

## Vatican City

The smallest country in the world has only around 500 citizens and an area of only 0.44 square kilometres. It is Vatican City, ruled by the head of the Catholic church: the pope. At one time, the Vatican ruled all of Rome and large parts of Italy, but that territory was lost when Italy was unified in the 19th century. For many years, the King of Italy claimed the city, but his soldiers never entered it. It was only in 1929 that Vatican City was recognised as a separate country, through the Lateran treaty.

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Because of its history, tiny size, and government by religion, Vatican City has some very odd features. One of its major industries is making mosaics; half of its territory is a garden; because citizenship is granted to religious officers (who lose it when they lose their jobs), 90% of the population is male; and the huge ratio of tourists to citizens means that it has one of the highest per capita crime rates in the world. It also has a railway, postal service, and bank – but no airport.

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When did Vatican City become an independent country?

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How can a Vatican City citizen lose their citizenship?

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Why does Vatican City have no airport?