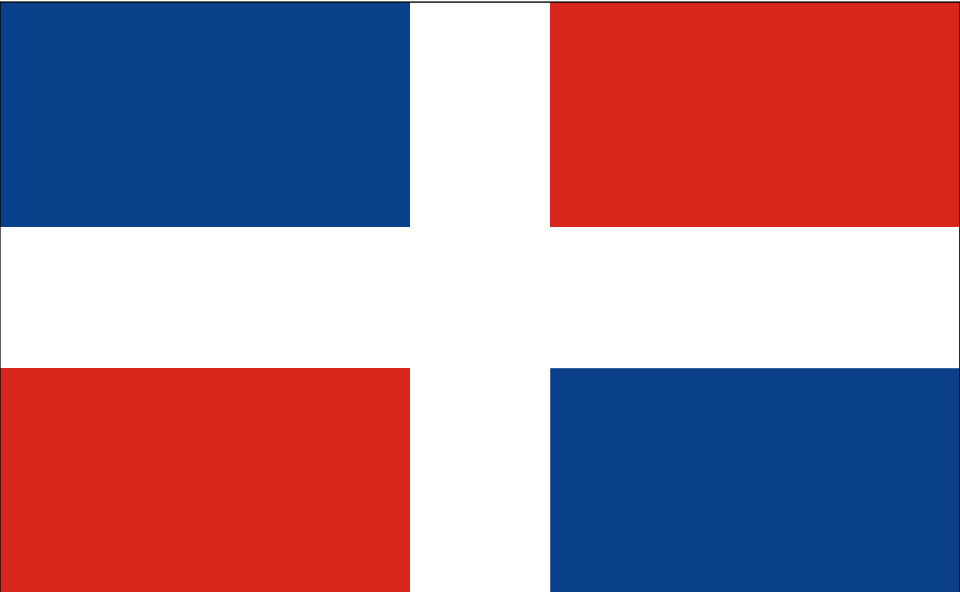




DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
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Introduction

Dominican Republic

Background: Explored and claimed by Christopher COLUMBUS on his first voyage in 1492, the island of Hispaniola became a springboard for Spanish conquest of the Caribbean and the American mainland. In 1697, Spain recognized French dominion over the western third of the island, which in 1804 became Haiti. The remainder of the island, by then known as Santo Domingo, sought to gain its own independence in 1821, but was conquered and ruled by the Haitians for 22 years; it finally attained independence as the Dominican Republic in 1844. In 1861, the Dominicans voluntarily returned to the Spanish Empire, but two years later they launched a war that restored independence in 1865. A legacy of unsettled, mostly non-representative rule followed, capped by the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas TRUJILLO from 1930-61. Juan BOSCH was elected president in 1962, but was deposed in a military coup in 1963. In 1965, the United States led an intervention in the midst of a civil war sparked by an uprising to restore BOSCH. In 1966, Joaquin BALAGUER defeated BOSCH in an election to become president. BALAGUER maintained a tight grip on power for most of the next 30 years when international reaction to flawed elections forced him to curtail his term in 1996. Since then, regular competitive elections have been held in which opposition candidates have won the presidency. Former President (1996-2000) Leonel FERNANDEZ Reyna won election to a second term in 2004 following a constitutional amendment allowing presidents to serve more than one term.

Geography

Dominican Republic

Location: Caribbean, eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola, between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, east of Haiti

Geographic coordinates: 19 00 N, 70 40 W

Map references: Central America and the Caribbean

Area: *total:* 48,730 sq km

land: 48,380 sq km

water: 350 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly more than twice the size of New Hampshire

Land boundaries: *total:* 360 km

border countries: Haiti 360 km

Coastline: 1,288 km

Maritime claims: measured from claimed archipelagic straight baselines
territorial sea: 6 nm
contiguous zone: 24 nm
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm
continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

Climate: tropical maritime; little seasonal temperature variation; seasonal variation in rainfall

