Haiti

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Haiti (🔊[i]/'heɪti/; French: *Haïti* [a.iti]; Haitian Creole *Ayiti* [ajiti]), officially the **Republic of Haiti** (*République d'Haïti*; *Repiblik Ayiti*[7]), is a Caribbean country. It occupies the western, smaller portion of the island of Hispaniola, in the Greater Antillean archipelago, which it shares with the Dominican Republic. In addition, Haiti also occupies small satellite islands known for tourists, including; "Île-à-Vache", which includes Port Morgan and Abaka Bay. In French, the country's nickname is *La Perle des Antilles* (The Pearl of the Antilles), because of its natural beauty. It is the most mountainous nation in the Caribbean and the country's highest point is Pic la Selle, at 2,680 metres (8,793 ft).[8] By area, Haiti is the third largest Caribbean nation (after Cuba and the Dominican Republic), with 27,750 square kilometres (10,714 sq mi) (roughly the size of the U.S. state of Hawaii or the country of Belgium).[9][10] By population, Haiti is the second largest Caribbean nation, with an estimated 10.7 million people, just under a million of whom live in the capital city, Port-au-Prince.

Haiti's regional, historical, and ethno-linguistic position is unique for several reasons. Originally inhabited by the indigenous Taíno people, the island was first discovered by Christopher Columbus during his first voyage across the Atlantic in 1492. When Columbus first landed in Haiti (western Hispaniola), he had thought he had found India or Asia.[8] His flagship, the *Santa Maria*, sank after running aground on December 25 in the north coast of what is now present day Haiti.[11][12] Deciding to establish a settlement in the area, a contingent of men were left at an outpost christened La Navidad, because the wreck occurred on Christmas day, north from the modern town of Limonade[13][14]

Gaining its independence in 1804, Haiti was the first independent nation of Latin America and the Caribbean, the second republic successful in a war of independence against a European colonial power in the Americas, the only nation in the western hemisphere to have defeated three European great powers (Britain, France, and Spain), and the only nation in the world established as a result of a successful slave revolt. The rebellion, begun in 1791, was led by a former slave and the first black general of the French Army, Toussaint Louverture, whose military genius and political acumen transformed an entire society of slaves into the independent country. Upon his death in a prison in France, he was

Republic of Haiti	
République d'Haïti (French)	
Repiblik Ayiti (Haitian Creole)	

Flag	Coat of arms

Motto:
"Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité" (French) [1]
"Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood"
Motto on traditional coat of arms:
"L'union fait la force" (French)
"Union makes strength"

Anthem: *La Dessalinienne* (French)
The Dessalines Song

0:00	**MENU**

succeeded by his lieutenant, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who declared Haiti's sovereignty and later became the first emperor of Haiti, *Jacques I*.[15][16][17][18][19][20] Its successful revolution by slaves and free people of color lasted nearly a decade; and apart from Alexandre Pétion, the first President of the Republic, all the first leaders of government were former slaves.[21] The Citadelle Laferrière, is the largest fortress in the Americas located in northern Haiti, built by former slave Henri Christophe, who was the drummer boy at the pivotal Siege of Savannah in the American Revolution, along with the French Army and more than 500 Haitian volunteers from Saint-Domingue, later becoming the first king of Haiti, *Henri I*. It was built between 1805 and 1820 in order to sustain a future European attack and is today known as the eighth wonder of the world.[22][23]

With 10.4 million people, Haiti is the most populous full member-state of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The country is also a member of the Latin Union. In 2012, Haiti announced its intention to seek associate membership status in the African Union.[24] It has the lowest Human Development Index in the Americas. Political violence has occurred regularly throughout its history, leading to government instability. Most recently, in February 2004, a *coup d'état* originating in the north of the country forced the resignation and exile of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. A provisional government took control with security provided by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Michel Martelly, the current president, was elected in the 2011 general election.

Contents
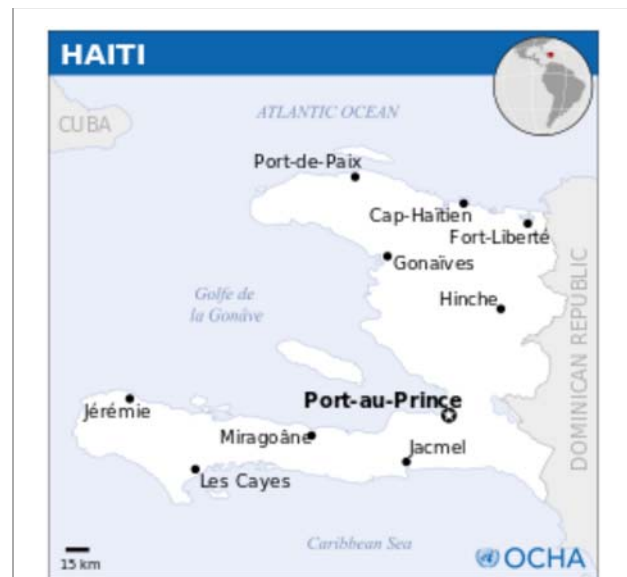
HAITI

Capital and largest city	Port-au-Prince 18°32′N 72°20′W
Official languages	French Haitian Creole
Demonym	Haitian
Government	Unitary semi-presidential republic
- President	Michel Martelly
- Prime Minister	Laurent Lamothe
Legislature	Parliament
- Upper house	Senate
- Lower house	Chamber of Deputies
Independence from France	
- Independence declared	1 January 1804
- Recognized by France	17 April 1825
Area	
- Total	27,750 km² (140th) 10,714 sq mi
- Water (%)	0.7
Population	
- (July 2014 est.) estimate	9,996,731[2] (84th)
- Density	350.27/km² (32nd) 907.22/sq mi
GDP (PPP)	2014 (Jan) estimate
- Total	$12.942 billion[3]
- Per capita	$1,242[3]

GDP (nominal)	2014 (Jan) estimate
- Total	$8.46 billion[3]
- Per capita	$473.3[3]
Gini (2001)	59.2[4] high
HDI (2013)	▬ 0.471[5] low · 168th
Currency	Gourde (HTG)
Time zone	EST (UTC−5)
- Summer (DST)	EDT (UTC−4)
Drives on the	right
Calling code	+509
ISO 3166 code	HT
Internet TLD	.ht .gouv.ht .edu.ht[6]

Etymology

The name *Haïti* comes from the indigenous Taíno language. It is the French spelling for the original word *Ayiti*, which was the native name given to the entire island of Hispaniola to mean, "*land of high mountains"*. The original spelling is kept in Haitian Creole, but since the *h* is silent in French, the pronunciation remains the same. The *ï* in Haïti, is a pronunciation accent used to show that the second vowel is to be pronounced separately, as in the word *naïve*. Without the pronunciation accent, the same rule is applied for Ay**ï**ti. In English, the rules for the pronunciation are disregarded; thus the spelling *Haiti* is used, with the *h* pronounced.

History

Pre-European history

The five caciquedoms of Hispaniola at the time of the arrival of Christopher Columbus.

At the time of European encounter, the island of Hispaniola, of which Haiti occupies the western three-eighths,[25][26] was one of many Caribbean islands inhabited by the Taíno Indians, speakers of an Arawakan language called Taino, which has been preserved in the Haitian Creole language. The Taíno name for the entire island was either *Ayiti* or *Kiskeya (Quisqueya).* The people had migrated over centuries into the Caribbean islands from South America. Genetic studies show they were related to the Yanamamo of the Amazon Basin. After migrating to Caribbean islands, in the 15th century, the Taíno were pushed into the northeast Caribbean islands by the Caribs.[27] They also originated in Central and South America.

In the Taíno societies of the Caribbean Islands, the largest unit of political organization was led by a *cacique,* or chief, as the Europeans understood them. The island of Ayiti was divided among five Caciquats: the Magua in the north east, the Marien in the north west, the Xaragua in the south west, the Maguana in the center region of Cibao and the Higuey in the south east or six long-established caciquedoms[28][29] The caciquedoms were tributary kingdoms, with payment consisting of harvests.

Taíno cultural artifacts include cave paintings in several locations in the country. These have become national symbols of Haiti and tourist attractions. Modern-day Léogane, started as a French colonial town in the southwest, is located at the site of the former capital of the caciquedom of *Xaragua.*[27]

Colonial era

Navigator Christopher Columbus landed at Môle Saint-Nicolas on 5 December 1492, and claimed the island for Spain. Nineteen days later, his ship the *Santa María* ran aground near the present site of Cap-Haïtien. Columbus left 39 men on the island, who founded the settlement of La Navidad.

