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I INTRODUCTION

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Belarus, officially *Respublika Belarus*

(Republic of Belarus), landlocked republic in east central Europe, bordered by [Russia](#) to the east, [Ukraine](#) to the south, [Poland](#) to the west, and the Baltic republics of [Latvia](#) and [Lithuania](#) to the northwest. Belarus has a generally flat terrain with many forests, lakes, and marshes. The great majority of its people are ethnic Belarusians, but many other ethnic groups also live in the country. Most of the people live in urban centers. The capital and largest city of Belarus is [Minsk](#), located in the center of the country.

From medieval times until the late 20th century Belarusian territory was under foreign

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Belarus - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Belarus (Belorussia, Byelorussia) / b ɪ ərʊ s/ (help · info) (Belarusian: Беларусь, Russian: Беларусь or Russian: Белоруссия) is a landlocked country ...

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Belarus: Definition from Answers.com

Click to enlarge) Belarus (Mapping Specialists, Ltd.) Belarus (Formerly Belorussia also Byelorussia) A country of eastern Europe east of Poland

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rule, and in the 18th century it was annexed by the Russian Empire. Belarusian national and cultural development made major strides only from the mid-19th century. Belarus was established in 1919 as the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), which in 1922 became one of the four founding republics of the [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics](#) (USSR). In August 1991 Belarus declared its independence, contributing to the collapse of the USSR in December.

II LAND AND RESOURCES OF BELARUS

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The total area of Belarus is 207,595 sq km (80,153 sq mi). Generally level terrain is disrupted by a series of highlands that run from northeast to southwest. Belarus has four additional discernible geographic regions: an area of lakes, hills, and forests in the north; an agricultural region with mixed-conifer forests in the west; a broad elevated plain in the east; and the [Poles'ye](#) (also called the Pripet Marshes), a lowland of rivers and swamps that extends into [Ukraine](#), in the south. The country's highest point, Mount Dzyarzhynskaya (346 m/1,135 ft), is located in an upland area just southwest of Minsk.

A Rivers and Lakes

The [Dnieper](#) (known as the Dnyapro in Belarus) is the largest river in Belarus; it flows southward, almost the entire length of the country in the east, passing through the city of Mahilyow. Its important tributaries are the [Pripyat'](#) in the south and the [Berezina](#) in the central region. Another major river is the [Daugava](#), which flows westward from [Russia](#) through the northern tip of the republic. The [Neman](#) (known as the Nyoman in Belarus), also a west-flowing river, links the western part of Belarus with [Lithuania](#). The [Bug](#), a northward-flowing river along the country's southwestern border with [Poland](#), is linked at the city of Brest to a canal that connects with the Pripyat' and subsequently the Dnieper. Belarus has thousands of lakes, the largest of which is Lake Narach in the northwest.

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B Plant and Animal Life

[Peat](#) bogs and marshland cover about 25 percent of the country, while the [soil](#) of about 70 percent of Belarusian territory is *podzolic* (acidic with fairly large amounts of iron oxides). The forest region, though extensive, is not contiguous. Coniferous forests predominate, with [pine](#) the principal tree; [spruce](#), [oak](#), [birch](#), [alder](#), and [ash](#) trees also are found. The Belovezhskaya Pushcha (Puszcza Białowiecka) Reserve in the southwest is part of the oldest existing European forest and the sanctuary of the virtually extinct European bison, or [wisent](#). The [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#) (UNESCO) designated the reserve a [World Heritage Site](#) in 1992 and made it a [biosphere reserve](#) the following year.

Belarus has more than 70 mammal species, including deer, fox, wild pig, wolves, and the common squirrel. There are 280 bird species, including doves, kestrels, wrens, bullfinches, and storks. Forests contain grass snakes and vipers, while rivers are the habitat of fur-bearing animals such as mink and otter.

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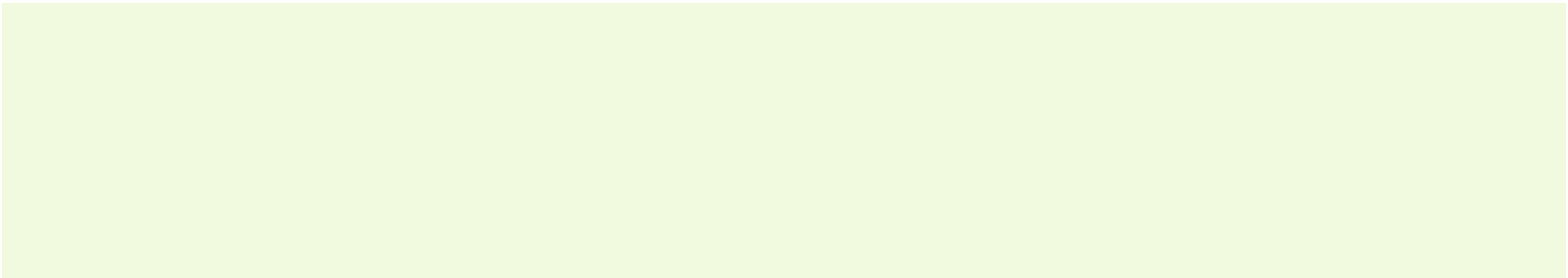
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