

Caracas Flickr / José Pestana

JULY 2016

Spanish-Venezuela Cultural Orientation





Spanish-Venezuela Cultural Orientation Contents

CHAPTER 1

Profile	1
Introduction	1
Climate	2
Geographic Divisions	3
Bodies of Water	
Lakes	
Rivers	4
Major Cities	5
Caracas	5
Maracaibo	6
Valencia	6
Barquisimeto	7
Maracay	
History	7
Pre-Columbian History	7
Conquest and Colonialism	8
Independence	9
The Caudillos (1830–1935)	10
The Transition to Democracy	10
Repression and Democracy	11
Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	11
Current Events (2013-2015)	12
Government	12
Media	13

Economy	14
Ethnic Groups and Languages	15
Endnotes	16
Overview: Chapter 1 Assessment	24
CHAPTER 2	
Religion	25
Overview	25
Religion and Government	26
Influence of Religion on Daily Life	27
Religious Conventions and Gender Roles	28
Religious Holidays and Festivals	28
National Holidays	
Other Holidays and Celebrations	29
Places of Worship	30
Behavior in Places of Worship	31
Endnotes	32
Overview: Chapter 2 Assessment	35
CHAPTER 3	
Traditions	36
Introduction	36
Values	37
Codes of Politeness	38
Male/Female Interaction	39
Hospitality and Gift Giving	40



Eating Habits	41
Eating Customs and Etiquette	41
Types of Food	41
Dress Codes	43
Non-Religious Holidays	43
Dos and Don'ts	45
Endnotes	46
Overview: Chapter 3 Assessment	50
CHAPTER 4	
Urban Life	51
Introduction	51
The Urban Condition	52
Poverty and the Slums	52
Crime and Violence	53
Healthcare	54
Education	55
Restaurants	56
Marketplaces and Street Vendors	57
Money, Credit Cards, and ATMs	59
Transportation and Traffic	60
Automobiles	60
Buses and Metros	60
Taxis	
Airplanes	61
Street Crime and Solicitations	62
Endnotes	63
Overview: Chapter 4 Assessment	69



CHAPTER 5

Rural Life	70
Introduction	70
Land Tenure	71
Agriculture	72
Rural Transportation	73
Rural Healthcare	
Rural Education	
Who's in Charge?	76
Border Crossings and Checkpoints	76
Landmines	77
Endnotes	79
Overview: Chapter 5 Assessment	83
CHAPTER 6	
Family Life	84
Introduction	84
Typical Household and Family Structure	85
Status of Women	86
Married Life and Divorce	
Marriage	86
Divorce	87
Family Social Events	87
Weddings	87
Funerals	88
Rites of Passage	89



Naming Conventions	90
Endnotes	91
Overview: Chapter 6 Assessment	94
Spanish-Venezuela Cultural Orientation: Final Assessment	95
Spanish-Venezuela Cultural Orientation:	
Further Reading and Resources	101
Books	101
Articles and Reports	102
Film and Video	103



CHAPTER 1

Diablos de Naiguatá Flickr / Zulmira Andrade

Profile

Introduction

Venezuela lies at the northeastern corner of South America. The country's coast borders the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. The nation is bordered to the west and southwest by Colombia, to the south by Brazil, and to the east by Guyana. Venezuela also controls several islands and archipelagos just off its coast. At 912,050 sq km (352,144 sq mi), Venezuela is about twice the size of California; it is also one of the 10 most ecologically diverse nations in the world. The country is home to more than 1,400 bird species, 300 mammal species, over 1,000 types of fish, and 25,000 varieties



of orchids.^{5,6} The landscape features mountains, jungles, forests, rivers, savannas, and coastal plains. The largest lake on the continent (Lake Maracaibo) is located there, as is the world's highest waterfall, Angel Falls, which tumbles 979 m (3,212 ft).⁷

Climate

Venezuela lies completely within the tropics, yet variations in elevation create a variety of temperatures and precipitation.⁸ The warmest months are May–September. January is generally the coldest month.⁹ Most of the country enjoys average temperatures



Tropical climate Wikimedia / Blevia2003



Map of Venezuela CIA / World factbook

above 24°C (75°F).¹⁰ At lower elevations of 800 m–2,000 m (2,625 ft–6,562 ft), temperatures average between 12°C–25°C (54°F–77°F). This temperate zone includes many major cities, including Caracas. Between 2,000 m–3,000 m (6,562 ft–9,843 ft), the average temperatures range from about 9°C–11°C (48°F–52°F). Above 3,000 m (9,843 ft), temperatures can get extremely cold, and some areas may have snow year round. In this zone, average yearly temperatures hover below 8°C (46°F).¹¹

