

JAMAICA

FULL NAME: Jamaica. Slang names: "Jamrock", or "Ja"

CAPITAL: Kingston

CURRENCY: Jamaican dollar (JMD)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE: English

OFFICIAL RELIGION: None

POPULATION: 2,9 million

LIFE EXPECTANCY: male 73,6 years; female 78,5 years

TOTAL AREA: 4244 square miles (160th)

GOVERNMENT: Constitutional monarchy. Part of the commonwealth since its independence in 1962.



Jamaica is about **15x** smaller than France.



- Black for the people
- Green for the fertility of the land
- Gold for the mineral wealth beneath the soil

BOB MARLEY & RASTAFARISM

Rastafarism and reggae music both emerged from Jamaica. They found one of their most important ambassadors in Bob Marley, who contributed to the spread of Rastafarian political and social ideas through his music which unabashedly explored themes of oppression, brotherhood and freedom.

BOB MARLEY (1945-1981)



Jamaican singer, musician and songwriter Bob Marley served as a world ambassador for reggae music. His music told stories of his homeland and the Rastafarian religion that he followed.

Starting out in 1963 with the group The Wailers, he forged a distinctive songwriting and vocal style that would later resonate with audiences worldwide.

After The Wailers disbanded in 1974, Marley pursued a solo career that culminated in the release of the album *Exodus* in 1977, establishing his worldwide reputation and confirming his status as one of the world's best-selling artists of all time. He was the first international superstar to have been born into poverty in a developing country.

In Jamaica he is considered a folk hero. At the heart of his message is a reflection on the power of music to unite, strengthen and inspire people.

"Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?

All I ever had:
Redemption songs,
These songs of freedom,
Songs of freedom."

Bob Marley

RASTAFARISM

- A religious and political movement which emerged in Jamaica in the early 1930s out of Biblical prophecy, mysticism and black social and political aspirations.
- Rastafarians (or Rastas), see people of African descent in the Americas and around the world to be "exiles in Babylon." They believe that they are being tested by Jah (God) through slavery and the existence of racial oppression. They await their deliverance from captivity and their return to the Promised Land, Zion, the symbolic name for Africa. Whilst Rastafarism recognises "Elders", it does not place value on hierarchical structures.
- Rastafarians do not drink alcohol and have a strict all-natural (often vegetarian) diet. Smoking marijuana or "the herb" is seen as a spiritual rite. Rastafarians do not cut their hair, preferring to grow it into dreadlocks.
- The Rastafari movement rapidly spread throughout much of the world, appealing particularly to a number of young Caribbean people and African Americans for whom the positive message about being black and seeking freedom was compelling.

