

Angola

Country name	Angola
State title	Republic of Angola
Name of citizen	Angolan
Official language	Portuguese (<i>por</i>) ¹
Country name in official language	Angola
State title in official language	República de Angola
Script	Roman script
Romanization System	Not required
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	AO/AGO
Capital	Luanda
Area / Population	1.25million km ² / 35,981,281 (2023 est.) ²

Introduction

Angola lies on the Atlantic Ocean sharing land boundaries with Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia and Zambia. It gained independence from Portugal in 1975.

Angola includes the exclave Cabinda, which is separated from the rest of the country by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Some secessionist insurgency and tension continue within the exclave.

Geographical names policy

For HMG use, geographical names should be taken from official sources, such as those produced by the national mapping agency in Angola, the [Instituto Geodesia e Cartografia de Angola](#), which will be written in Roman script in a Portuguese style. All diacritical marks, apostrophes and hyphens should be retained.

The US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) [Geographic Names Server](#) can also be used as a source for names in Angola. Additionally, the [Africa Geoportal](#) may be used as a helpful source of geospatial data and names³.

¹ ISO 639 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Factfile.

² <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/angola/>

³ This is a source collated from multiple sources, including Esri, organisations working in Africa and crowdsourced information. It should be used as a supplementary source.

Languages

Portuguese is the only official language, and is spoken as a mother tongue by over 70% of the population. Additionally there are 10 significant (spoken by at least 1% of the population according to the [2014 census](#)) indigenous languages, four of which have over 5 million speakers: Umbundu (*umb*, spoken by over 23% of the population), Kikongo (*kon*), Kimbundu (*kmb*), Chokwe (*chk*). The map at this link shows the main language(s) spoken in each province: <https://governo.gov.ao/angola/mapa>

Spelling Notes

The spellings of some geographical names can be a little inconsistent, particularly the use of ‘c’ versus ‘k’, which leads to alternative spellings for several of the ADM1 and centre names, among others. Examples include Mbanza Congo/Kongo, Cuanza/Kwanza, Cubango/Kubango. Official Angolan sources currently appear to favour spellings with ‘c’, and PCGN would recommend following the spellings on the most authoritative and up-to-date Angolan sources.

Another inconsistency is the use of an apostrophe in geographical names...examples include M’banza Congo, N’zeto, N’dalatando on older mapping but government websites tend to omit the apostrophe. Again, PCGN would recommend following the spellings on the most authoritative and up-to-date Angolan sources.

Inventory of Characters (and their Unicode encodings)⁴

Portuguese contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
À	00C0	à	00E0
Á	00C1	á	00E1
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Ã	00C3	ã	00E3
Ç	00C7	ç	00E7
É	00C9	é	00E9
Ê	00CA	ê	00EA
Í	00CD	í	00ED
Ó	00D3	ó	00F3
Ô	00D4	ô	00F4
Õ	00D5	õ	00F5
Ú	00DA	ú	00FA

⁴ See www.unicode.org

Map of Angola



Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.

Administrative structure

Angola is divided into 21 provinces (por: *provincia*) at the first-order administrative level. The newest provinces were created in September 2024; Icolo e Bengo and Moxico Leste, resulting from the bifurcation of the provinces of Luanda and Moxico respectively, and the province of Cuando Cubango split into the two new provinces of Cuando and Cubango.

Each province is sub-divided into municipalities (por: *município*) at the second-order level. These are further sub-divided into communes (por: *comuna*) at ADM3 level. According to Law No.14/24 on political subdivisions, Angola's administrative structure consists of 21 provinces, 326 municipalities and 378 communes. A map and details of the provinces and their subdivisions can be found at this link: <https://governo.gov.ao/angola/mapa>⁵

Administrative division	ISO 3166-2 code ⁶	Administrative centre	Location of administrative centre
Bengo	AO-BGO	Dande/Caxito ⁷	8°34'48"S 13°39'51"E
Benguela	AO-BGU	Benguela	12°34'42"S 13°24'26"E
Bié	AO-BIE	Cuito	12°23'00"S 16°56'00"E
Cabinda	AO-CAB	Cabinda	5°33'00"S 12°12'00"E
Quando	N/A	Mavinga	15°47'44"S 20°21'55"E
Cubango	N/A	Menongue	14°39'20"S 17°41'03"E
Cunene	AO-CNN	Ondjiva	17°04'00"S 15°44'00"E
Cuanza-Norte	AO-CNO	Ndalatando	9°18'01"S 14°54'41"E
Cuanza-Sul	AO-CUS	Sumbe	11°12'22"S 13°50'37"E
Huambo	AO-HUA	Huambo	12°46'34"S 15°44'21"E
Huíla	AO-HUI	Lubango	14°55'00"S 13°30'00"E
Icolo e Bengo	N/A	Catete	9°06'32"S 13°41'16"E
Lunda-Norte	AO-LNO	Dundo	7°22'52"S 20°50'02"E
Lunda-Sul	AO-LSU	Saurimo	9°39'39"S 20°23'30"E
Luanda	AO-LUA	Luanda	8°50'18"S 13°14'04"E
Malanje	AO-MAL	Malanje	9°32'41"S 16°20'43"E
Moxico	AO-MOX	Luena	11°47'00"S 19°55'00"E
Moxico Leste	N/A	Cazombo	11°53'36"S 22°54'15"E
Namibe	AO-NAM	Moçâmedes ⁸	15°11'46"S 12°09'08"E
Uíge	AO-UIG	Uíge	7°36'48"S 15°03'24"E
Zaire	AO-ZAI	Mbanza Kongo	6°16'00"S 14°14'18"E

⁵ The map has not yet been updated to show the new provinces.

⁶ The newest provinces have not yet been allocated ISO 3166-2 codes.

⁷ Caxito is the seat of Dande municipality, which is in turn the capital municipality of Bengo province.

⁸ Called Namibe between 1985 and 2016.

Other Significant Locations

PCGN Recommended Name	Variant Names/Spellings	Location	Feature Type
Morro do Moco	Mount Moco	12°28'00"S 15°10'00"E	Mountain [2620m]
Okavango River	Rio Cubango (Angola)	18°59'17"S 22°34'34"E	River (Angola, Namibia, Botswana)
Zambezi River	Rio Zambeze (Angola)	11°22'11"S 24°18'30"E	River (Zambia, Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique)

Useful references

- Africa geoportal: <https://www.africageoportal.com/>
- BBC Country Profile: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13036732>
- CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/angola/>
- Diário da República - Lei n.º 14/24 Da Divisão Político-Administrativa: <https://mpla.ao/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Lei14.24de5deSetembro.pdf>
- Ethnologue: www.ethnologue.com (for information on languages)
- FCDO Geographical Names Index (GNI): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/geographical-names-and-information>
- FCDO Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/angola>
- Governo de Angola: <https://governo.gov.ao/>
- Instituto Geodésia e Cartografia de Angola: <https://www.igca.gov.ao/home>
- Instituto Nacional de Estatística: <https://www.ine.gov.ao/>
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP) : <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui#home>
- Omniglot: www.omniglot.com (for information on languages and scripts)
- PCGN Country Names list: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/country-names>
- Unicode: www.unicode.org
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: [GNS Search & Download WebApp \(nga.mil\)](https://www.gns.gov)

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