Venezuela has a dry season and a rainy season. The dry season begins in December and lasts through March or April. January–April and are generally the driest months. The wet season begins in May and extends into November. The wettest months are August–November. Rainfall is uneven across the nation, with

the northeastern coast receiving significant rain in the summer compared to the relatively dry northwestern coast. The country's interior receives enough precipitation to support savannas and rain forests, as well as crop growth. Floods and droughts are common throughout the plains, but the northern coastal area is vulnerable to serious flooding.¹³



Geographic Divisions

The narrow strip of land between the oceans and the mountains is smallest geographic region in the country. ¹⁴ This area is home to Lake Maracaibo, which borders the

Caribbean Sea. The Maracaibo lowlands, a flat, swampy area in the northwest, make up the smallest geographic region in the country. The coasts also contain the nation's only desert, located near the city of Coro. 15, 16, 17

The *llanos*, or plains, cover about a third of the nation. This area, in the center of the country, extends from the mountains near the western border with Colombia, almost to the Atlantic Ocean near the Orinoco Delta. Elevations are



Table Top Mountain Wikimedia / Paolo Costa Baldi

relatively consistent, ranging between 200 m-500 m (656 ft-1,640 ft). Much of the plains are covered with savannas or grasslands, but tropical forests and pristine jungles dot the landscape. ^{18, 19}

Venezuela's mountains are part of the Andes chain and form an arc along its border with Colombia, and extend to the tip of the Paria Peninsula on the Caribbean coast.²⁰ The western branch is called the Perijá Mountains. The eastern branch is the Cordillera de Mérida, which divides the Lake Maracaibo Basin from the Orinoco River region and ends near the city of Barquisimeto.^{21,22} These mountains cover approximately 6% of the total land and reach altitudes of 5,000 m (16,404 ft) and include Bolívar Peak, which rises 5,007 m (16,427 ft).^{23,24} The westernmost mountains on the Colombian border are the most scarcely populated part of the country is located. Fertile valleys are located between the two parallel ranges of the Cordillera de Costa (Venezuelan Coastal Range), and support extensive agriculture. These fertile valleys also contain the densest population areas, including Caracas.^{25,26,27}

The Guyana Highlands occupy most of the land south of the Orinoco River, covering about 45% of Venezuela. A unique feature of the area is the *tepui*, or tabletop mountain. *Tepuis* range from 1,300 m–3,000 m (4,265 ft–9,843 ft) in elevation. The world's highest waterfall, Angel Falls, plunges 979 m (3,212 ft) from one of these *tepuis*. This largely unexplored region is sparsely populated, but it represents the largest geographic division in the country. It is also the most biodiverse area in the country, with more than 9,000 varieties of trees and herbs.^{28, 29}





Hydroelectric Power Wikimedia / Davidusb

Bodies of Water

Venezuela has hundreds of lakes and lagoons, in addition to its Caribbean and North Atlantic seacoasts, and has as many as 1,000 rivers.^{30, 31} During the rainy season, rains swell the rivers and lakes, making nearby towns and cities vulnerable to flooding.³²

Lakes

Venezuela has hundreds of lakes and lagoons.^{33, 34} Ten rivers empty Lake Maracaibo, the largest lake in South America, which occupies about 13,300 sq km (5,135 sq mi).^{35, 36} Lake Maracaibo is 160 km (99 mi) long and expands to 120 km (75 mi) in width, but it averages only 10 m (33 ft) in depth.³⁷ A channel completed in 1957 connects the lake to the Gulf of Venezuela in the Caribbean, allowing ocean-bound ships and tankers to navigate the waters. Lake Maracaibo is one of the world's richest oil-producing areas. Thousands of oil

derricks fill the lake and dot the shore, and storage tanks are fed by pipelines running under the lake.^{38, 39} The water at the southern end is clear and fresh, but waters near the sea are brackish and unfit for drinking or irrigation.⁴⁰

Lake Valencia is situated in the north-central part of the country, near the city of Valencia. This lake is Venezuela's largest natural freshwater lake. The surrounding area supports agricultural crops including cotton, sugarcane, tobacco, and corn. The area is a popular resort spot, even though the lake suffers from high levels of pollution. This limits the use of the lake's water and exposes nearby residents to a variety of health issues. All Venezuela's government is constructing a tunnel to transfer the lake's waters to the Pao River, which will help control the persistent flooding that also plagues the area.