Terrain: rugged highlands and mountains with fertile valleys interspersed

Elevation extremes: *lowest point*: Lago Enriquillo -46 m
highest point: Pico Duarte 3,175 m

Natural resources: nickel, bauxite, gold, silver

Land use: *arable land*: 22.49%
permanent crops: 10.26%
other: 67.25% (2005)

Irrigated land: 2,750 sq km (2003)

Total renewable water resources: 21 cu km (2000)

Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural): *total*: 3.39 cu km/yr (32%/2%/66%)
per capita: 381 cu m/yr (2000)

Natural hazards: lies in the middle of the hurricane belt and subject to severe storms from June to October; occasional flooding; periodic droughts

Environment - current issues: water shortages; soil eroding into the sea damages coral reefs; deforestation

Environment - international agreements: *party to*: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Marine Dumping, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands
signed, but not ratified: Law of the Sea

Geography - note: shares island of Hispaniola with Haiti

People**Dominican Republic**

Population:	9,507,133 (July 2008 est.)
Age structure:	<i>0-14 years:</i> 31.8% (male 1,537,981/female 1,482,546) <i>15-64 years:</i> 62.4% (male 3,029,349/female 2,905,471) <i>65 years and over:</i> 5.8% (male 255,898/female 295,888) (2008 est.)
Median age:	<i>total:</i> 24.7 years <i>male:</i> 24.6 years <i>female:</i> 24.8 years (2008 est.)
Population growth rate:	1.495% (2008 est.)
Birth rate:	22.65 births/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Death rate:	5.3 deaths/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Net migration rate:	-2.4 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Sex ratio:	<i>at birth:</i> 1.04 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.04 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 1.04 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.86 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 1.03 male(s)/female (2008 est.)
Infant mortality rate:	<i>total:</i> 26.93 deaths/1,000 live births <i>male:</i> 29.01 deaths/1,000 live births <i>female:</i> 24.78 deaths/1,000 live births (2008 est.)
Life expectancy at birth:	<i>total population:</i> 73.39 years <i>male:</i> 71.61 years <i>female:</i> 75.24 years (2008 est.)
Total fertility rate:	2.78 children born/woman (2008 est.)
HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:	1.7% (2003 est.)
HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:	88,000 (2003 est.)
HIV/AIDS - deaths:	7,900 (2003 est.)

Major infectious *degree of risk*: high
diseases: *food or waterborne diseases*: bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever
vectorborne diseases: dengue fever and malaria
water contact disease: leptospirosis (2008)

Nationality: *noun*: Dominican(s)
adjective: Dominican

Ethnic groups: mixed 73%, white 16%, black 11%

Religions: Roman Catholic 95%, other 5%

Languages: Spanish

Literacy: *definition*: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 87%
male: 86.8%
female: 87.2% (2002 census)

Government	Dominican Republic
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Country name: *conventional long form*: Dominican Republic
conventional short form: The Dominican
local long form: Republica Dominicana
local short form: La Dominicana

Government type: democratic republic

Capital: *name*: Santo Domingo
geographic coordinates: 18 28 N, 69 54 W
time difference: UTC-4 (1 hour ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions: 31 provinces (provincias, singular - provincia) and 1 district* (distrito);
Azua, Bahoruco, Barahona, Dajabon, Distrito Nacional*, Duarte, El Seibo, Elias Pina, Espaillat, Hato Mayor, Independencia, La Altagracia, La Romana, La Vega, Maria Trinidad Sanchez, Monsenor Nouel, Monte Cristi, Monte Plata, Pedernales, Peravia, Puerto Plata, Salcedo, Samana, San Cristobal, San Jose de Ocoa, San Juan, San Pedro de Macoris, Sanchez Ramirez, Santiago, Santiago Rodriguez, Santo Domingo, Valverde

Independence: 27 February 1844 (from Haiti)

National holiday: Independence Day, 27 February (1844)

