



Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

BACKGROUND

Land and Climate. Luxembourg is one of the smallest European Union (EU) member states. With Belgium and the Netherlands, Luxembourg forms the Low Countries. It is a landlocked country bordered by France to the south, Belgium to the north and west, and Germany to the east. Covering 998 square miles (2,586 square kilometers), it is about the same size as Rhode Island. Luxembourg has gently rolling hills with shallow valleys and many forests, especially picturesque in the Ardennes uplands of the north. The northern third of the country is called the Eisléck or Oesling and is mostly covered by forested highlands. The central and southern region (called the Good Land) is dominated by farmland and woods and comprises about 68 percent of the territory. Southwest Luxembourg, rich in iron-ore, contributed to the country's original wealth. The landscape is dotted with castles and the ruins of castles and fortresses. Nearly 25 percent of the land is suitable for cultivation. The Moselle River forms the southeastern border, irrigating land largely devoted to the grape and wine industries. Urbanization in Luxembourg has led to some problems with air and water pollution.

The climate is mild because of the moderating effects of the Gulf Stream and the distant North Sea. Winter temperatures average 32°F (0°C), and summer temperatures average 75°F (24°C). Luxembourg has an average rainfall of about 32 inches (81.3 centimeters) a year. The sunniest summer months are May and June.

History. Luxembourg is one of the oldest and smallest independent countries in Europe. But before it became independent, the area was ruled by many kingdoms and empires, including that of the Romans and, much later, Charlemagne. In 963, Count Siegfried of the Ardennes built a castle in present-day

Luxembourg and founded the Luxembourg Dynasty. Several of his descendants became monarchs of other European regions during the medieval period. Charles of Luxembourg, for example, became the king of Bohemia in the 14th century and strove to make Prague (now in the Czech Republic) as beautiful as Paris.

Luxembourg was ruled by the Austrian Hapsburgs in the 17th and 18th centuries and then by the Netherlands. In 1815, it became a Grand Duchy in the Dutch Kingdom. The Luxembourgers revolted in 1830 after the Belgians also rebelled against Dutch control. After the revolt, Luxembourg was divided between Belgium and the Netherlands. The Netherlands' portion is what eventually gained independence as today's Luxembourg. The 1867 Treaty of London declared Luxembourg an independent neutral state, although it remained closely tied to the Netherlands. Personal union between the monarchs of the Netherlands and Luxembourg ended in 1890, when both died without leaving heirs to their thrones. In Luxembourg, the crown passed to the current royal family, the House of Nassau.

Although neutral, Luxembourg was invaded by Germany in both world wars. After its World War II liberation, Luxembourg ended its neutrality (1949) and joined Western European alliances, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In 1964, the Grand Duchess Charlotte abdicated, allowing her son, Grand Duke Jean, to become ruler. Grand Duke Jean named his son Prince Henri as governor in 1998 and abdicated the crown to him in 2000.

Luxembourg has enjoyed peace, economic growth, and mutually beneficial relations with other European nations for decades. Luxembourg is particularly well represented in the

Luxembourg

EU. The European Court of Justice, Investment Bank, Court of Auditors, Secretariat of the European Parliament, and services of the Commission of the EU, such as the Statistical Office (EUROSTAT), are based in Luxembourg.

Luxembourg is currently working to adapt its institutions and infrastructure to a population that is expected to increase rapidly over the next decade.

THE PEOPLE

Population. After remaining steady for several years, Luxembourg's population of over 480,200 is currently growing at 1.2 percent annually. Around 91 percent of the population lives in urban areas, and nearly one-quarter resides in the city of Luxembourg. The Luxembourgers, who are an ethnic mixture of French and German origins, account for about two-thirds of the population. The rest is made up of guests and worker residents from Portugal, Italy, France, and other European countries. The immigrant population is growing faster than the number of native Luxembourgers. Foreign residents comprise more than 50 percent of Luxembourg City's population. Nearly 120,000 workers travel into Luxembourg from neighboring regions every workday.