Rivers

Venezuela has as many as 1,000 rivers.^{46, 47} Rains swell the rivers and lakes during the rainy season, making nearby towns and cities vulnerable to flooding.⁴⁸ Venezuela's main river is the Orinoco, which makes an enormous curve as it flows northwest from the Guyana Highlands, near the Brazilian border, before flowing eastward into the North Atlantic Ocean. The Orinoco nearly bisects the nation as it flows more than 2,000 km (1,243 mi.), and is nearly 8 km (5 mi) wide in some places. It forms a vast delta near the city of Barrancas, stretching nearly 443 km (275 mi) along the Atlantic coast.^{49, 50} The



Orinoco is only about 15 m (49 ft) deep during the dry season, but swells to depths of nearly 50 m (165 ft) during July. It is an important transportation source, especially during the rainy season when river transport is the only way to reach many settlements. Large steamships travel more than 1,100 km (684 mi) from the delta to the Atures Rapids. Oceangoing



Orinoco River Wikimedia / Anagoria

vessels can navigate the river 362 km (225 mi) from its mouth to the ore deposits of the Guyana Highlands.⁵¹

The Caroní River originates in the Guyana Highlands and flows northward to meet the Orinoco near Ciudad Guayana. It is about 690 km (429 mi) long, and is navigable on its lower course by small boats.⁵² The Caroni is a major source of hydroelectric power in the country.⁵³

The Apure River in western Venezuela flows northeast and east for over 800 km (497 mi), through the country's major cattle-raising area. Small craft are able to navigate the river during the rainy season, from Ciudad Bolívar to San Fernando de Apure.⁵⁴

Major Cities

Caracas

Caracas is the capital city of Venezuela. It was founded in 1567, and it is located in the north-central part of the country.⁵⁵ It lies about half a mile, 922 m (3,025 ft), above sea level and has approximately 3,000,000 residents.^{56,57} Caracas has not had an easy history. It has been beleaguered by pirates, plague, and rebellions, and nearly destroyed by earthquakes.^{58,59} However, the city grew rapidly following the discovery of oil in the 1900s.^{60,61}



Caracas, Capital of Venezuela Wikimedia / Igvir



Modern-day Caracas is the center of considerable economic activity, which includes a service sector. The city is also a major manufacturing center, and numerous domestic and international companies have located their headquarters there. Consequently, Caracas is home to embassies and consulates, and is the country's political center.⁶²

The city faces numerous challenges, including traffic jams, pollution, and insufficient housing. Many Venezuelans moved to the city to attain a better life, but only manage to live a meager existence in the *ranchitos* (huts) scattered among the hillsides. These neighborhoods often lack basic services such as running water, sanitation facilities, and electricity.^{63, 64, 65}

Maracaibo

Maracaibo lies on Venezuela's Caribbean coast and once served as a transit center for Atlantic voyages. The city was founded in 1574 and remained relatively insignificant until oil was discovered. The modern city has 2,225,000 residents and is the capital of the state of Zulia, which is the unofficial capital of the country's petroleum industry.^{66, 67, 68} Much of Venezuela's vast oil reserves lie under nearby Lake Maracaibo, making the city an industrial and commercial hub and a major national port.^{69, 70} The climate is hot and humid, with average daily high temperatures that can reach the 30s C° (90s F°).^{71, 72, 73}

Valencia

Founded in 1555, Valencia is the capital of the state of Carabobo and is the nation's fourth-largest metropolis. ^{74,} ⁷⁵ The city has a population of 1,738,000, and sits 490 m (1,608 ft) above sea level in the central highlands near Lake Valencia. Valencia is one of Venezuela's most industrialized cities, even though it is located in the center of a major agricultural area. ^{76,77} Valencia's history is a brutal one. During its first 125 years, the city



Valencia Wikimedia / Ccmaracay2

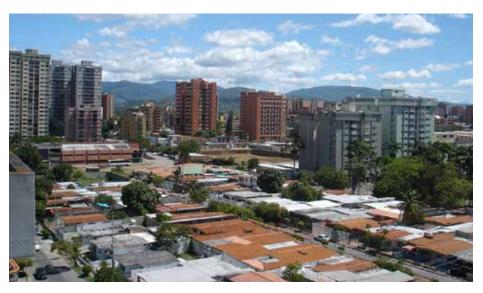
was destroyed at least three times by Spaniards, Caribs, and pirates. The population also suffered from smallpox epidemics because of Valencia's proximity to marshy swampland, and an 1812 earthquake devastated the city. Valencia was the site of many battles in its war of independence. Valencia became the first city to oppose Bolívar's Gran Colombia when its inhabitants demanded independence and formally seceded.