The sailors carried endemic Eurasian infectious diseases. The natives lacked immunity to these new diseases and died in great numbers in epidemics.[30][31] The first recorded smallpox epidemic in the Americas erupted on Hispaniola in 1507.[32] The *encomienda* system forced natives to work in gold mines and plantations.[33]

1510 Taíno pictograph telling a story of missionaries arriving in Hispaniola

The Spanish passed the Laws of Burgos, 1512–1513, which forbade the maltreatment of natives, endorsed their conversion to Catholicism,[34] and gave legal framework to *encomiendas*. The natives were brought to these sites to work in specific plantations or industries.[35]

As a gateway to the Caribbean, Hispaniola became a haven for pirates during the early colonial period. The western part of the island was settled by French buccaneers. Among them was Bertrand d'Ogeron, who succeeded in growing tobacco. He recruited many French colonial families from Martinique and Guadeloupe. European nations were competing for control in the New World, in the Caribbean as well as in North America. France and Spain settled their hostilities on the island, by way of the Treaty of Ryswick of 1697, and divided Hispaniola between them.

France received the western third and subsequently named it Saint-Domingue, the French equivalent of *Santo Domingo*, the Spanish colony of Hispaniola and the name of its patron saint, Saint Dominic.[36] To develop it into sugar cane plantations, they imported thousands of slaves from Africa. Sugar was a lucrative commodity crop throughout the 18th century. By 1789, approximately 40,000 French colonists lived in Saint-Domingue.[37] In contrast, by 1763 the French population of Canada, a vast territory, had numbered 65,000.[38] The (white) French were vastly outnumbered by the tens of thousands of (Black African) slaves they had imported to work on their plantations, which were primarily devoted to the production of sugar cane. In the north of the island, slaves were able to retain many ties to African cultures, religion, and language; these ties were continually being renewed by newly-imported Africans. Blacks outnumbered whites by about ten-to-one.

The French-enacted *Code Noir* ("Black Code"), prepared by Jean-Baptiste Colbert and ratified by Louis XIV, had established rules on slave treatment and permissible freedoms. Saint-Domingue has been described as one of the most brutally efficient slave colonies; one-third of newly-imported Africans died within a few years.[39] Many slaves died from diseases such as smallpox and typhoid fever.[40] They had low birth rates, and there is evidence that some women aborted fetuses rather than give birth to children within the bonds of slavery.

As in its Louisiana colony, the French colonial government allowed some rights to free people of color: the mixed-race descendants of white male colonists and black female slaves (and later, mixed-race women). Over time, many were released from slavery. They established a separate social class. White French Creole fathers frequently sent their mixed-race sons to France for their education. Some men of color were admitted into the military. More of the free people of color lived in the south of the island, near Port-au-Prince, and many intermarried within their community. They frequently worked as artisans and tradesmen, and began to own some property. Some became slave holders. The free people of color petitioned the colonial government to expand their rights.

Revolution

Inspired by the French Revolution of 1789 and principles of the rights of man, free people of color and slaves in Saint-Domingue and the French West Indies pressed for freedom and more civil rights. Most important was the revolution of the slaves in Saint-Domingue, starting in the northern plains in 1791, where Africans greatly outnumbered the whites.

Burning of the town of Cap-Français

In 1792, the French government sent three commissioners with troops to re-establish control. To build an alliance with the *gens de couleur* and slaves, the French commissioners Sonthonax and Polverel abolished slavery in the colony. Six months later, the National Convention, led by Robespierre and the Jacobins, endorsed abolition and extended it to all the French colonies.[41]

Political leaders in the United States, which was a new republic itself, reacted with ambivalence, at times providing aid to enable planters to put down the revolt. Later in the revolution, the US provided support to black Haitian military forces, with the goal of reducing French influence in North America and the Caribbean.[42]

Toussaint Louverture, a former slave and leader in the slave revolt, drove out the Spanish (from Santo Domingo) and the British invaders who threatened the colony. In the uncertain years of revolution, the United States played both sides off against each other, with its traders supplying both the French and the rebels.[43] The struggle within Haiti between the free people of color led by André Rigaud and the black Haitians led by Louverture devolved into the War of the Knives in 1799 and 1800.[44][45] Many surviving free people of color left the island as refugees.

After Louverture created a separatist constitution, Napoléon Bonaparte in 1802 sent an expedition of more than 20,000 men under the command of his brother-in-law, General Charles Leclerc, to retake the island. The French achieved some victories, but within a few months, most of the French troops had died from yellow fever.[46] More than 50,000 French troops died in an attempt to retake the colony, including 18 generals.[47] The French captured Louverture, transporting him to France for trial. He was imprisoned at Fort de Joux, where he died in 1803 of exposure and possibly tuberculosis.[39]

Battle between Polish troops in French service and the Haitian rebels.

The slaves, along with free *gens de couleur* and allies, continued their fight for independence. Jean-Jacques Dessalines defeated French troops at the Battle of Vertières on 18 November 1803, leading the first ever successful slave army revolution. In late 1803, France withdrew its remaining 7,000 troops from the island and Napoleon gave up his idea of re-establishing a North American empire. With the war going badly, he sold Louisiana (New France) to the United States, in the Louisiana Purchase.

Early post-independence

The independence of Saint-Domingue was proclaimed by Dessalines on 1 January 1804.[48] According to some estimates, the slave rebellion resulted in the deaths of 100,000 slaves and 24,000 of the 40,000 colonists.[49]

Fearful of the influence of the slaves' revolution, US President Thomas Jefferson refused to recognize the new

republic, as did most European nations. The US did not officially recognize Haiti for decades, until after the American Civil War. Haiti's new government was not supported by other republics.

The revolution led to a wave of emigration.[50] In 1809, nearly 10,000 refugees from Saint-Domingue settled *en masse* in New Orleans.[51] They doubled the city's population. In addition, the newly arrived slaves added to the city's African population.[52]

Dessalines was proclaimed "Emperor for Life" by his troops.[53] Dessalines at first offered protection to the white planters and others;[54] but once in power, he ordered the massacre of most whites, without regard to age or gender.[55] In the continuing competition for power, he was assassinated by rivals on 17 October 1806.[48]

Saint-Domingue was divided between the Kingdom of Haiti in the north, directed by Henri I, and a republic in the south, directed by Alexandre Pétion, an *homme de couleur*. Henri Christophe established a semi-feudal corvée system, with a rigid education and economic code.[56]

President Pétion gave military and financial assistance to the revolutionary leader Simón Bolívar, which were critical in enabling him to liberate the Viceroyalty of New Granada.[57] He was instrumental in aiding countries in South America achieve independence from Spain.

Pétion and Dessalines swearing allegiance to one another before God, painting by Guillon-Lethière

Beginning in 1821, President Jean Pierre Boyer, also an *homme de couleur* and successor to Pétion, reunified the two parts of St. Domingue and extended control over all of the western part of the island.[58] In addition, after Santo Domingo declared its independence from Spain, Boyer sent forces in to take control. Boyer ruled the entire island, ending slavery in Santo Domingo.[59] After Santo Domingo achieved independence from Haiti, it established a separate national identity that united the racially diverse people in this part of the island.

Struggling to revive the agricultural economy to produce commodity crops, Boyer passed the Code Rural, which denied peasant laborers the right to leave the land, enter the towns, or start farms or shops of their own. Following the Revolution, many peasants wanted to have their own farms rather than work on plantations.[60][61]

The American Colonization Society (ACS) encouraged free blacks in the United States to emigrate to Haiti. Starting in September 1824, more than 6,000 African Americans migrated to Haiti, with transportation paid by the ACS.[62] Many found the conditions too harsh and returned to the United States.

In July 1825, King Charles X of France, during a period of "restoration" for the monarchy, sent a fleet to reconquer the island. Under pressure, President Boyer agreed to a treaty by which France formally recognized the independence of the nation in exchange for a payment of 150 million francs (reduced to 90 million in 1838). After losing the support of Haiti's elite, Boyer was ousted in 1843. A long succession of coups followed his departure to exile.

