





Venezuela, officially the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** is a country on the northern coast of South America, consisting of a <u>continental</u> landmass and many <u>islands and islets</u> in the <u>Caribbean Sea</u>. It has a territorial extension of 916,445 km² (353,841 sq. mi), and the population of Venezuela was estimated at 28 million in 2019. The capital and largest urban agglomeration is the city of <u>Caracas</u>.

The continental territory is bordered on the north by the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, on the west by Colombia, Brazil on the south, Trinidad and Tobago to the north-east and on the east by Guyana. The Venezuelan government maintains a claim against Guyana to Guayana Esequiba. Venezuela is a federal presidential republic consisting of 23 states, the Capital District and federal dependencies covering Venezuela's offshore islands. Venezuela is among the most urbanized countries in Latin America; the vast majority of Venezuelans live in the cities of the north and in the capital.

The territory of Venezuela was <u>colonized by Spain</u> in 1522 amid resistance from indigenous peoples. In 1811, it became one of the first Spanish-American territories to <u>declare independence</u> from the Spanish and to form part, as a department, of the first federal Republic of Colombia (historiographically known as <u>Gran Colombia</u>). It separated as a full sovereign country in 1830. During the 19th century, Venezuela suffered political turmoil and autocracy, remaining dominated by regional <u>military dictators</u> until the mid-20th century. Since 1958, the country has had a series of democratic governments, as an exception where most of the region was ruled by military dictatorships, and the period was characterized by economic prosperity. Economic shocks in the <u>1980s</u> and 1990s led to major political crises and widespread social unrest, including the deadly <u>Caracazo</u> riots of 1989, <u>two attempted coups in 1992</u>, and the <u>impeachment of a President</u> for embezzlement of public funds charges in 1993. The collapse in confidence in the existing parties saw the <u>1998 Venezuelan presidential election</u>, the catalyst for the <u>Bolivarian Revolution</u>, which began with a <u>1999 Constituent Assembly</u>, where a new <u>Constitution of Venezuela</u> was imposed. The government <u>populist social welfare</u> policies were bolstered by soaring oil prices, temporarily increasing social spending, and reducing <u>economic inequality</u> and poverty in the early years of the regime. The <u>2013 Venezuelan presidential election</u> was widely disputed leading to <u>widespread protest</u>, which triggered another nationwide <u>crisis</u> that continues to this day.

Venezuela is a <u>developing country</u> and ranks 113th on the <u>Human Development Index</u>. It has the world's <u>largest known oil reserves</u> and has been one of the world's leading <u>exporters of oil</u>. Previously, the country was an underdeveloped exporter of agricultural commodities such as coffee and <u>cocoa</u>, but oil quickly came to dominate exports and government revenues. The excesses and poor policies of the incumbent government led to the collapse of Venezuela's entire economy. The country struggles with record <u>hyperinflation</u>, <u>shortages of basic goods</u>, unemployment, poverty, disease, high child mortality, <u>malnutrition</u>, severe crime and corruption. These factors have precipitated the <u>Venezuelan migrant crisis</u> where more than three million people have fled the country. By 2017, Venezuela was declared to be in <u>default</u> regarding debt payments by <u>credit rating agencies</u>. The crisis in Venezuela has contributed to a rapidly deteriorating <u>human rights situation</u>, including increased abuses such as torture, arbitrary imprisonment, extrajudicial killings and attacks on human rights advocates. Venezuela is a charter member of the UN, OAS, UNASUR, ALBA, Mercosur, LAIA and OEI.

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The First Lions Club was Barquisimeto-Central chartered in 1943.

Updated 05/28/2021: Removed the Unknown pin on page 6 and replaced it with the Tie Tack on page 5.







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Believed to be handouts