Language. *Lëtzebuergesch* (Luxembourgish) is the native tongue of Luxembourgers as well as many who live just across the border in Belgium, France, or Germany. The language comes from a Franco-Moselle dialect, mixed with many German and French words. It was declared the national language in 1984, although it had always been the daily language of the people. Luxembourgish is used more as a spoken language than a written language. French and German also have official status and are the most common written languages. German, favored by the general population, is often used for newspapers. French, traditionally preferred by the intellectual elite, is the official language of the civil service, law, and parliament. Children begin learning German in school at the age of six and French at seven. English is also taught in schools and is widely understood. Young Luxembourgers master an average of 2.9 foreign languages by the time they leave school.

Religion. The Roman Catholic Church claims membership of more than 87 percent of the population. While most people adhere to Catholic traditions, society is basically secular. Many of those who are not Catholic are Protestant or belong to other Christian denominations. There are also Jewish and Muslim communities. A small number of residents claim no affiliation. Most Christians do not attend church services on a regular basis, but many feel they show their devotion through actions or attitudes (such as tolerance, charity, etc.).

General Attitudes. Although the people of Luxembourg are descendants of different nationalities and speak several different languages, they maintain a strong feeling of national pride. Their independence and separate identity in Europe are important. This character is reflected in the national motto: *Mir wëlle bleiwe wat mer sin!* (We want to remain what we are!). By both conquest and peaceful exchange, Luxembourg has been influenced by the neighboring countries of Belgium, Germany, and France. Many traditions of these countries are evident in the customs of the Luxembourgers.

There are differences, however. For example, the pace of everyday life in Luxembourg is not as hurried as in other European countries. The people of Luxembourg value education, privacy, friendship, and humor. They do not appreciate loud behavior in polite company or in public. Luxembourgers have a strong environmental ethic. Recycling programs are well

established, and development is usually weighed against its environmental impact.

Personal Appearance. Luxembourgers tend to follow European fashion trends, chiefly those from France, Germany, and Italy. Men wear suits to work; many also wear hats. Women wear dresses somewhat more often than pants. The younger generation follows the latest European fashion trends. Luxembourgers stress cleanliness and neatness in appearance. People try to dress well in public; tattered clothing is considered inappropriate. Very casual clothing is reserved for the home or recreational activities.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings. A gentle handshake is most common and most appropriate when greeting acquaintances or meeting someone for the first time. Close female friends may hug three times. Other close friends who have not seen each other for a long time may kiss each other's cheeks three times. Polite inquiries about a friend's health or colleague's work might accompany a greeting. The most common verbal greetings in Luxembourgish include *Moien* (Morning), *Gudden Owend* (Good evening), and *Wéi geet et?* (How are you?). Also common is *Bonjour*, French for "Good day." Upon parting, one might say *Äddi*, a casual "Good-bye," or the more formal *Au revoir*. Young people use *Salut* or *Ciao* for a quick good-bye. Friends and acquaintances also use longer phrases, such as *Bis eng aner Kéier* or *Bis härno*, both of which roughly mean "See you later." *Äddi, bis mar* (Until tomorrow) is also appropriate. Like most Europeans, Luxembourgers are reserved when first meeting strangers. However, they are friendly and remember those who befriend them. Friends and relatives address each other by given names or nicknames, while acquaintances use titles and surnames. High-ranking officials may be addressed by more than one title, such as *Här Minister* (Mr. Minister), with or without the surname.

Gestures. Although Luxembourgers might use hands to emphasize their speech during conversation, specific gestures are rarely used to complement or replace verbal communication. Proper behavior in public is expected; one refrains from yawning, shouting, or using offensive language. Handkerchiefs are used inconspicuously. Chewing gum while speaking is impolite.