Citadelle Laferrière, the largest fortress in the Americas, and the eighth wonder of the world[23]

The enforced payment to France reduced Haiti's economy for years. Western nations did not give Haiti formal

diplomatic recognition. Both of these problems kept the Haitian economy and society isolated. Expatriates bankrolled and armed opposing groups.[63] In 1892, the German government supported suppression of the reform movement of Anténor Firmin.

20th century

U.S. Marines and guide in search of bandits. circa 1919.

In January 1914, British, German and U.S. military forces entered Haiti, ostensibly to protect their citizens from civil unrest at the time.[63] In an expression of the Theodore Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, the United States occupied the island in 1915. U.S. Marines were stationed in the country until 1934, a period of twenty years.

Sisal was introduced to Haiti, and sugar and cotton became significant exports.[64] Haitian traditionalists, based in rural areas, were highly resistant to American-backed changes, while the urban elites wanted more control. Together they helped secure an end to the occupation in 1934.[65] The debts were still outstanding and the American financial advisor-general receiver handled the budget until 1941.[66]

Recognition of the distinctive traditionalism of the Haitian people had an influence on United States writers, including Eugene O'Neill, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston and Orson Welles.[67]

After US forces left in 1934, Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo used anti-Haitian sentiment as a nationalist tool. In an event that became known as the Parsley Massacre, he ordered his Army to kill Haitians living on the Dominican side of the border.[68][69] Between 10,000 and 20,000 Haitians were killed.[68] One-quarter Haitian, Trujillo continued policies against the neighboring population for some time.

Tourists started to visit Haiti from the United States and Europe in the 1950s.[70]

After a period of disorder, in September 1957 Dr. François Duvalier was elected President of Haiti. Known as "Papa Doc" and initially popular, Duvalier was President until his death in 1971. He advanced black interests in the public sector, where over time people of color had predominated as the educated urban elite.[71] He stayed in power by enlisting an organization known as *Tontons Macoutes* ("Bogeymen"), which maintained order by terrorizing the populace and political opponents.[72]

He was succeeded by his son Jean-Claude Duvalier – known also as "Bébé Doc" – who led the country from 1971 until his ouster in 1986. In 1986, protests against "Baby Doc" led him to seek exile in France. Army leader General Henri Namphy headed a new National Governing Council.[73] General elections in November were aborted after dozens of inhabitants were shot in the capital by soldiers and Tontons Macoutes. Fraudulent elections followed. The elected President, Leslie Manigat, was overthrown some months later in the June 1988 Haitian coup d'état. The September 1988 Haitian coup d'état, which followed the St Jean Bosco massacre, revealed the increasing prominence of former Tontons Macoutes. General Prosper Avril led a military regime until March 1990.
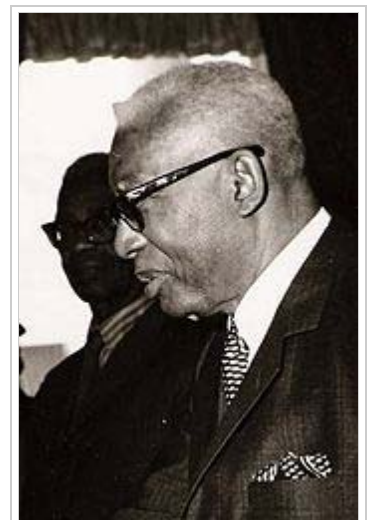
"Papa Doc" Duvalier in 1968

In December 1990, a former Catholic priest, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected President in the Haitian general election. In September of the following year, Aristide was overthrown by the military in the 1991 Haitian coup d'état. In 1994, an American team negotiated the departure of Haiti's military leaders and the peaceful entry of US forces under Operation Uphold Democracy. This enabled the restoration of the democratically elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide as president.[74] In October 1994, Aristide returned to Haiti to complete his term in office.[75] Aristide vacated the presidency in February 1996. In the 1995 election, René Préval was elected as president for a five-year term, winning 88% of the popular vote.

21st century

Port-au-Prince, 19 January 2010

The November 2000 election gave the presidency back to Aristide with an overwhelming 92% of the vote.[76] The election had been boycotted by the opposition, now organized into the Convergence Démocratique, over a dispute in the May legislative elections. In subsequent years, there was increasing violence and human rights abuses. Aristide supporters attacked the opposition.[77] Aristide spent years negotiating with the Convergence Démocratique on new elections, but the Convergence's inability to develop a sufficient electoral base made elections unattractive.

In 2004, a revolt began in northern Haiti. The rebellion eventually reached the capital; and Aristide was forced into exile, whereupon the United Nations stationed peacekeepers in Haiti. Some including Aristide and his bodyguard, Franz Gabriel, stated that he was the victim of a "new coup d'état or modern kidnapping" by U.S. forces. Mrs. Aristide stated that the kidnappers wore US Special Forces uniforms, but changed into civilian clothes upon boarding the aircraft that was used to remove Aristide from Haiti.[78][79] Boniface Alexandre assumed interim authority. René Préval was elected President in February 2006, following elections marked by uncertainties and popular demonstrations. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in

The National Palace following the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

Haiti (also known as MINUSTAH) remains in the country, having been there since the 2004 coup d'etat. The United States led a vast international campaign to prevent Aristide from returning to his country while he was exiled in South Africa. Released Wikileaks cables show that high-level U.S. and U.N. officials coordinated a politically motivated prosecution of Aristide to prevent him from "gaining more traction with the Haitian population and returning to Haiti." The United States and its allies allegedly poured tens of millions of dollars into unsuccessful efforts to slander Aristide as a drug trafficker, human rights violator, and heretical practitioner of vodou.[80]

In 2004, Tropical Storm Jeanne skimmed the north coast of Haiti, leaving 3,006 people dead in flooding and mudslides, mostly in the city of Gonaïves.[81] Haiti was again pummeled by tropical storms in late August and early September 2008. The storms – Tropical Storm Fay, Hurricane Gustav, Hurricane Hanna and Hurricane Ike – all produced heavy winds and rain in Haiti. Newspapers listed 331 dead and 800,000 in need of humanitarian aid.[82] The grim state of affairs produced by these storms was all the more life threatening due to already high food and fuel prices that had caused a food crisis and political unrest in April 2008.[83]

On 12 January 2010, at 4:53pm local time, Haiti was struck by a magnitude-7.0 earthquake. This was the country's most severe earthquake in over 200 years.[84] The 2010 Haiti earthquake was reported to have left up

to 316,000 people dead and 1.6 million homeless,[85] though later reports found these numbers to have been grossly inflated, and put the death toll between 46,000 and 85,000.[86] The country has yet to recover from the 2010 earthquake (and subsequent incidents) due to both the severity of the damage Haiti endured in 2010, as well as a government that was ineffective well before the earthquake.[87]

General elections had been planned for January 2010, but were postponed due to the earthquake. The elections were held on 28 November 2010 for senate, parliament and the first round of the presidential elections. The run-off between Michel Martelly and Mirlande Manigat took place on 20 March 2011, and preliminary results, released on 4 April, named Michel Martelly the winner.[88]

In 2013, Haiti called for European nations to pay reparations for slavery and established an official reparations commission.[89]

Geography

Satellite view of Haiti

Haiti is on the western part of Hispaniola, the second largest island in the Greater Antilles. Haiti is the third largest country in the Caribbean behind Cuba and the Dominican Republic (the latter shares a 360-kilometre (224 mi) border with Haiti). Haiti at its closest point is about 45 nautical miles (83 km; 52 mi) away from Cuba and comprises the *horseshoe*-shape peninsula and because of this, it has a disproportionately long coastline and is *second* in length (1,771 km or 1,100 mi) in the Greater Antilles. Cuba has the longest.[90][91] The country lies mostly between latitudes 18° and 20°N (Tortuga island lies just north of 20°), and longitudes 71° and 75°W. Haiti's terrain consists mainly of rugged mountains interspersed with small coastal plains and river valleys. The climate is tropical, with some variation depending on altitude.

Saut-d'Eau

The northern region consists of the *Massif du Nord* (Northern Massif) and the *Plaine du Nord* (Northern Plain). The *Massif du Nord* is an extension of the *Cordillera Central* in the Dominican Republic. It begins at Haiti's eastern border, north of the Guayamouc River, and extends to the northwest through the northern peninsula. The lowlands of the *Plaine du Nord* lie along the northern border with the Dominican Republic, between the *Massif du Nord* and the North Atlantic Ocean. The central region consists of two plains and two sets of mountain ranges. The *Plateau Central* (Central Plateau) extends along both sides of the Guayamouc River, south of the *Massif du Nord*. It runs from the southeast to the northwest. To the southwest of the *Plateau Central* are the *Montagnes Noires*, whose most northwestern part merges with the *Massif du Nord*. Its westernmost point is known as Cap Carcasse.

