart

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ref/pdf/802801.pdf>

### U.S. Embassy

There is no diplomatic representative in Comoros. The U.S. ambassador to Mauritius is accredited to the Comoros. The mailing addresses for the U.S. Embassy in Mauritius are, as follows:

1. International mail—  
P.O. Box 544  
Port Louis  
Mauritius
2. Diplomatic pouch—  
American Embassy Port Louis  
Department of State  
Washington DC 20521-2450

#### U. S. Embassy Mauritius Home Page

<http://mauritius.usembassy.gov>