Constitution: 28 November 1966; amended 25 July 2002

Legal system: based on French civil codes; Criminal Procedures Code modified in 2004 to include important elements of an accusatory system; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

- Suffrage: 18 years of age, universal and compulsory; married persons regardless of age; note - members of the armed forces and national police cannot vote
- Executive branch: *chief of state*: President Leonel FERNANDEZ Reyna (since 16 August 2004); Vice President Rafael ALBURQUERQUE de Castro (since 16 August 2004); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government
head of government: President Leonel FERNANDEZ Reyna (since 16 August 2004); Vice President Rafael ALBURQUERQUE de Castro (since 16 August 2004)
cabinet: Cabinet nominated by the president
elections: president and vice president elected on the same ticket by popular vote for four-year terms (eligible for a second consecutive term); election last held 16 May 2008 (next to be held in May 2012)
election results: Leonel FERNANDEZ reelected president; percent of vote - Leonel FERNANDEZ 53.6%, Miguel VARGAS 41%, Amable ARISTY less than 5%
- Legislative branch: bicameral National Congress or Congreso Nacional consists of the Senate or Senado (32 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms) and the House of Representatives or Camara de Diputados (178 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)
elections: Senate - last held 16 May 2006 (next to be held in May 2010); House of Representatives - last held 16 May 2006 (next to be held in May 2010)
election results: Senate - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - PLD 22, PRD 6, PRSC 4; House of Representatives - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - PLD 96, PRD 60, PRSC 22
- Judicial branch: Supreme Court or Corte Suprema (judges are appointed by the National Judicial Council comprised of the president, the leaders of both chambers of congress, the president of the Supreme Court, and an additional non-governing party congressional representative)
- Political parties and leaders: Dominican Liberation Party or PLD [Leonel FERNANDEZ Reyna]; Dominican Revolutionary Party or PRD [Ramon ALBURQUERQUE]; National Progressive Front [Vincent CASTILLO, Pelegrin CASTILLO]; Social Christian Reformist Party or PRSC [Enrique ANTUN]
- Political pressure groups and leaders: Citizen Participation Group (Participacion Ciudadania); Collective of Popular Organizations or COP; Foundation for Institution-Building and Justice (FINJUS)
- International organization participation: ACP, Caricom (observer), FAO, G-77, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICCT, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO (suspended), ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO (correspondent), ITSO, ITU, ITUC, LAES, LAIA (observer), MIGA, NAM, OAS, OPANAL, OPCW (signatory), PCA, RG, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, Union Latina, UNOCI, UNWTO, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador Flavio Dario ESPINAL Jacobo
chancery: 1715 22nd Street NW, Washington, DC 20008
telephone: [1] (202) 332-6280
FAX: [1] (202) 265-8057
consulate(s) general: Anchorage, Boston, Chicago, Mayaguez (Puerto Rico), Miami, New Orleans, New York, San Francisco, San Juan (Puerto Rico)

Diplomatic representation from the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador P. Robert FANNIN
embassy: corner of Calle Cesar Nicolas Penson and Calle Leopoldo Navarro, Santo Domingo
mailing address: Unit 5500, APO AA 34041-5500
telephone: [1] (809) 221-2171
FAX: [1] (809) 686-7437

Flag description: a centered white cross that extends to the edges divides the flag into four rectangles - the top ones are blue (hoist side) and red, and the bottom ones are red (hoist side) and blue; a small coat of arms featuring a shield supported by an olive branch (left) and a palm branch (right) is at the center of the cross; above the shield a blue ribbon displays the motto, DIOS, PATRIA, LIBERTAD (God, Fatherland, Liberty), and below the shield, REPUBLICA DOMINICANA appears on a red ribbon

