



## The Smallest Country

Not all countries are as big as you might think. Some are smaller than some of the cities of you know. They might even have fewer people living there than are in your school! Let's have a look at the 5 smallest countries in the world.

### **Fifth smallest - San Marino**

Once upon a time, Italy was made up of lots of small city-states. These all became part of one big country over time, but San Marino stood on its own. It is the world's oldest republic (a nation that has an elected president instead of a king or queen). San Marino is situated in the middle of Italy. This makes it almost unique. It has an area of 23.63 square miles and a population of roughly 33,000 people.

### **Fourth smallest - Tuvalu**

Tuvalu is a country made up of 9 tiny islands in the South Pacific Ocean. It is part of the British Empire. The total area of the islands is less than 10 square miles. Most of the 11,000 people live on the island of Fongafale. This island is only 20 metres across at its narrowest point! Scientists and locals are worried that the islands will disappear beneath the sea in the next 50 to 100 years because of global warming.

### **Third smallest - Nauru**

Nauru is a tiny island in Micronesia. It is northeast of Australia. It gained independence in 1968. Only around 200 tourists travel to Nauru each year. In 1982, one of those tourists was Queen Elizabeth II. It is estimated that only 15,000 people alive today have visited or lived on the island. It is the smallest island nation in the world. It has an area of just 8 square miles. It was once a tropical paradise. Mining has removed most of the wildlife and natural resources. It is now used by the Australian government to house refugees.

## Second smallest - Principality of Monaco

A principality is a country which is governed by a prince. The current prince is Prince Albert II. It is bordered on three sides by France and by the Mediterranean Sea on the fourth. It has an area of only 0.78 square miles. That's smaller than a lot of villages! Just over 38,000 people live in Monaco.

## The smallest country in the world - Vatican City

Vatican City is by far the smallest country in the world. It has an area of just 0.17 square miles. Only 825 people live there but over 20,000 people a day visit during the summer. Much like San Marino, Vatican City is surrounded by Italy. In fact, it is entirely surrounded by the city of Rome. It has been the official home of the Catholic pope since 1377. It was declared an independent nation in 1929. Almost 75% of the people who live in Vatican City are members of the church.

### RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. Which country might disappear in the next century?
2. Which country is the world's oldest republic?
3. When did Queen Elizabeth II visit Micronesia?
4. On how many sides does Monaco border France?
5. Vatican City is the official home of which church?

### VIPERS QUESTIONS

- I** Which fact does the author consider surprising in the section about Monaco? How do you know?
- V** Find a word or phrase that tells you Nauru became its own country.
- S** How have these countries been selected as the smallest? What fact was used?
- E** Why has the author listed the countries in descending order? What impact does this have?
- V** Which word tells you that Prince Albert II is the prince of Monaco at the moment?

Answers:

1. Tuvalu
2. San Marino
3. 1982
4. 3
5. Catholic church

I: That's smaller than a lot of villages! The use of an exclamation mark shows excitement or surprise.

V: Gained independence

S: They have the smallest area.

E: Descending order builds suspense to find out the first in the list. Accept answers that discuss the impact of this on them as a reader

V: Current