

## Venezuela

Known since 1999 as the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, is a country on the northern coast of South America.

Su ubicación geográfica se corresponde con el Hemisferio Norte, su límite sur está muy cercano a la línea del Ecuador terrestre. Su territorio está compuesto por una compacta masa continental que se extiende equitativamente de este a oeste y de norte a sur; también posee un conjunto de cientos de archipiélagos, islas e islotes en el Mar Caribe. Su geografía le concede una gran diversidad de recursos naturales, principalmente genéticos y minerales, así como de especies y ecosistemas, por lo que es considerado un país megadiverso.

Human habitation of Venezuela is estimated to have commenced at least 15,000 years ago, from which period leaf-shaped flake tools, together with chopping and plano-convex scraping implements, have been found exposed on the high riverine terraces of the Rio Pedregal in western Venezuela.

Some 49% of the estimated 27,483,200 Venezuelans are Mestizo (mixed white and Amerindian ancestry); another 41% are white Latin American, mostly of Italian, Spanish, German, and Portuguese stock. Other important minority groups include Afro-Venezuelans (7%), and Asians (2%), who are of predominantly Arab and Chinese descent. Only 1% of Venezuelans are Amerindian. These groups were joined by sponsored migrants from throughout Europe and neighboring parts of South America during waves of immigration in the early 20th century; many were attracted again, by the mid-20th century economic boom. About 85% of the population live in urban areas in northern Venezuela; 73% live less than 100 kilometres from the coastline. Though almost half of Venezuela's land area lies south of the Orinoco, only 5% of Venezuelans live there. The national and official language is Spanish; 31 indigenous languages are also spoken, including Guajibo, Pemon, Warao, Wayuu, and the various Yanomaman languages.

Venezuelan culture has been shaped by indigenous, Spanish and Italian, and some African influences. Before this period, indigenous culture was expressed in art (petroglyphs), crafts, architecture (shabonos), and social organization. Aboriginal culture was subsequently assimilated by Spaniards; over the years, the hybrid culture had diversified by region. Venezuela is among the most urbanized countries in Latin America; the vast majority of Venezuelans live in the cities of the north, especially in the largest metropolis, Caracas. Other major cities include Maracay, Maracaibo, Barquisimeto, Valencia, and Ciudad Guayana. Venezuela is also home to a diversity of wildlife in a variety of protected habitats.

The people of Venezuela are mostly Christians. The music that Venezuela is renowned for is the 'Gaita'. Also the 'llanero' is pretty famous. The two dance forms of repute in Venezuela are 'Salsa' and 'Merengue'.

The petroleum sector dominates Venezuela's mixed economy, accounting for roughly a third of GDP, around 80% of exports, and more than half of government revenues. The country's main petroleum deposits are located around and beneath Lake Maracaibo and the Gulf of Venezuela.

Venezuela is also highly dependent on its agricultural sector. Sectors with major potential for export-led growth are production of both coffee and cocoa crops.