Iran

**Full name:** Islamic Republic of Iran

**Government:** theocratic republic

**Location:** Middle East, bordering the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea, between Iraq and Pakistan

**Capital:** Tehran

**Area:** 1.65 million sq km (636,313 sq miles); slightly larger than Alaska

**Climate:** mostly arid or semiarid, subtropical along Caspian coast

**Terrain:** rugged, mountainous rim; high, central basin with deserts, mountains; small, discontinuous plains along both coasts

**Natural Hazards:** periodic droughts, floods; dust storms, sandstorms; earthquakes

**Population:** 68.5 million (UN, 2006)

**Ethnicity:** Persian 51%, Azeri 24%, Gilaki and Mazandarani 8%, Kurd 7%, Arab 3%, Lur 2%, Baloch 2%, Turkmen 2%, other 1%

**Major Language:** Persian

**Religion:** Muslim 98% (Shi'a 89%, Sunni 9%), other (includes Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, and Baha'i) 2%

**Life expectancy:** 69 years (men), 72 years (women) (UN)

**Currency:** 10 Iranian rials = 1 toman