The fledgling country named Valencia as its capital, although this designation moved to Caracas a year later. Nalencia again briefly served as Venezuela's capital in 1830 and 1858.79, 80

Barquisimeto

Barquisimeto is located in the middle of Venezuela's cattle country.⁸¹ It is the capital of the state of Lara, and has a population of 809,490. Barquisimeto was founded in



Este de Barquisimeto Flickr / Barquisimeto - Ciudad Crepuscular

1522, making it one of the country's oldest cities. It was originally named after the Spanish city of Segovia.82, 83 Gold was discovered nearby, a few years after the founding of the city. The black slaves who worked the original mines revolted around 1569, but the rebellion was quickly quashed. The indigenous Jirajira Indians also revolted, but their insurgency was not put down until 1628.84 Barquisimeto is an important commercial hub, connecting the central and western sections of the nation. It is also often regarded as the musical capital of Venezuela.85,86

Maracay

The 300-year-old city of Maracay is the capital of the state of Aragua.⁸⁷ It is situated in a fertile northern valley, making it an important agricultural and commercial center. Major crops include coffee, wheat, cotton, and cacao. The city rose to prominence when Venezuelan dictator Juan Vicente Gómez settled there in 1908. He ran the country from Maracay until 1935. Gómez initiated a wave of construction projects that included the building of an opera house, airports, and an air force school.^{88,89} During the 1950s, the city underwent additional development when freeways were built linking Maracay to Caracas 110 km (68 mi) away.⁹⁰ Venezuela developed the most powerful air force in Latin America during this time, much of it based in Maracay. This city, with 1,754,256 residents, remains an important military center.^{91,92,93}

History

Pre-Columbian History

People lived in the area of modern-day Venezuela for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans in the late 15th century. These early inhabitants migrated into



the area from present-day Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, Brazil, and the Antilles. They belonged to one of three language groups: Arawak, Carib, Chibcha.94, 95, 96 Venezuela had a native population numbering 350,000-500,000 when the Europeans arrived.97

Christopher Columbus landed at the northeastern tip of present-day Venezuela in



Pre-Columbian Pottery Flickr / Gosia Malochleb

1498 and became the first European to visit the region. A year later, Alfonso de Ojeda explored the area as far as Lake Maracaibo and named the country Venezuela (Little Venice). 98, 99, 100 Venezuela's indigenous population did not pose a unified threat to Spanish regional authority and this, combined with a relative lack of mineral wealth, prompted the Spanish to pay little attention to Venezuela. As a result, this region fell under Spanish rule much later than Mexico and Peru. 101, 102, 103

Conquest and Colonialism

The first known temporary Spanish settlement appeared near Nueva Cádiz on Cubagua Island around 1500.¹⁰⁴ The Spanish created their first permanent settlement some 23 year later in Cumaná. 105 The Spanish later established additional settlements in Coro, Valencia, Mérida, and Barquisimeto. 106, 107 By 1567, they established a settlement at Santiago de León, which is present-day Caracas. Germans also became interested in the region and, between 1528 and 1556, western Venezuela was governed by a succession of Germans. The Germans failed to find gold and eventually lost interest; consequently,

they relinquished their claims and left. 108, 109 Other than the exploration of Jesuit missionaries, Venezuela remained relatively unexplored until the 17th and 18th centuries. 110

political unity, and it was virtually ignored by Spain for the first 250 years of colonial rule. In 1526, Venezuela came under the authority of the Audiencia de Santo Domingo on the island

Venezuela lacked any real





of Hispaniola; in 1550, the colony was ruled by the Audiencia de Santa Fé de Bogotá.^{111,} ¹¹² In 1777, authority for Venezuela was transferred to the Viceroyalty of New Granada, which also included Colombia, Panama, and Ecuador. Venezuela remained under the Viceroyalty until declaring independence in 1811.¹¹³

Independence

Wealthy Venezuelan elites united with the poor and indigenous peoples to forge an independence movement towards the end of the 18th century, declaring the country