Labadee beach and village

The southern region consists of the Plaine du Cul-de-Sac (the southeast) and the mountainous southern peninsula

Étang Saumatre

(also known as the Tiburon Peninsula). The Plaine du Cul-de-Sac is a natural depression that harbors the country's saline lakes, such as Trou Caïman and Haiti's largest lake, Étang Saumatre. The Chaîne de la Selle mountain range – an extension of the southern mountain chain of the Dominican Republic (the Sierra de Baoruco) – extends from the Massif de la Selle in the east to the Massif de la Hotte in the west. This mountain range harbors Pic la Selle, the highest point in Haiti at 2,680 metres (8,793 ft).[92]

The country's most important valley in terms of crops is the Plaine de l'Artibonite, which is oriented south of the Montagnes Noires. This region supports the country's (also Hispaniola's) longest river, the Riviere l'Artibonite, which begins in the western region of the Dominican Republic and continues most of its length through central Haiti and onward where it empties into the Golfe de la Gonâve. The eastern and central region of the island is a large elevated plateau. Haiti also includes various offshore islands. The historically famous island of Tortuga (Île de la Tortue) is located off the coast of northern Haiti. The arrondissement of La Gonâve is located on the island of the same name, in the Golfe de la Gonâve. Gonâve Island is moderately populated by rural villagers. Île à Vache (Cow Island), a lush island with many beautiful sights, is located off the tip of southwestern Haiti. Also part of Haiti are the Cayemites and Île d' Anacaona. La Navasse located 40 nautical miles (46 mi; 74 km) west of Jérémie on the south west peninsula of Haiti,[93] is subject to an on-going territorial dispute with the United States.

Geology

There are blind thrust faults associated with the Enriquillo-Plantain Garden fault system over which Haiti lies.[94] After the Earthquake of 2010, there was no evidence of surface rupture and based on seismological, geological and ground deformation data.[95]

The northern boundary of the fault is where the Caribbean tectonic plate shifts eastwards by about 20 mm (0.79 inches) per year in relation to the North American plate. The strike-slip fault system in the region has two branches in Haiti, the Septentrional-Oriente fault in the north and the Enriquillo-Plantain Garden fault in the south.

A 2007 earthquake hazard study by C. DeMets and M. Wiggins-Grandison noted that the Enriquillo-Plantain Garden fault zone could be at the end of its seismic cycle and concluded that a worst-case forecast would involve a 7.2 M_w earthquake, similar in size to the 1692 Jamaica earthquake.[96] Paul Mann and a group including the 2006 study team presented a hazard assessment of the Enriquillo-Plantain Garden fault system to the 18th Caribbean Geologic Conference in March 2008, noting the large strain; the team recommended "high priority" historical geologic rupture studies, as the fault was fully locked and had recorded few earthquakes in the preceding 40 years.[97] An article published in Haiti's *Le Matin* newspaper in September 2008 cited comments by geologist Patrick Charles to the effect that there was a high risk of major seismic activity in Port-au-Prince.[98]

Haiti also has rare elements such as Gold, which can be found at The Mont Organisé gold mine.[99]

Environment

The soil erosion and deforestation have caused periodic and severe flooding in Haiti, as experienced, for example, on 17 September 2004. Earlier that year, in May, floods had killed over 3,000 people on Haiti's southern border with the Dominican Republic.[100]

There has been little marine, coastal, and river basin management. Forest cover in the steep hills surrounding Haiti's river basin retains soil, which in turn retains water from rainfall, reducing river flood peaks and conserving flows in the dry season. But deforestation has resulted in much of the soil being released from the upper catchments. Many of Haiti's rivers are now highly unstable, changing rapidly from destructive flooding to inadequate flows.[101] Scientists at the Columbia University's Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) and the United Nations Environment Programme are working on the Haiti Regenerative Initiative an initiative aiming to reduce poverty and natural disaster vulnerability in Haiti through ecosystem restoration and sustainable resource management.

Satellite image of Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic (right) shows the amount of deforestation on the Haitian side.

Flora

In 1925, Haiti was lush, with 60% of its original forest covering the lands and mountainous regions. Since then, Haiti's residents have cut down an estimated 98% of its original forest cover for use as fuel for cookstoves, destroying fertile farmland soils and contributing to desertification.[102]

Demographics

Although Haiti averages approximately 350 people per square kilometer (~900 per sq mi.), its population is concentrated most heavily in urban areas, coastal plains, and valleys. Haiti's population was about 10.1 million according to UN 2011 estimates,[103] with half of the population younger than age 20.[104] In 1950 the first formal census gave a total population of 3.1 million.[105]

Modern Haitians today are people who are descendants of former African slaves, Mulatto/Creole/Free people of color and the remaining white populations who survived the revolt. The percentage of Mulattoes for decades is given as a fixed 5% but is estimated to be as high as 15%. Haitian

Population of Haiti (in thousands) from 1961 to 2003

constitution specifies: All Citizens must be known as "Black" regardless of skin color, therefore it is kept as low as possible. Also poor mulattoes are regarded as being black. Smaller minority groups include people of Western European (French, German, Italian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish), Arab, Armenian, or Jewish origin. [106][107] Haitians of East Asian descent or East Indian origin number approximately 400+.[106]

Millions of Haitians live abroad in the United States, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Canada (primarily Montreal), Bahamas, France, French Antilles, the Turks and Caicos, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Brazil and French Guiana. There are an estimated 881,500 in the United States,[108] 800,000 in the Dominican Republic,[109] 300,000 in Cuba,[110] 100,000 in Canada,[111] 80,000 in France,[112] and up to 80,000 in the Bahamas.[113] But there are also smaller Haitian communities in many other countries, including Chile, Switzerland, Japan and Australia.

Casta discrimination

Due to the racial caste system instituted in colonial Haiti, Haitian mulattoes became the nation's social elite and

racially privileged. Numerous leaders throughout Haiti's history have been mulattoes. Comprising 5% of the nation's population, mulattoes have retained their preeminence, evident in the political, economic, social and cultural hierarchy in Haiti.[114] Alexandre Pétion, born to a Haitian mother and a wealthy French father, was the first President of the Republic of Haiti.

Religion

Around 80% of Haitians profess to be Catholics, led by Chibly Langlois, a Haitian Cardinal created by Pope Francis in Les Cayes. Protestants make up about 16% of the population (Baptist 10%, Pentecostal 4%, Adventist 1%, other 1%), and others make up 3% consisting of Islam, Bahá'í Faith, Judaism, and Buddhism.[115] Some Haitians combine their Catholicism with elements of vodou.[116]

Languages

The two official languages of Haiti are French and Haitian Creole. French is the principal written and administratively authorized language. It is spoken by all educated Haitians, is the medium of instruction in most schools, and is used in the business sector. It is also used in ceremonial events such as weddings, graduations and church masses. Haiti is one of two independent nations in the Americas (along with Canada) to designate French as an official language; the other French-speaking areas are all overseas *départements*, or *collectivités,* of France. Haitian Creole,[117] which recently undergone a standardization, is spoken by virtually the entire population of Haiti.[118] Haitian Creole is one of the French-based creole languages. Its vocabulary is 90% derived from French, but its grammar and influences are from some West African, Taino, Spanish, and Portuguese languages.[119] Haitian Creole is related to the other French creoles, but most closely to Antillean Creole and Louisiana Creole.

Emigration

Emigrants from Haiti have constituted a segment of American and Canadian society, before the independence of Haiti from France in 1804.

Haiti's proximity to the United States, and its status as a free black republic in the years before the American Civil War, have contributed to this relationship. Many influential early American settlers and black freemen, including Jean Baptiste Point du Sable and W. E. B. Du Bois, were of Haitian origin.[120][121][122][123]

Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, an immigrant from Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti), founded the first nonindigenous settlement in what is now Chicago, Illinois, the third largest city in the United States. The state of Illinois and city of Chicago declared du Sable the founder of Chicago on 26 October 1968.[120][121][122]

Largest cities

Government and politics

The government of Haiti is a semi-presidential republic, a multiparty system wherein the President of Haiti is head of state elected directly by popular elections.[124] The Prime Minister acts as head of government and is appointed by the President, chosen from the majority party in the National Assembly. Executive power is exercised by the President and Prime Minister who together constitute the government. In 2013, the annual budget was US$1 billion.[125]

Legislative power is vested in both the government and the two chambers of the National Assembly of Haiti. The government is organized unitarily, thus the central government *delegates* powers to the departments without a constitutional need for consent. The current structure of Haiti's political system was set forth in the Constitution of Haiti on 29 March 1987. The current president is Michel Martelly.