Visiting. Luxembourgers enjoy visiting friends and relatives at home, but they rarely drop by unannounced. Most visits are prearranged, usually by invitation. Hosts take care to make guests feel welcome. They nearly always offer refreshments, usually in the form of something to drink. A cocktail is common before a meal. Good friends visiting a couple that has just moved into a new home bring bread, salt, and a bottle of wine to wish them well. Dinner guests normally bring flowers, chocolates, a small gift, or a bottle of wine to their hosts. Among younger people, the guests often bring dessert. Good friends and relatives might bring gifts for holidays or special occasions (first communions, final exams at secondary school, college graduation, birthdays, and so forth).

When guests depart, they thank the hosts and are accompanied outside the home. Guests are seldom invited to the home to discuss business. Such matters are taken care of in public places, such as restaurants, cafés, or offices.

Eating. Luxembourgers usually eat breakfast between 7 and 9 a.m., lunch at noon, and dinner around 7 p.m. Some people have coffee around 4 p.m. The main meal of the day was traditionally at midday, but this is not possible for people who

work all day or are too far from home each day to gather to eat at that time. For these families, lunch is light and dinner is the main meal. At the family meal, serving dishes are placed on the table for each person to choose his or her portion. When guests are present, each person's plate is usually prepared in advance. Hosts expect their guests to ask for second helpings. If guests do not eat seconds, some cooks conclude that the food was unsatisfactory. People eat in the continental style, with the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right. They keep both hands, but not the elbows, above the table at all times. It is not proper to have one's hands resting in the lap during a meal. A wide variety of international cuisine is available in the city of Luxembourg. In a restaurant, diners usually pay their bill at the table. One normally leaves a tip of 10 to 15 percent.

LIFESTYLE

Family. The importance of the family is well established in Luxembourg. Parents still exert influence on the social and professional choices of their children. Parents are required by law to pay for their children's education, and adult children are required to meet certain financial obligations of their parents if in need. Over the past decade, traditional family ties have been weakened somewhat as more young people travel abroad for study or employment. However, bonds are still maintained through family gatherings and celebrations. Families are usually small, having fewer than two children on average. Many women work outside the home; they comprise one-third of the labor force. Grandparents sometimes care for young children while parents work during the day. Day-care facilities and other options are also available.

Housing. Over 70 percent of the population own their homes. Low interest rates and extensive, flexible loan offerings encourage home ownership. In urban areas, high-rise apartment buildings are most common, whereas single-family houses dominate rural areas. Homes are usually made from bricks, which are painted white or other neutral colors and are surrounded by wide green lawns. Apartment dwellers share a common outdoor space. Interiors are often decorated in a rustic style, though more modern trends can be seen in cities. A typical house has a living room and kitchen on the ground floor with bedrooms located on the floor above. More spacious homes, occupied by the upper-class, contain areas reserved for guests. Modern conveniences and electronic devices are available in most homes.

Dating and Marriage. Dating usually begins at age 15, after compulsory education requirements have been met. Parental approval, although less important than in the past, is still a factor in a young person's dating choices. Young people enjoy going to movies and theaters, eating at cafés and restaurants, having parties and dinners, and dancing. Couples may postpone marriage until they are financially established or have completed their educational goals. Some couples choose to live together before marriage, but this is not an official union, and most Luxembourgers expect to marry eventually.

Only civil marriages are recognized by law. To be married in a church, a couple must present a certificate showing that they have been legally married by a civil authority. A reception for acquaintances and friends may follow a civil wedding, while a dinner for close friends and relatives traditionally follows a church ceremony.

Life Cycle. Births and deaths are marked by religious practices. The birth of a child, who is welcomed with presents from family and friends, is celebrated with baptism. The child's

name is chosen well before birth. Multiple first names are not uncommon and often include godparents' respective first names.

Transition to adulthood formally begins at age 18, but driving licenses are issued at 17, when young adults begin participating more actively in social life. Most young adults prefer to live on their own once they begin higher education or start earning a wage.