1876 signing of the Declaration Wikimedia / Martin Tovar y Tovar

an independent republic in 1797. The movement was unsuccessful, but signaled the beginning of later independence struggles. ^{114, 115, 116} In 1806, a group of mercenaries attempted to aid the struggle for independence, but when they tried to land at Coro they failed. The Spanish put down this initial insurrection; yet, their action could not halt the movement for independence. ^{117, 118, 119}

The Caracas *cabildo* (city council) ousted the Spanish colonial governor in 1810, and declared the *cabildo* the governing junta. It was headed by Francisco de Miranda, the leader of the insurrection. On 5 July 1811, Miranda and the Caracas *cabildo* formally declared Venezuela's independence from Spain and named the new

state the First Republic of Venezuela. The

cabildos of Coro, Maracaibo, and Guayana rejected these independence claims, however, and remained loyal to Spain. Miranda became embroiled in a number of battles with Spain and the *cabildos* of Coro, Maracaibo, and Guayana. These battles finally came to an end when he signed an armistice with Spain in 1812; yet, this defeat would not end rebel aspirations to free the country.^{120, 121, 122, 123}

Simón Bolívar, who became known as the Liberator, successfully led rebel forces in 1813 and freed the country from the grips of Spain. After securing the downfall of royalists, Bolívar assumed the dictatorship of the Second Republic of Venezuela. However, within a year the royalists retook the territory, ousting Bolívar



Bolívar Wikimedia / FILBIL



and ending the short-lived second republic. In 1817, Bolívar set up camp in the Orinoco region, where he raised a force that included soldiers from Britain and Ireland, as well as blacks and Creole elites.^{124, 125}

In 1819, Bolívar and his troops defeated the Spanish forces of the Viceroyalty of New Granada. Bolívar then proclaimed a future federation of states called Gran Colombia, which was to be a federation of Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador. Venezuelan independence was assured, following the Battle of Carabobo in June 1821. This decisive victory led Bolívar to formally establish Gran Colombia and become its first president. ^{126, 127} Venezuela remained a reluctant partner in the federation, however, until it seceded 1829. Venezuela finally declared itself an independent republic 1830, achieving true independence. ¹²⁸

Jose Antonio Paez Library of Congress

The Caudillos (1830–1935)



José Antonio Páez became president of the new republic in 1830. Government unity faltered, however, when the governing elite broke into two factions: Páez's Conservatives and the opposition Liberals. Between 1830 and 1859, power changed hands frequently between these two factions. And 1859, power changed hands frequently between these two factions.

In 1858, the country plunged into 12 years of intermittent civil war , which included a power struggle (1858–1863) known as the Federal War. The experiment with federalism failed, and the central government remained weak. Antonio Guzmán Blanco became dictator in 1870 and ruled (directly and indirectly) for 18 years. However, by 1908 three different dictators had taken control of the country. Each assumed power by either manipulating elections or overthrowing the government. General Juan Vicente Gómez became the nation's 3rd and final dictator in 1908 when he usurped presidential powers and took

control of the nation. Gómez retained absolute authority until his death in 1935. His death ended more than 100 years of dictatorship. 135, 136, 137

Rómulo Betancourt Wikimedia / Rómulo Betancourt Foundation

The Transition to Democracy



Upon the death of Gómez, General Eleazar López Contreras was selected by the Congress to a 5-year term. He loosened the autocratic controls and declared limited freedom of expression. A general strike in 1936 prompted brutal repression, suspension of freedom of association, the restriction of labor unions, and the prohibition of opposition parties. 138, 139

Isaías Medina Angarita was selected by the Congress in 1941 to rule the country. Angarita extended the López reforms, and soaring oil revenues allowed the government to expand infrastructure and build

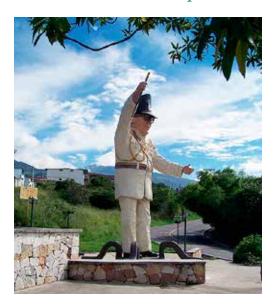


hospitals and schools. 140, 141, 142 The middle class expanded and people moved to the cities in unprecedented numbers. 143 When Medina tried to appoint his successor in 1945, Rómulo Betancourt led a successful coup and ruled until July 1947. In February 1948, Rómulo Gallegos was elected president. 144, 145

Gallegos promptly initiated a series of democratic reforms and enacted political freedoms. These actions angered Conservatives and led to a military coup to overthrow the government in November 1948. Both Gallegos and Betancourt went into exile. 146, 147, 148