Voting in the 2006 elections in Port-au-Prince

Haitian politics have been contentious: since independence, Haiti has suffered 32 coups.[126] Haiti is the only country in the Western Hemisphere to undergo a successful slave revolution, but a long history of oppression by dictators – including François Duvalier and his son Jean-Claude Duvalier – has markedly affected the nation. France, the United States and other Western countries have repeatedly intervened in Haitian politics since the country's founding, sometimes at the request of one party or another. Along with international financial institutions, they have imposed large quantities of debt – so much that foreign debt payments have rivaled the available government budget for social sector spending. They also enforced trade policies that have broken down the Haitian government's ability to protect the local economy, forcing greater dependence on imports and eroding economic self-sufficiency.[127]

According to a Corruption Perceptions Index report in 2006, there is a strong correlation between corruption and poverty and Haiti ranked first of all countries surveyed for of levels of perceived domestic corruption.[128] The International Red Cross reports that seven out of ten Haitians live on less than US$2 a day, however, stated below "such statitical estimations should be looked upon very skeptically because of the fact that the average Haitian and Haitian family has to and does spend a lot more than that daily. The disconnect likely lies in the fact that these are estimates based on surveys conducted by asking individuals what their incomes are; in the Haitian culture it is very unlikely that one will receive a truthful and accurate answer to such a personal question. For various reasons individuals will not tell the truth on such a private matter. For some it is because "it's none of your business," for others, they will simply exaggerate their poor situation in hopes that some type of financial aide will be gained or rendered to them".[129]

Cité Soleil in Port-au-Prince, one of the biggest slums in the Northern Hemisphere, has been called "the most dangerous place on Earth" by the United Nations.[130] Many residents are supporters of former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide,[131] who, according to the BBC, "accused the US of forcing him out – an accusation the US rejected as 'absurd'".[132]

Jean-Bertrand Aristide was initially denied access to Haiti by Haitian immigration authorities, despite issuing appeals for entrance to his supporters and international observers. The world's most prominent governments did not overtly oppose such appeals, nor did they support them; an unnamed analyst "close to the Haitian government" quoted in several media sources – including *The New York Times* – is reported to have said: "Aristide could have 15 passports and he's still not going to come back to Haiti ... France and the United States are standing in the way." However, Aristide finally returned to Haiti on 18 March 2011, days before the 2011 presidential election.[133]

The first round of the 2010 general election was held in December. Mirlande Manigat and Jude Celestin qualified for the second round of the presidential election, but its results were contested. Some people said that the first round was a fraud and that Michel Martelly should replace Jude Celestin, René Préval's chosen successor. There was some violence between the contending parties.[134] On 4 April 2011, the Provisional Electoral Council announced preliminary results indicating that Martelly had won the presidential election.[135]

In February 2012, Haiti signaled it would seek to upgrade its observer status to full associate member status of

the African Union (AU).[136] At its next summit in June 2013, the AU plans to upgrade Haiti's status from observer to associate.[137]

In 2010, the Haitian National Police numbered 7,000.[138] The legal system for torts is based on a version of the Napoleonic Code.[139]

The Institute for the Protection of National Heritage has preserved 33 historical monuments and the historic center of Cap-Haïtien.[140]

U.S. Marines patrol the streets of Port-au-Prince on 14 April 2004

Cabinet

The executive function is divided into ministries, each led by a Minister appointed by the Prime Minister and confirmed by Parliament:[141][142]

Ministry	Minister	Address
Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation	Laurent Lamothe	347, Ave John Brown (Bourdon) Port - au Prince, HAITI
Ministry of the Environment	Jean François Thomas	Delmas 31, Rue Jacques 1 # 11, Port - au Prince
Ministry of Defense	Lener Renauld	
Ministry of Commerce and Industry	Wilson Laleau	
Ministry of Education and Professionals	Nesmy Manigat	5, Ave Jean-Paul II, Port - au Prince, Haiti
Ministry of Economy and Finance	Marie-Carmelle Jean-Marie	22 Avenue Charles Summer Port-au-Prince Haiti
Ministry of Justice and Public Security	Jean Renel Sanon	
Ministry of Communication	Rudy Heriveaux	
Ministry of Tourism	Stéphane Balmir Villedrouin	8, rue legitimate (Champs-de-Mars) Port - au Prince
Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development	Thomas Jacques	Route Nationale No.. 1, Damien Port - au Prince, Haiti
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor	Charles Jean-Jacques	
Ministry of Interior and Territorial Communities	Reginald Delva	
Ministry of Health	Florence Duperval Guillaume	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Duly Brutus	
Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communications (Haiti)	Jacques Rousseau	

Military

Haiti has a Ministry of Defense which serves as the country's main body of their armed forces.[143] The former Haitian Armed Forces were demobilized in 1995.[144]

Law enforcement and crime

Haiti has consistently ranked among the most corrupt countries in the world on the Corruption Perceptions Index.[145] It is estimated that President "Baby Doc" Duvalier, his wife Michelle, and their agents stole $504 million from the country's treasury between 1971 and 1986.[146]

Similarly, some media outlets alleged that millions were stolen by former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. [147][148][149][150] In March 2004, at the time of Aristide's being kidnapped, a BBC article wrote that the Bush administration State Department stated that Aristide had been involved in drug trafficking.[151] The BBC also described pyramid schemes, in which Haitians lost hundreds of millions in 2002, as the "only real economic initiative" of the Aristide years.[152]

### Departments, arrondissements and communes

Administratively, Haiti is divided into ten departments. The departments are listed below, with the departmental capital cities in parentheses.

1. Nord-Ouest (Port-de-Paix)
2. Nord (Cap-Haïtien)
3. Nord-Est (Fort-Liberté)
4. Artibonite (Gonaïves)
5. Centre (Hinche)
6. Ouest (Port-au-Prince)
7. Grand'Anse (Jérémie)
8. Nippes (Miragoâne)
9. Sud (Les Cayes)
10. Sud-Est (Jacmel)

Departments of Haiti

The departments are further divided into 41 arrondissements and 133 communes. These serve as, respectively, second- and third-level administrative divisions.

Economy

Graphical depiction of Haiti 's product exports in 28 color-coded categories.
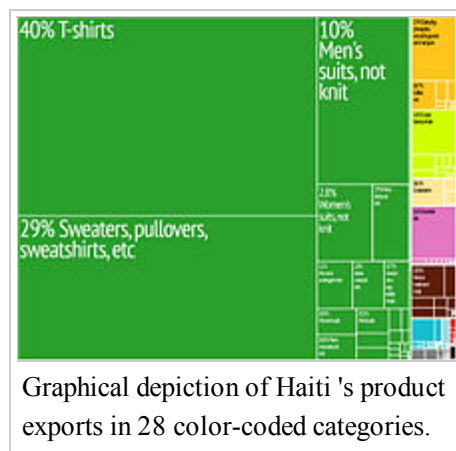
Haiti's purchasing power parity GDP fell 8% in 2010 (from $12.15 billion to $11.18 billion) and the GDP per capita remained unchanged at (PPP US$) 1,200.[115] Haiti ranked 145 of 182 countries in the 2010 United Nations Human Development Index, with 57.3% of the population being deprived in at least three of the HDI's poverty measures.[153]

Following the disputed 2000 election and accusations about President Aristide's rule,[154] US aid to the Haitian government was cut off between 2001 and 2004.[155] After Aristide's departure in 2004, aid was restored and the Brazilian army led a United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti peacekeeping operation. After almost four years of recession, the economy grew by 1.5% in 2005.[156] In September 2009, Haiti met the

conditions set out by the IMF and World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries program to qualify for cancellation of its external debt.[157]

Foreign aid

Foreign aid makes up approximately 30–40% of the national government's budget. The largest donor is the US, followed by Canada and the European Union.[158] Haiti received more than $4 billion in aid from 1990 to 2003, including $1.5 billion from the United States.[159] In January 2010, following the earthquake, China promised $4.2 million[160] and US President Barack Obama promised $1.15 billion in assistance.[161] European Union nations pledged more than 400 million euros ($616 million).[162]