Economy	Dominican Republic
Economy - overview:	The Dominican Republic has enjoyed strong GDP growth since 2005, with double digit growth in 2006. In 2007, exports were bolstered by the nearly 50% increase in nickel prices; however, prices are expected to fall in 2008, contributing to a slowdown in GDP growth for the year. Although the country has long been viewed primarily as an exporter of sugar, coffee, and tobacco, in recent years the service sector has overtaken agriculture as the economy's largest employer due to growth in tourism and free trade zones. The economy is highly dependent upon the US, the source of nearly three-fourths of exports, and remittances represent about a tenth of GDP, equivalent to almost half of exports and three-quarters of tourism receipts. With the help of strict fiscal targets agreed to in the 2004 renegotiation of an IMF standby loan, President FERNANDEZ has stabilized the country's financial situation, lowering inflation to less than 6%. A fiscal expansion is expected for 2008 prior to the elections in May and for Tropical Storm Noel reconstruction. Although the economy is growing at a respectable rate, high unemployment and underemployment remains an important challenge. The country suffers from marked income inequality; the poorest half of the population receives less than one-fifth of GNP, while the richest 10% enjoys nearly 40% of national income. The Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) came into force in March 2007, which should boost investment and exports and diminishes losses to the Asian garment industry.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$61.79 billion (2007 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$36.4 billion (2007 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 8.5% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$7,000 (2007 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: *agriculture*: 11.7%
industry: 23.8%
services: 64.4% (2007 est.)

Labor force: 4.027 million (2007 est.)

Labor force - by occupation: *agriculture*: 17%
industry: 24.3%
services: 58.7% (1998 est.)

Unemployment rate: 15.6% (2007 est.)

Population below poverty line: 42.2% (2004)

Household income or consumption by percentage share: *lowest 10%*: 1.4%
highest 10%: 41.1% (2004)

Distribution of family income - Gini index: 51.6 (2004)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 6.1% (2007 est.)

Investment (gross fixed): 17.1% of GDP (2007 est.)

Budget: *revenues*: \$7.942 billion
expenditures: \$7.766 billion (2007 est.)

Public debt: 40.6% of GDP (2007 est.)

Agriculture - products: sugarcane, coffee, cotton, cocoa, tobacco, rice, beans, potatoes, corn, bananas; cattle, pigs, dairy products, beef, eggs

Industries: tourism, sugar processing, ferronickel and gold mining, textiles, cement, tobacco

Industrial production growth rate: 2.4% (2007 est.)

Electricity - production: 12.22 billion kWh (2005)

Electricity - consumption: 8.791 billion kWh (2005)

Electricity - exports: 0 kWh (2005)

Electricity - imports: 0 kWh (2005)

Oil - production: 12 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - consumption: 116,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - exports: 0 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - imports: 116,700 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - proved reserves: 0 bbl (1 January 2006 est.)

Natural gas - production: 0 cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - consumption: 239.8 million cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - exports: 0 cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - imports: 239.8 million cu m (2005)

Natural gas - proved reserves: 0 cu m (1 January 2006 est.)

Current account balance: -\$2.041 billion (2007 est.)

Exports: \$7.237 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Exports - commodities: ferronickel, sugar, gold, silver, coffee, cocoa, tobacco, meats, consumer goods

Exports - partners: US 66.9%, Belgium 3.7%, Finland 3.4% (2006)

Imports: \$13.82 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Imports - foodstuffs, petroleum, cotton and fabrics, chemicals and pharmaceuticals commodities:

Imports - partners: US 44.5%, Venezuela 8.5%, Colombia 6.5%, Mexico 5.9% (2006)

Economic aid - \$76.99 million (2005)
recipient:

Reserves of \$2.562 billion (31 December 2007 est.)
foreign exchange
and gold:

Debt - external: \$10.21 billion (31 December 2007 est.)

