

The Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)

The Falkland Islands form an archipelago in the South Atlantic Ocean on the Patagonian Shelf. The principal islands are about 300 miles (500 km) east of the southern Patagonian coast. The archipelago, with an area of 4,700 square miles (12,200 km²), comprises East Falkland, West Falkland and 776 smaller islands. The Falkland Islands is a British territory. The United Kingdom takes responsibility for its defence and foreign affairs. The islands' capital is Stanley, on East Falkland.



The name comes from the Falkland Sound, a strait separating the archipelago's two main islands. The name "Falkland" was applied to the channel by John Strong, the captain of an English expedition, which landed on the islands in 1690. The Spanish name for the archipelago, *Islas Malvinas*, derives from the French *Îles Malouines*, the name given to the islands by French explorer Louis-Antoine de Bougainville in 1764. Bougainville also founded the islands' first settlement, Port Louis.

Controversy exists over the Falklands' discovery and subsequent colonisation by Europeans. At various times, the islands have had French, British, Spanish, and Argentine settlements. Britain asserted its rule in 1833, although Argentina has always maintained its claim to the islands. In 1982, Argentina invaded the islands, but after a two-month war, the Argentine forces surrendered and the islands returned to British administration.

The population (2,916 in January 2017 - www.worldometers.info) primarily consists of native Falkland Islanders, the majority being of British descent. Other ethnicities include French, Gibraltarian and Scandinavian. Immigration from the United Kingdom, Saint Helena and Chile has reversed a recent population decline. Falkland Islanders are legally British citizens and can freely enter the United Kingdom.

According to naturalist Will Wagstaff, "the Falkland Islands is a very social place, and stopping for a chat is a way of life". Television and radio broadcasts generally feature programming from the United Kingdom. Wagstaff describes local cuisine as "very British in character with much use made of home-grown vegetables, local lamb, mutton, beef, and fish". Common between meals are "home made cakes and biscuits with tea or coffee".

The islands are home to large bird populations. Economic activities include fishing, tourism and sheep farming, with an emphasis on high-quality wool exports. Oil exploration, licensed by the Falkland Islands Government, remains controversial as a result of maritime disputes with Argentina.

The economy of the Falkland Islands is ranked as the 222nd largest in the world by GDP, and ranks 9th worldwide by GDP per capita.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falkland_Islands