Former US President Bill Clinton's foundation contributed $250,000 to a recycling initiative for a sister-program of "Ranmase Lajan" or "Picking Up Money" by use of reverse vending machines.[163]

Trade

Haiti has a large trade deficit of $3 billion in 2011, or 41% of GDP.[164]

In 2010, former US President Bill Clinton expressed regret and apologized for the US's trade policies with Haiti.[165]

Energy

Haiti has discovered no hydrocarbon resources on land or in the Gulf of Gonâve. It is dependent on energy imports (petroleum and petroleum products).[166]

Personal income

The World Factbook reports a shortage of skilled labor, widespread unemployment and underemployment, saying "more than two-thirds of the labor force do not have formal jobs." It is also often stated that three-quarters of the population lives on $2 or less per day, however such statistical estimations should viewed with skepticism because the average Haitian and Haitian family spends more than that daily. The disconnect likely lies in the fact that these are estimates based on surveys conducted by asking individuals what their incomes are; in the Haitian culture it is very unlikely that one will receive a truthful and accurate answer to such a personal question. For various reasons individuals will not tell the truth on such a private matter. For some it is because "it's none of your business," for others, they will simply exaggerate their poor situation in hopes that some type of financial aid will be gained or rendered to them. In other words foreign methods are being utilized irrespective of its appropriateness for the culture and situation at hand. With respect to the business environment reforms have had little effect because of widespread corruption and the inefficient judicial framework.[167]

The richest 1% own nearly half of Haiti's wealth.[152]

Most of the 500,000 residents of Cité Soleil live in poverty.[130] As of 2009, at least 225,000 Haitian children were working as restavecs (unpaid household servants). The United Nations considers this a modern-day form of slavery.[168]

The World Bank estimates that over 80% of college graduates from Haiti were living abroad in 2004, with their remittances home representing 52.7% of Haiti's GDP.[169]

Agriculture

Though more than half of all Haitians work in the agricultural sector, the country relies on imports for half its food needs and 80% of its rice.[170] Haiti exports crops such as mangoes, cacao, coffee, papayas, mahogany nuts, spinach, and watercress. Agricultural products comprise 6% of all exports.[164] In addition, local agricultural products include corn, beans, cassava, sweet potato, peanuts, pistachios, bananas, millet, pigeon peas and sugar cane.

Market in Cap Haitien

Currency

The Haitian gourde (HTG) is the national currency. Creole speakers will call U.S. dollars, *Dola Ameriken* or *Dola US* (pronounced *oos*), and gourdes, *goud* (rhymes fairly closely with the English "mood"). The vast majority of businesses and individuals in Haiti will accept U.S. dollars, though gourdes may be preferred in places such as outdoor markets.

The Haitian dollar equals 5 gourdes, and exists as a concept only. This exchange rate is fixed, with certain informal prices specified in Haitian dollars.[171]

Tourism

Seaside in Jacmel

In 2012, the country received 950,000 tourists (mostly from cruise ships), and the industry generated US$200 million in 2012.[125]

In December 2012, the US State Department issued a travel warning about the country, noting

Labadee, a cruise ship destination

that while thousands of American citizens safely visit Haiti each year, foreign tourists had been victims of violent crime, including murder and kidnapping, predominantly in the Port-au-Prince area.[172]

In 2012, several hotels were opened, including a Best Western Premier,[173] a five-star Royal Oasis hotel by Occidental Hotel and Resorts in Pétionville,[174] a four-star Mariott hotel in the Turgeau area of Port-au-Prince[175] and other new hotel developments in Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Cap-Haïtien and Jacmel. Other tourist destinations include Île-à-Vache, Camp-Perrin, Pic Macaya.

The Haitian Carnival has become one of the most popular carnivals in the Caribbean since the government decided to stage the event in a different city every year.[176] The National Carnival which is usually held in one of the country's largest cities (i.e., Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien or Les Cayes), follows the also very popular Jacmel Carnival which takes place a week earlier in February or March.[176]

Caracol Industrial Park

In 21 October 2012, Haitian President Michel Martelly, US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Bill Clinton, Richard Branson, Ben Stiller and Sean Penn inaugurated the 600 acres (240 ha) Caracol industrial park, the largest in the Caribbean.[177] Costing $300 million, the project, which includes a 10-megawatt power plant, a

water-treatment plant and worker housing, is intended to transform the northern part of the country by creating 65,000 jobs.[177]

The park is part of a "master plan" for Haiti's North and North-East departments, including the expansion of the Cap-Haitien International Airport to accommodate large international flights, the construction of an international Seaport in Fort-Liberté and the opening of the $50 million Roi Henri Christophe Campus of a new university in Limonade (near Cap-Haitien) on 12 January 2012.[178]

South Korean clothing manufacturer Sae-A Trading Co. Ltd, one of the park's main tenants, is creating 20,000 permanent jobs and building 5,000 houses in the surrounding area for its workers.

Infrastructure

Transportation

Haiti has two main highways that run from one end of the country to the other. The northern highway, Route Nationale No. 1 (National Highway One), originates in Port-au-Prince, winding through the coastal towns of Montrouis and Gonaïves, before reaching its terminus at the northern port Cap-Haïtien. The southern highway, Route Nationale No. 2, links Port-au-Prince with Les Cayes via Léogâne and Petit-Goâve.

According to the Washington Post, "Officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Saturday [23 January 2010] that they assessed the damage from the 12 Jan. quake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and found that many of the roads aren't any worse than they were before because they've always been in poor condition."[179]

Air Haiti Curtiss Commando freight aircraft at Miami Airport in 1971

The port at Port-au-Prince, Port international de Port-au-Prince, has more registered shipping than any of the other dozen ports in the country. The port's facilities include cranes, large berths, and warehouses, but these facilities are not in good condition. The port is underused, possibly due to the substantially high port fees. The port of Saint-Marc is currently the preferred port of entry for consumer goods coming into Haiti. Reasons for this may include its location away from volatile and congested Port-au-Prince, as well as its central location relative to numerous Haitian cities.

During the 2010 earthquake, the Port-au-Prince port suffered widespread damage, impeding aid to the victims. The main pier caved in and fell into the water. One of the main cranes also collapsed in the water. Port access roads were severely damaged as well.

Toussaint Louverture International Airport is located 10 kilometres (6.2 mi) North/North East of Port-au-Prince. It has Haiti's main jetway, and as such, handles the vast majority of the country's international flights. To travel on from the international airport at Port-au-Prince to other Haitian cities requires boarding a smaller plane. Cities such as Jacmel, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Cap-Haïtien, and Port-de-Paix have airports that are accessible by smaller aircraft. Companies that fly to these airports include: Caribintair, Sunrise Airways and Tortug' Air.

In the past, Haiti used rail transport, but, today, railroads are no longer in use, due to their replacement by other forms of transportation.

Bus service

Tap tap buses are colorfully painted buses or pick-up trucks that serve as share taxis in Haiti. The "tap tap" name comes from sound of taps on the metal bus body signifying a passenger's request to be dropped off.[180] These vehicles for hire are often privately owned and extensively decorated. They follow fixed routes, will not leave until filled with passengers, and riders are usually able to disembark at any point in the journey. It is a typically Haitian form of art.[181]

"Tap tap" bus in Port-Salut

In August 2013, the first coach bus prototype was made in Haiti.[182]

Electricity

In Haiti, 12.5% of the population have access to electricity officially, although the Ministry of Public Works estimated that the coverage could be around 25% when irregular connections are considered. In the capital, Port-au-Prince, the access rate is about 45%.

Some towns in Haiti, such as the capital of the Nord-Est Department Fort-Liberté, have an electricity distribution network, but have been effectively abandoned by the Haiti Electric Company (EdH) national utility for about a decade. Users thus have to rely entirely on small, privately owned generators to meet their electricity demand.