Stock of direct \$12.37 billion (2007 est.)
foreign
investment - at
home:

Stock of direct \$59 million (2007 est.)
foreign
investment -
abroad:

Market value of \$NA
publicly traded
shares:

Currency (code): Dominican peso (DOP)

Exchange rates: Dominican pesos per US dollar - 33.113 (2007), 33.406 (2006), 30.409 (2005), 42.12 (2004), 30.831 (2003)

Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications Dominican Republic

Telephones - main 897,000 (2006)
lines in use:

Telephones - 5.513 million (2007)
mobile cellular:

Telephone *general assessment*: relatively efficient system based on island-wide
system: microwave radio relay network
domestic: fixed telephone line density is about 10 per 100 persons; multiple providers of mobile cellular service with a subscribership of roughly 50 per 100 persons
international: country code - 1-809; landing point for the Americas Region Caribbean Ring System (ARCOS-1) fiber-optic telecommunications submarine cable that provides links to South and Central America, parts of the Caribbean, and US; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 120, FM 56, shortwave 4 (1998)

Television broadcast stations: 25 (2003)

Internet country code: .do

Internet hosts: 81,218 (2007)

Internet users: 1.232 million (2006)

Transportation Dominican Republic

Airports: 34 (2007)

Airports - with paved runways: *total: 15*
over 3,047 m: 3
2,438 to 3,047 m: 4
1,524 to 2,437 m: 4
914 to 1,523 m: 3
under 914 m: 1 (2007)

Airports - with unpaved runways: *total: 19*
1,524 to 2,437 m: 3
914 to 1,523 m: 5
under 914 m: 11 (2007)

Railways: *total: 517 km*
standard gauge: 375 km 1.435-m gauge
narrow gauge: 142 km 0.762-m gauge
note: additional 1,226 km operated by sugar companies in 1.076 m, 0.889 m, and 0.762-m gauges (2006)

Roadways: *total: 12,600 km*
paved: 6,224 km
unpaved: 6,376 km (2000)

Merchant marine: *total: 1 ship (1000 GRT or over) 1,587 GRT/1,165 DWT*
by type: cargo 1
registered in other countries: 1 (Panama 1) (2008)

Ports and terminals: Boca Chica, Caucedo, Puerto Plata, Rio Haina, Santo Domingo

Military	Dominican Republic
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Military branches: Army, Navy, Air Force (Fuerza Aerea Dominicana, FAD) (2007)

Military service age and obligation: 18 years of age for voluntary military service (2007)

Manpower available for military service: *males age 16-49: 2,440,203*
females age 16-49: 2,326,694 (2008 est.)

Manpower fit for military service: *males age 16-49: 2,020,490*
females age 16-49: 1,883,875 (2008 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually: *males age 16-49: 96,971*
females age 16-49: 93,116 (2008 est.)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP: 0.8% (2006)

Transnational Issues	Dominican Republic
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Disputes - international: Haitian migrants cross the porous border into the Dominican Republic to find work; illegal migrants from the Dominican Republic cross the Mona Passage each year to Puerto Rico to find better work

Trafficking in persons: *current situation:* the Dominican Republic is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor; a large number of Dominican women are trafficked into prostitution and sexual exploitation in Western Europe, Australia, Central and South America, and Caribbean destinations; a significant number of women, boys, and girls are trafficked within the country for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude
tier rating: Tier 2 Watch List - for a second consecutive year, the Dominican Republic is on the Tier 2 Watch List for its failure to show evidence of increasing efforts to combat human trafficking, particularly in terms of not adequately investigating and prosecuting public officials who may be complicit with trafficking activity, and inadequate government efforts to protect trafficking victims; the government has taken measures to reduce demand for commercial sex acts with children through criminal prosecutions (2008)

Illicit drugs: transshipment point for South American drugs destined for the US and Europe; has become a transshipment point for ecstasy from the Netherlands and Belgium destined for US and Canada; substantial money laundering activity; Colombian narcotics traffickers favor the Dominican Republic for illicit financial transactions; significant amphetamine consumption

Information current as of 7 August, 2008

SOURCES: The CIA World Factbook

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