Upon a person's death, the body is buried or cremated. Following this, a religious ceremony is held at the burial ground or at the church, where family, friends, and neighbors join to remember the deceased. Deaths are announced in local newspapers and facilitate the collection of money to be given to charities in the name of the deceased. Six weeks and one year after someone's death, religious ceremonies are held to remember him or her.

Diet. Food in Luxembourg is influenced by French and German traditions, but it has its own unique flavor. People appreciate fine foods, and there are many national favorites. Popular dishes include *Judd mat Gaardebounen* (smoked collar of pork with broad beans), *Bouneschlupp* (bean soup), *Quenelles* (small dumplings made with meat or fish and served with a sauce), *Kachkéis* (a soft cheese known as *cançoillotte* in French), *Quetschentaart* (plum tart), *Fritten*, *Ham an Zalot* (french fries, ham, and salad), *Träipen* (black pudding commonly eaten on Christmas Eve), and freshwater fish (usually trout). Sausages, potatoes, and sauerkraut are common elements of the diet. Fresh fruits and vegetables are eaten in season. A variety of cheeses and other dairy products are important. Coffee, wine, juice, and beer are popular drinks. Luxembourg also exports some domestic wines and beer to other countries in Europe.

Recreation. Cycling and hiking are favorite activities in Luxembourg, mostly because of the beautiful scenery. Soccer is the national sport, but people also enjoy jogging, basketball, volleyball, golf, tennis, squash, and water sports. Hunting and fishing are popular seasonal activities. Numerous parks, theaters, movie theaters, and museums are available. Gardening and watching television are popular leisure activities.

The Arts. Cultural arts are important to Luxembourgers. A large art market in Luxembourg City helps satisfy the demand for traditional and contemporary art and sculpture. Important art and historical collections are housed in the *Musée de l'Etat*. To help sustain musical and theatrical arts in the country, Luxembourg has established cultural agreements with other European nations. Private banks are also important cultural patrons.

Luxembourgers enjoy attending concerts performed by the well-respected *Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg*. During the summer, the cities of Wiltz and Echternach host festivals involving music, dance, and theater. In the capital, orchestras and folk bands give open-air concerts regularly. Besides going to performances or museums, Luxembourgers like to paint, play musical instruments, or perform in village playhouses.

Holidays. In addition to some national holidays, several religious holidays are celebrated in Luxembourg. The national holidays include New Year's Day, Labor Day (1 May), the Grand Duke's Birthday (celebrated on National Day, 23 June), and Fair Day (early September). Fair Day occurs during fair season in the capital city. An ancient shepherds' market serves as the fairgrounds, and many traditions focus on shepherding.

Religious holidays include Easter (including Monday), Ascension, Whitmonday, Assumption (15 Aug.), All Saints'

Luxembourg

Day (1 Nov.), All Souls' Day (2 Nov.), and Christmas (25–26 Dec.). Christmas and Easter are the most important holidays.

At Easter, young children take part in a tradition called *klibbere goen*. According to folklore, all church bells go to Rome three days before Easter for confessional. So the children use rattles to announce church services, since the bells cannot ring. When the bells return on the Saturday before Easter, the children collect money and colorful Easter eggs from each home in the neighborhood as their reward. Every family colors Easter eggs during this season, and on Easter Sunday, children receive the eggs and other gifts hidden in the garden.

Christmas celebrations begin weeks before the actual holiday. Some time before 6 December, small children place a shoe outside their bedroom before bedtime and expect to receive a piece of chocolate from St. Nicholas (*Kleeschen*) if they have been good. Otherwise, they might receive a birch twig from his helper, *Houhecker*. Then, on 6 December, *Kleeschen* visits good children and brings them gifts. Small parades are often held in various cities to celebrate the event. On Christmas Eve, families have a big meal and Catholics go to Mass. Nearly all families have a tree in the home; many have a nativity scene. Christmas Day is a family day.

Carnival is celebrated in the spring in many cities. There are also wine fairs, art festivals, and festivities to mark historical events.

