

However, private industry has outstripped these in contributing to the gross national product, and there has been considerable diversification in recent years. As in many other Latin-American countries, this has been made possible through foreign loans, which have placed the country in serious debt.

### Orphan Home for Children:

Las Palmas children's village in the Dominican Republic has ten homes. Las Palmas was established in 1982. The campus includes an elementary school, secondary school, church, children's chapel, and farm.

### How you can help:

The mission of International Children's Care is to bring hope and the gift of a new life to the orphaned and abandoned children of The Dominican Republic. Through sponsorships, donations and volunteer service, you can give these children the chance in life that they so richly deserve. If you would like to know more about how you can make a difference, please contact ICC in one of the following ways:

**P. O. Box 820610  
Vancouver, WA. 98682-0013**

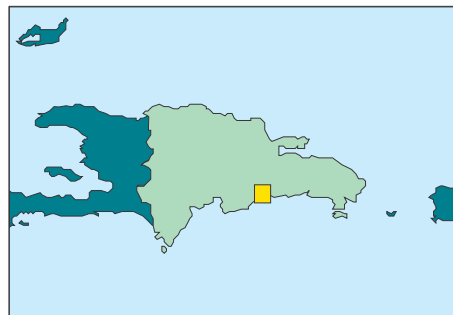
**(800) 422-7729  
ForHisKids.org**



"Dominican Republic" — Encyclopedia Britannica · Britannica.com  
CIA World Factbook 2018 · CIA.gov

**FAST  
FACTS**

# Dominican Republic



**Population:** 10,734,247

**Official Language:** Spanish

**Capital City:** Santo Domingo

Santo Domingo was the first Spanish settlement in the Americas, founded four years after Columbus landed in 1492.

### People:

The racial composition of the republic is predominantly mulatto (i.e., of mixed European and African ancestry), the Amerindian element having been largely decimated by disease, warfare, and the effects of forced labor shortly after the arrival of the first Europeans.

The colonizing whites, mostly Spaniards, were joined in the 19th and 20th centuries by immigrants from East Asia and from such European countries as France, England, and Germany, as well as by small numbers of Sephardic Jews and Middle Easterners.

The exact African heritage of the large black population is unknown. Many of them arrived with or soon after the conquistadors, serving as slaves in the mines and the early sugar enterprises. The African-American cultural influence is strong, especially among the lower socioeconomic classes, which tend to be darker-skinned than their more affluent compatriots.

### Culture and Life Styles:

The Spanish language has always been predominant, although English is becoming common





due to the massive emigration to the United States.

Most of the population is Roman Catholic. Catholicism exerts a marked influence on cultural life at all levels. The religious beliefs and practices of the rural populace are rooted in the cultures of both the early Spanish and African communities.

It is difficult to define any particular and unique cultural tradition that may be labeled Dominican. Music, especially when accompanied by dancing, is important at all social levels and in all regions. Important holidays are largely defined by the calendar of the Roman Catholic church, but the way in which they are celebrated reveals a mixture of official church and ancient folk traditions.

Health conditions among the poorer classes in both rural and urban zones are characterized by a generally unsanitary environment, inadequate health services, and poor nutrition. As a result, infectious and parasitic diseases are common, and infant mortality is high. Hospital and trained medical personnel are available only in the larger cities and towns.

Social conditions in the Dominican Republic resemble those found in other underdeveloped Latin-American nations. Small farmers rarely eke out more than a subsistence crop and most often must supplement this by the sale of handicrafts; products include baskets, pottery, rocking chairs, straw hats, and foodstuffs.

### **Education:**

The more isolated the population, the less accessible are educational institutions, although education is free and compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 14. Six years of primary schooling is followed by a two-year intermediate school and a four-year secondary course. Few lower-income students succeed in reaching this level, as the system is designed to encourage middle and upper-income students to prepare for university. Wealthier students attend private schools, which are frequently sponsored by religious orders.

### **Housing:**

Housing is considered by Dominican planners to constitute one of the most serious problems in the country. On the sugar plantations in the south, barrack-like housing is provided for temporary workers, but more permanent employees frequently have their own small huts, or bohios, often on company-owned land. These may be little more than a lean-to of palm leaves and bamboo. Others, more sturdy, may have double-reed walls filled with rubble and plastered with mud.

In the Cibao, a relatively prosperous zone, houses are built solidly of palm board or pine and are frequently painted and decorated, with shutters and lintels in contrasting colors. Roofs are most often covered with sheets of zinc or tin but, in poorer households, may be thatched. A prosperous family may have a concrete floor, but most are of packed earth.

In the cities are the squatter settlements and poverty-stricken inner-city ghettos characteristic of most rapidly urbanizing underdeveloped countries. Dwellings may be built of cardboard, discarded inner tubes, and any other materials the inhabitants may scavenge.

Also in the cities are districts with well-appointed modern houses, occupied by members of the new commercial and industrial elite, as well as by the more traditional land-based oligarchy. Government programs, often funded with international loans, have financed housing construction for lower and middle-income families.

### **Economy:**

Agriculture continues to be the basis of the Dominican Republic's economy, although that sector has been giving way to manufacturing. During the Trujillo regime from 1930 to 1961, the Trujillo family largely controlled both agriculture and industry and therefore, the economy. Since 1961, most Trujillo enterprises have remained under governmental control.

