

Definition: **Barbados** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Island state in the Windward Islands, West Indies; the capital is Bridgetown. Barbados' warm climate encouraged the growth of its two largest industries - sugar cane and tourism. It was settled by the British in 1627, and dominated by British plantation owners (using African slave labour until the abolition of slavery) for the next 300 years. It gained independence in 1966. Area: 430sq km (166sq mi). Pop. (2000) 277,000. See West Indies map



Image from:

[BARBADOS](#) in [Encyclopedia of Law Enforcement](#)

Summary Article: **Barbados**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Island country in the Caribbean, one of the Lesser Antilles. It is about 483 km/300 mi north of Venezuela.

Government Barbados is a multiparty parliamentary democracy. Its ceremonial head of state is Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom, represented by a governor general. Its constitution dates from independence in 1966 and provides for a system of parliamentary government on the UK model, with a prime minister and cabinet drawn from and responsible to the legislature, or parliament. The legislature dates from 1627, when the British settled, and comprises two chambers, an unelected upper house, the Senate, and an elected lower house, the House of Assembly. The Senate has 21 members appointed by the governor general, 12 on the advice of the prime minister, two on the advice of the leader of the opposition, and the rest on the basis of wider consultations. The House of Assembly has 30 members elected by universal suffrage. The legislature has a maximum life of five years and may be dissolved within this period. The governor general appoints a prime minister (who can command majority support in the House of Assembly).

History Barbados was originally inhabited from around 1000 BC by Barrancoid Indians and, from 1000 AD, by Arawak Indians, who were wiped out soon after the arrival of the first Europeans, the Portuguese, in the early 167th century. Many were seized to work as slaves on plantations elsewhere in the Caribbean. Barbados became a British colony in 1627 and remained so until independence in 1966. Because Barbados was initially largely uninhabited, black slaves were brought to the island, as well as Celts from Ireland and Scotland, to work as servants for British owners of sugar plantations, which were established from the 1640s. After the ending of the slave trade between West Africa and the Caribbean in 1804, there was a major rebellion by slaves in Barbados in 1816, claiming hundreds of lives. In 1834, slavery was abolished in Barbados, as in the rest of the British Empire, but many emancipated slaves were unable to vote because of the high income qualification required for voting.

In 1938, as part of a movement for political rights, Grantley Adams formed the centre-left Barbados Progressive League, which became known as the Barbados Labour Party (BLP). In 1942, the income qualification for voting was lowered and women were given the right to vote. In 1951, universal adult suffrage was introduced, and the BLP won the first general election. Ministerial government was established in 1954, and BLP leader Grantley Adams became the first prime minister. In 1955, a more radical group, led by Errol Barrow, broke away from the BLP in 1955 to form the Democratic Labour

Party (DLP).

Between 1958–62, Barbados joined the ten-member West Indies Federation, which broke apart because of nationalistic tensions. Adams served as the federation's prime minister. In October 1961, Barbados achieved full internal self-government and the DLP won a general election and Barrow became prime minister. He instituted social reforms, including free school meals and free education.

Independence In November 1966 Barbados became independent within the British Commonwealth, with Barrow as its first prime minister. The DLP was re-elected 1971, but in the 1976 general election the BLP – led now by Grantley Adams' son Tom – ended Barrow's 15-year rule. During this period, Barbados developed a more diversified economy, with tourism and offshore financial services key elements. The pro-business BLP was re-elected in 1981 and Tom Adams remained in power until his sudden death in 1985, when he was succeeded by his deputy, Bernard St John.

Foreign relations Both main parties were committed to maintaining free enterprise and alignment with the USA, although the DLP government established diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1972 and the BLP administration supported the US invasion of Grenada in 1983.

DLP returned to power The DLP, led by Barrow, won the 1986 general election to return to power with a large majority. Barrow died in office in 1987 and was succeeded as prime minister by Erskine Lloyd Sandiford. A new opposition party, the centrist National Democratic Party, was formed in 1989, but the DLP held on to power after the 1991 general election.

BLP in power under Arthur In 1993 Owen Arthur became leader of the BLP and restored its fortunes. Promising to develop and modernize the economy, based around expansion of tourism and foreign investment, he led the party to a clear victory at the September 1994 general election to become prime minister and also finance minister. The election was held at a time of economic difficulties, with the sugar industry and offshore finance sectors undergoing structural reform, with the aid of the IMF.

The BLP achieved a landslide victory in the January 1999 general election, with over 90% of the House of Assembly seats. Arthur secured a third term at the 2003 elections, but with a reduced majority and 58% of the vote. He had campaigned on a platform of reducing taxes and transforming Barbados into a republic, but there were delays in holding a referendum on this issue. Arthur was active in regional politics, pressing for the establishment of a Caribbean (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy. Liberalization in trade provided the basis for strong economic growth 2004–07, averaging 4% a year.

DLP win in 2008 to end 13 years of BLP dominance After 13 years in government, the BLP lost power at the January 2008 general election and Arthur stepped down as BLP leader (until October 2010). The DLP, led by David Thomson, won 20 of the 30 Assembly seats, with 53% of the vote.

Thompson became both prime minister and finance minister and his government gave emphasis to improving healthcare and the transport infrastructure.

In 2010, Thompson became seriously ill; in May 2010, the deputy prime minister and attorney general Freundel Stewart took over as acting prime minister. On Thompson's death in October 2010, Stewart succeeded as prime minister.

The Stewart government struggled with rising levels of public debt, as the Barbados economy was badly affected by the impact of the global financial crisis of 2008–11 on tourism and the financial sector.

However, despite the country's credit rating downgrades in 2012, Stewart and the DLP held on to power at the February 2013 general election, winning a narrow 16 to 14 seat assembly majority.

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