POPULATION & AREA

Population	480,222 (rank=166)
Area, sq. mi.	998 (rank=171)
Area, sq. km.	2,586

DEVELOPMENT DATA

Human Dev. Index* rank	18 of 177 countries
Adjusted for women	23 of 156 countries
Real GDP per capita	\$60,228
Adult literacy rate	99% (male); 99% (female)
Infant mortality rate	4 per 1,000 births
Life expectancy	75 (male); 81 (female)

Luxembourg has benefited from European economic integration and cooperates closely with Belgium and the Netherlands in the BENELUX union. The government actively encourages foreign investment. In 2002, Luxembourg's national currency (the *Luxembourg franc*) was replaced by the euro (EUR), a single currency used throughout much of Europe.

Transportation and Communications. Luxembourg is a hub of travel in Europe. Trains connect to most major European cities and are well maintained. Roads and railways are in excellent condition. Most domestic consumer goods are transported in trucks. Most families own cars. Taxis are plentiful in the cities, and the urban bus system is efficient.

The communications system is modern and efficient. The government administers telephone, telegraph, and postal systems. Television, radio, and newspapers are privately owned. There are five daily newspapers. Luxembourgers have easy access to television and radio broadcasts from neighboring countries. Internet usage is widespread.

Education. Luxembourg's education system is well developed. Nearly all students attend public schools, although a few go to private Catholic schools. Education from preschool through secondary school is compulsory and free. Beginning at age six, children attend primary school for six years and secondary school for seven years. Upon successfully passing exams at the end of the secondary level, students may go on to university studies. Various technical and vocational schools exist. Since 2003, students have been able to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Luxembourg. Many Luxembourgers study abroad throughout Western Europe but especially in neighboring France and Belgium.

Health. Public health standards are high, facilities are modern and advanced, and the cost to patients is low because of a compulsory social insurance system. People may also carry private insurance to cover certain expenses. Clinics serve local needs, and hospitals are located in large towns.

AT A GLANCE

Contact Information. Embassy of Luxembourg, 2200 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008; phone (202) 265-4171; web site www.luxembourg-usa.org. Luxembourg National Tourist Office, 17 Beekman Place, New York, NY 10022; phone (212) 935-8888; web site www.ont.lu or www.visitluxembourg.com.

SOCIETY

Government. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is a constitutional monarchy, led by the Grand Duke Henri. However, the constitution vests sovereignty in the people. The 60 members of Luxembourg's unicameral legislature (Chamber of Deputies) are directly elected to five-year terms. A prime minister (currently Jean-Claude Juncker) is head of government. A Council of State advises the legislature. The legislature is usually led by coalitions of parties. All citizens older than age 18 are required to vote in national elections. Luxembourg is divided regionally into 12 *cantons*, which are further divided into *communes*. Each *commune* is administered by an elected council. The judicial system includes a variety of courts and tribunals. Judges for all courts are appointed for life by the monarch. A member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Luxembourg maintains a small volunteer army.

Economy. Luxembourgers enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world, in part because of ongoing economic stability. Despite its lack of natural resources and its policy to no longer exploit its iron-ore reserves, Luxembourg has been able to develop, diversify, and keep its economy strong. Inflation and unemployment generally remain low. Although the agriculture sector is modern, it contributes only minimally to the overall economy and employs less than 3 percent of the labor force.

The service sector of the economy has grown substantially, as the manufacturing sector, which is based on the steel industry, has become less important. Services (especially financial) now employ almost half of the workforce. Nevertheless, steel, chemicals, rubber, and other products are still important exports. The government is working currently to broaden the economic base of the country by promoting investment in communications and audiovisual companies. Tourism is growing in importance.

© 2008 ProQuest LLC and Brigham Young University. It is against the law to copy, reprint, store, or transmit any part of this publication in any form by any means without strict written permission from ProQuest. *UN Development Programme, Human Development Report 2007/2008 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

CultureGrams™
People. The World. You.

ProQuest
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 USA
Toll Free: 1.800.521.3042
Fax: 1.800.864.0019
www.culturegrams.com