Communications

In Haiti, communications include the radio, television, fixed and mobile telephones, and the Internet. Haiti ranked last among North American countries in the World Economic Forum's Network Readiness Index (NRI) – an indicator for determining the development level of a country's information and communication technologies. Haiti ranked number 143 out of 148 overall in the 2014 NRI ranking, down from 141 in 2013.[183]

Culture

Haitian culture is a mixture of primarily French, African elements, and native Taíno, with influence from the colonial Spanish. The country's customs essentially are a blend of cultural beliefs that derived from the various ethnic groups that inhabited the island of Hispaniola. In nearly all aspects of modern Haitian society however, the African and European elements dominate. Haiti's uniqueness is greatly reflected in the originality of its paintings, music, and literature. Galleries and museums in the United States and France have exhibited the works of the better-known artists to have come out of Haiti.[184]

Art

Haiti is world famous for its distinctive art, notably painting and sculpture.[185][186] Brilliant colors, naive perspective and sly humor characterize Haitian art. Frequent subjects in Haitian art include big, delectable foods, lush landscapes, market activities, jungle animals, rituals, dances, and gods. Artists frequently paint in fables. People are disguised as animals and animals are transformed into people. As a result of a deep history and strong African ties, symbols take on great meaning within Haitian society. For example, a rooster often represents Aristide and the red and blue colors of the Haitian flag often represent his Lavalas party. Many artists cluster in 'schools' of painting, such as the Cap-Haïtien school, which features depictions of daily life in the city, the Jacmel School, which reflects the steep mountains and bays of that coastal town, or the Saint-Soleil School, which is characterized by abstracted human forms and is heavily influenced by vodou symbolism.

Music and dance

The music of Haiti combines a wide range of influences drawn from the many people who have settled on this Caribbean island. It reflects French, African rhythms, Spanish elements and others who have inhabited the island of Hispaniola and minor native Taino influences. Styles of music unique to the nation of Haiti include music derived from Vodou ceremonial traditions, Rara parading music, Twoubadou *troubadour ballads*, Mini-jazz rock bands, Rasin movement, Hip hop Kreyòl, Méringue,[187] and Compas. Youth attend parties at nightclubs called *discos*, (pronounced "deece-ko"), and attend *Bal*. This term derives from the word ballad.

Compas (konpa) (also known as *compas direct* in French, or *konpa dirèk* in creole)[188] is a complex, ever-changing music that arose from African rhythms and European ballroom dancing, mixed with Haiti's bourgeois culture. It is a refined music, with méringue as its basic rhythm. Haiti had no recorded music until 1937 when Jazz Guignard was recorded non-commercially. One of the most popular Haitian artists is Wyclef Jean. Wyclef Jean, however, left the country before his teenage years. His music is somewhat hip-hop mixed with world music.

Literature

Dating back to the days of its independence, Haiti has always been a literary nation, that has produced a number of poetry and plays of international reputation. Despite attempts to write in Haitian Creole dating back to the eighteenth century due to its unofficial status, French has always been the exclusive literary language of Haiti. With the recognition of Creole as an official language, more and more novels, poems, and plays are being written in Creole. In 1975, the first novel written entirely in Haitian Creole was published entitled *Dezafi* written by Franketienne describing a poetic picture of Haitian life.[184][189]

Cuisine

A table setting of Haitian food

Haitian cuisine originates from several culinary styles from the various historical ethnic groups that populated the western portion of the island of Hispaniola. Haitian cuisine is similar to the rest of the Latin-Caribbean (the French and the Spanish-speaking countries of the Antilles), however it differs in several ways from its regional counterparts. While the cuisine is unpretentious and simple, the flavors are bold and spicy that demonstrate a primary influence of African culinary aesthetic, paired with a very French sophistication[190] with notable derivatives coming from native Taíno and Spanish techniques. Though similar to other cooking styles in the region, it carries a uniqueness native to the country and an appeal to many visitors to the island. Haitians often use peppers and other strong flavorings.[191]

Dishes tend to be seasoned liberally and consequently Haitian cuisine is often moderately spicy. In the country, however, several foreign cuisines have been introduced. These include Levantine from Arab migration to Haiti. Rice and beans in several differing ways are eaten throughout the country regardless of location, becoming a sort of national dish. They form the staple diet, which consists of a lot of starch and is high in carbohydrates. Rural areas, with better

Rhum Barbancourt, *5 star Réserve Spéciale*

access to agricultural products, have a larger variety of choices.

One such dish is mais moulu (*mayi moulen*), which is comparable to cornmeal that can be eaten with sauce aux pois (*sòs pwa*), a bean sauce made from one of many types of beans such as kidney, pinto, chickpeas, or pigeon peas (known in some countries as gandules). Mais moulin can be eaten with fish (often red snapper), or alone depending on personal preference. Some of the many plants used in Haitian dishes include tomato, oregano, cabbage, avocado, bell peppers. A popular food is banane pesée (*ban-nan'n peze*), flattened plantain slices fried in cooking oil (known as tostones in the Spanish speaking Latin American countries). It is eaten both as a snack and as part of a meal is, often eaten with tassot or griot, which are deep-fried goat and pork respectively.

Traditionally, the food that Haitians eat on the independence day (January 1) is soup joumou (pumpkin soup).[192]

Haiti is also known internationally for its rum. The world-renowned Rhum Barbancourt is one of the nation's finest and most famous exports by international standards.[193]

Architecture

Haiti's most famous monuments are the Sans-Souci Palace and the Citadelle Laferrière, inscribed as a World Heritage site in 1982.[194] Situated in the Northern Massif du Nord, in one of Haiti's National Parks, the structures date from the early 19th century.[195] The buildings were among the first to be built after Haiti's independence from France.

Jacmel, the colonial city that was tentatively accepted as a World Heritage site, is reported to be extensively damaged by the 2010 Haiti earthquake.[195]

Museums

The anchor of Christopher Columbus' largest ship, the *Santa María* now rests in the Musée du Panthéon National Haïtien (MUPANAH), in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.[196]

Folklore and mythology

Haiti is known for its folklore traditions.[197] The country has tales that are part of the Haitian Vodou tradition.

National holidays and festivals

Santa María's anchor on display

Date	English name	Local name (in French)	Remarks
January 1	New Year's Day *and* Independence Day	*Nouvel an / Jour de l'an / Premier de l'a* et *Jour de l'Indépendance*	Act of Independence against France
January 2	Ancestry Day	*Jour des Aieux*	Commemorates ancestors who have died fighting for freedom.
January 6	Epiphany	*Le Jour des Rois*	Celebrates the Three Wise Men's visit to see the newborn Christ.
moveable	Carnival/Mardi Gras	*Carnaval/Mardi Gras*	
May 1	Labour and Agriculture Day	*Fête du Travail / Fête des Travailleurs*	International holiday
May 18	Flag and Universities' Day	*Jour du Drapeau et de l'Université*	Celebrates the educational system and creation of the flag.
August 15	Assumption of Mary	*L'Assomption de Marie*	
October 17	Anniversary of the death of Dessalines	*Anniversaire de la mort de Dessalines*	Celebrates the death of Jean-Jacques Dessalines.
November 1	All Saints Day	*La Toussaint*	Christian holiday; commemorates the sainthood.
November 2	All Souls' Day	*Jour des Morts*	Another Christian holiday; commemorates the faithful departed.
November 18	Battle of Vertières Day	*Vertières*	Commemorates the victory over the French in the Battle of Vertières in the year 1803.[198]
December 5	Discovery Day	*Découverte d'Haïti*	Commemorates Christopher Columbus' landing on Hispaniola in 1492.
December 25	Christmas	*Noël*	Traditional Christmas celebration.

The most festive time of the year in Haiti is during **Carnival** (referred to as *Kanaval* in Haitian Creole or Mardi Gras) in February. There is music, parade floats, and ancing and singing in the streets. Carnival week is traditionally a time of all-night parties.

Rara, a festival which is celebrated before Easter. The festival has generated a style of Carnival music.

