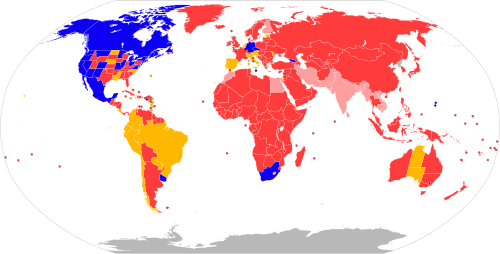
The **legality of cannabis** for [medical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medical_cannabis) and [recreational](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recreational_drug_use) use varies by country, in terms of its possession, distribution, and cultivation, and (in regards to medical) how it can be consumed and what medical conditions it can be used for. These policies in most countries are [regulated by three United Nations treaties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_and_international_law): the 1961 [Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_Convention_on_Narcotic_Drugs), the 1971 [Convention on Psychotropic Substances](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_Psychotropic_Substances), and the 1988 [Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Convention_Against_Illicit_Traffic_in_Narcotic_Drugs_and_Psychotropic_Substances).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis#cite_note-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis#cite_note-2) Cannabis is only scheduled under the Single Convention and was [reclassified in 2020](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Removal_of_cannabis_and_cannabis_resin_from_Schedule_IV_of_the_Single_Convention_on_narcotic_drugs,_1961) to a Schedule I-only drug (from being both Schedule I and IV drug previously, with the schedules from strictest to least being IV, I, II, and III).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis#cite_note-3)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis#cite_note-:53-4) As a Schedule I drug under the treaty, countries can allow the medical use of cannabis but it is considered to be an addictive drug with a serious risk of abuse.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis#cite_note-schedules-5)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis#cite_note-:0-6) and may be able to regulate non-medical cannabis industry under its [Article 2 paragraph 9](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_2_paragraph_9_of_the_Single_Convention_on_narcotic_drugs).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis#cite_note-:52-7)

The use of [cannabis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_(drug)) for recreational purposes is prohibited in most countries; however, many have adopted a policy of [decriminalization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decriminalization) to make simple possession a non-criminal offense (often similar to a minor traffic violation). Others have much more severe penalties such as some [Middle Eastern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East) and [Far Eastern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Far_East) countries where possession of even small amounts is punished by imprisonment for several years.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis#cite_note-8) Countries that have legalized recreational use of cannabis are [Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_Canada), [Georgia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_Georgia_(country)), [Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_Germany), [Luxembourg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_Luxembourg), [Malta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_Malta), [South Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_South_Africa), and [Uruguay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_Uruguay), plus 24 states, 3 territories, and the [District of Columbia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_Washington,_D.C.) in the [United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_the_United_States) and the [Australian Capital Territory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Capital_Territory) in [Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_Australia). Commercial sale of recreational cannabis is legalized nationwide in two countries (Canada and Uruguay) and in all subnational U.S. jurisdictions that have legalized possession except Virginia and Washington, D.C. A policy of limited enforcement has also been adopted in many countries, in particular the [Netherlands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_in_the_Netherlands) where the sale of cannabis is tolerated at [licensed coffeeshops](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffeeshop_(Netherlands)).[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis#cite_note-coffeeshops-9)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map-of-world-cannabis-laws.svg)**Adult legal status of cannabis possession for recreational use**1

  Legal

  Illegal but [decriminalized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decriminalized)

  Illegal but often [unenforced](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unenforced)

  Illegal