Sports

Association Football is the most popular sport in Haiti with hundreds of small football clubs competing at the local level. Basketball is growing in popularity.[199] Hundreds of small football clubs compete at the local level.[199] Stade Sylvio Cator is the multi-purpose stadium in Port-au-Prince, where it is currently used mostly for association football matches that fits a capacity of 30,000 people. The Haiti national football team were the second Caribbean team to make the World Cup, which was their only appearance in 1974. They lost in the opening qualifying stages against three of the pre-tournament favorites; Italy, Poland, and Argentina. The national team won the 2007 Caribbean Nations Cup.[200]
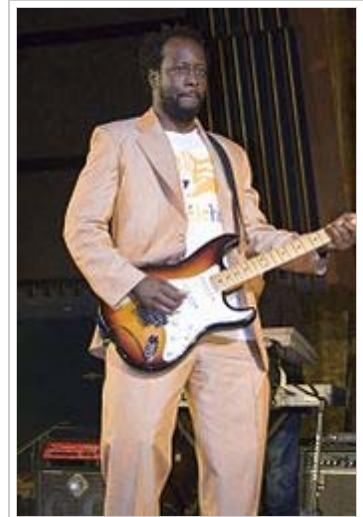
International Sports

Haiti has participated in the Olympic Games since the year 1900 and won a number of medals. Haitian soccer player Joe Gaetjens played for the United States national team in the 1950 FIFA World Cup, scoring the winning goal in the 1–0 upset of England.[201]

Notable natives and residents

Haiti national football team training in Port-au-Prince, 2004.

- Comte d'Estaing – in command of more than 500 volunteers from Saint-Domingue, fought alongside American colonial troops against the British in the Siege of Savannah, one of the most significant foreign contributions to the American Revolutionary War in 1779[202]
- Frankétienne – arguably Haiti's greatest author; he was a candidate for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2009
- Garcelle Beauvais – television actress (*NYPD Blue*, *The Jamie Foxx Show*)
- Jean Baptiste Point du Sable – who might have been born in St Marc, Saint-Domingue in 1745; established a fur trading post at present-day Chicago, Illinois; he is considered to be one of the city's founders
- Jean Lafitte – a French pirate who operated around New Orleans and Galveston on the Gulf Coast of the United States; was born in Port-au-Prince around 1782[203]
- John James Audubon – ornithologist and painter; born in 1785 in Les Cayes, Saint-Domingue; his parents returned to France, where the boy was educated; he emigrated to the United States as a young man and made a career as he painted, catalogued and described the birds of North America
- Jørgen Leth – Danish poet and filmmaker[204]
- Sean Penn – American Oscar Award-winning actor, who currently serves as *Ambassador-at-large* for Haiti; the first non-Haitian citizen to hold such a position[205]
- Michaëlle Jean – 27th Governor General of Canada; was born in Port-au-Prince in 1957 and lived in Haiti until 1968
- Wyclef Jean – Grammy Award-winning hip-hop recording artist

Wyclef Jean

Education

The educational system of Haiti is based on the French system. Higher education, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education,[206] is provided by universities and other public and private institutions.[207] Haiti counts 15,200 primary schools, of which 90% are non-public and managed by communities, religious organizations or NGOs.[208] The enrollment rate for primary school is 67%, and fewer than 30% reach 6th grade. Secondary schools enroll 20% of eligible-age children. Charity organizations, including Food for the Poor and Haitian Health Foundation, are building schools for children and providing necessary school supplies. Haiti's literacy rate is 52.9%.[115]

The Universite Roi Henri Christophe in Limonade

The January 2010 earthquake was a major setback for education reform in Haiti as it diverted limited resources to survival. Literacy levels remain near 50%. Haiti is one of the lowest-ranked countries in the world, 177th out of 186, for national spending on education.[209]

Many reformers have advocated the creation of a free, public and universal education system for all primary school-age students in Haiti. The Inter-American Development Bank estimates that the government will need at least $3 billion USD to create an adequately funded system.[210]

Higher Education

Upon successful graduation of secondary school, students may continue into higher education. The higher education schools in Haiti include the University of Haiti. There are also medical schools and law schools offered at both the University of Haiti and abroad. Presently, Brown University is cooperating with L'Hôpital Saint-Damien in Haiti to coordinate a pediatric health care curriculum.[211]

Health

In 2012, 95% of the children in Haiti under the age of 10 have been vaccinated. Most people have no transportation or access to Haitian hospitals.[212][213] The World Health Organization cites diarrheal diseases, HIV/AIDS, meningitis, and respiratory infections as common causes of death in Haiti.[214] Ninety percent of Haiti's children suffer from waterborne diseases and intestinal parasites.[215] HIV infection is found in 5% of Haiti's population.[216] The incidence of tuberculosis (TB) in Haiti is more than ten times as high as in the rest of Latin America.[217] Approximately 30,000 Haitians fall ill with malaria each year.[218]

Most people living in Haiti are at high risk for major infectious diseases. Food or water-borne diseases include bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, typhoid fever and hepatitis A and E; common vector-borne diseases are dengue fever and malaria; water-contact diseases include leptospirosis. Roughly 75% of Haitian households lack running water. Unsafe water, along with inadequate housing and unsanitary living conditions, contributes to the high incidence of infectious diseases. There is a chronic shortage of health care personnel and hospitals lack resources, a situation that became readily apparent after the January 2010 earthquake.[219]

See also

- External debt of Haiti
- Haitian Heritage Museum
- List of island countries
- 🕮 *Haiti* – Wikipedia book

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219. **^** Robert Lee Hadden and Steven G. Minson (2010). "The Geology of Haiti: An Annotated Bibliography of Haiti's Geology, Geography and Earth Science" (http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA528274). p. 10. Retrieved 24 July 2013.

Further reading

- Prichard, Hesketh. *Where Black Rules White: A Journey Across and About Hayti*. These are exact reproductions of a book published before 1923: (Nabu Press, ISBN 978-1-146-67652-6, 5 March 2010); (Wermod and Wermod Publishing Group, ISBN 978-0-9561835-8-3, 15 October 2012).
- Arthur, Charles. *Haiti in Focus: A Guide to the People, Politics, and Culture*. Interlink Publishing Group (2002). ISBN 1-56656-359-3.
- Dayan, Colin. *Haiti, History, and the Gods*. University of California Press (1998). ISBN 0-520-21368-8.
- Girard, Philippe. Haiti: The Tumultuous History (New York: Palgrave, Sept. 2010).
- Hadden, Robert Lee and Steven G. Minson. 2010. The Geology of Haiti: An Annotated Bibliography of Haiti's Geology, Geography and Earth Science (http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA528274). US Army Corps of Engineers, Army Geospatial Center. July 2010.
- Heinl, Robert Debs & Nancy Gordon Heinl. *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People 1492–1995*. University Press of America (2005). ISBN 0-7618-3177-0.
- Kovats-Bernat, J. Christopher. *Sleeping Rough in Port-au-Prince: An Ethnography of Street Children and Violence in Haiti*. University Press of Florida (2008). ISBN 978-0-8130-3302-0.
- Robinson, Randall. *An Unbroken Agony: Haiti, From Revolution to the Kidnapping of a President*. Basic Civitas (2007). ISBN 0-465-07050-7.
- Wilentz, Amy. *The Rainy Season: Haiti Since Duvalier*. Simon & Schuster (1990). ISBN 0-671-70628-4.

External links

Government

- **(French) (Haitian Creole)** President of Haiti (http://www.presidence.ht/)
- **(French)** Prime Minister of Haiti (http://primature.gouv.ht/)
- **(French)** Parliament of Haiti (http://www.parlementhaitien.ht/)

General information

- Haiti (https://www.dmoz.org/Regional/Caribbean/Haiti) at DMOZ
- Haiti (http://www.britannica.com/nations/Haiti) at Encyclopædia Britannica.
- Haiti (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html) entry at *The World Factbook*
- Haiti (http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/haiti.htm) at *UCB Libraries GovPubs*.
- A Country Study: Haiti (http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/httoc.html) from the U.S. Library of Congress (December 1989).
- 🌐 Wikimedia Atlas of Haiti
- Haiti profile (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/1202772.stm) from the BBC News.
- Country Profile (http://www.newint.org/columns/country/2011/06/01/haiti/) at New Internationalist.
- Web Site about Safe and Sustainable Water Solutions for Haiti (http://www.gvsu.edu/haitiwater)

Maps

- Collection of maps (http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/haiti.html) from the Perry-Castañeda Library at the University of Texas at Austin.
- Map of Haiti (http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/haiti.pdf) from the United Nations.

Relief organizations

- The ICRC in Haiti (http://www.icrc.org/eng/where-we-work/americas/haiti/) (International Committee of the Red Cross).
- Hope for Haiti (http://www.hope-for-haiti.org/), education and grassroots development in rural Haiti.
- Haiti volunteer youth corps (http://www.nouvelleviehaiti.org/), training leaders in trauma relief, community empowerment and sustainable agriculture.
- Instituto Dominicano de Desarrollo Integral (http://www.iddi.org/), the Dominican parent of the Haitian Institute of Integral Development.

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