Marcos Pérez Jiménez Wikimedia / Fotofox

Repression and Democracy



From 1950–1957, Marcos Pérez Jiménez headed one of the most repressive regimes in the nation's history. He outlawed political activities, closed universities, severely curtailed freedom of the press, and destroyed the labor movements. Pérez was forced from office in 1958. A civilian-military junta presided over the country for a year before Rómulo Betancourt was again elected to the presidency. From 1964–1983, Venezuela elected five different presidents; despite this turnover, the nation enjoyed relative stability. 151, 152

Former President Carlos Andrés Pérez was reelected in 1988, and introduced a series of measures designed to strengthen the Venezuelan economy. He survived two unsuccessful coup attempts and he was forced from office in 1993. The economy continued to falter under the leadership of the next two presidents, until the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed to step in. The IMF policies caused widespread

unemployment and rampant inflation in the country, setting the stage for the emergence of new leadership. 153, 154, 155

Hugo Chávez Flickr / Bernardo Londoy

Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela



Hugo Chávez was elected president in 1998 with 56.2% of the popular vote. Chávez ran on a platform of ending corruption and improving the living conditions of the poor. Upon winning the election, he immediately renamed the nation the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Chávez was initially popular; yet, many viewed his agenda as increasingly radical and his authoritarian style created many enemies. 156, 157, 158

Chávez was removed from office in a 2002 coup, but was reinstated almost immediately. He won a recall election in 2004 and he was reelected in 2006. During this time, Chávez became increasingly outspoken and passionate in his anti-American stance. He also nationalized key

industries, including crude oil and telecommunications. Chávez finally suffered his first electoral defeat when a new package of constitutional provisions was narrowly rejected by voters. This package included a provision that would have allowed him to be reelected indefinitely.¹⁶²

In 2011, President Chávez traveled to Cuba for surgery, later announcing that he had cancer. He finally returned to Venezuela after a prolonged absence. ^{163, 164} Chavez died in March 2013 leaving his nation fragmented and in mourning. ^{165, 166}

Current Events (2013-2015)

After Chávez died, Vice President Nicolás Maduro took over as president, promising to continue Chávez's policies. Maduro narrowly defeated Henrique Capriles in April 2013, in a special presidential election. Maduro inherited a nation spiraling toward

President Maduro assuming Office Wikimedia / Cancillería del Ecuador Cancillería del Ecuador

economic disaster—a nation suffering from run-away inflation, and massive food and energy shortages. ^{169, 170} It is within this context that the Maduro administration expelled three U.S. diplomats, accusing them of attempting to destabilize the country. ^{171, 172, 173}

Protests against the government and worsening economic conditions erupted in western Venezuela in February 2014 and spread to other cities, including Caracas. 174 Confrontations between the people and security forces became increasingly violent. By April, 39 people had died. 175, 176 Protests continued, even as the government arrested and detained protest leaders. 177 Maduro remained under siege. In parliamentary elections in December 2015, Maduro's ruling United Socialist Part of Venezuela (PSUV) lost its majority to Venezuela's rightwing Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) which won enough seats for a supermajority. For the first time in nearly two decades, Venezuela's Chavistas were no longer in absolute control. Maduro will remain in office until 2018. Until then, the two sides will have to find some way to work together. 178, 179, 180 The new government, however, will face many of the same problems that led to Maduro's demise. Venezuela's estimated inflation rate is over 200%, which would make it the highest in the world. 181 The economy is expected to continue to contract and Venezuela

is likely to default on its foreign debt. Long lines for food are common. Crime rates are up all over the country and armed gangs operated in many regions.

Government

Venezuela is a federal republic with 23 states, a federal district, and one capital district. ^{185, 186} The government is divided into five branches: executive, legislative,



judicial, citizen power, and electoral. Venezuelans age 18 and older may vote in direct elections to choose the president and members of the legislature.¹⁸⁷

The executive arm is constitutionally the most powerful branch of government. The president is elected to a 6-year term. In 2009, voters approved an end to term limits, paving the



Supreme Tribunal of Justice Wikimedia / Guillermo Ramos Flamerich

way for indefinite presidential terms.¹⁹⁰ The vice-president and the cabinet are chosen by the president. The legislative arm is the National Assembly, a unicameral house, with 167 members directly elected to 5-year terms.¹⁹¹ Three seats are guaranteed to indigenous groups.^{192, 193} The citizen branch investigates allegations of human rights abuses, misdeeds by public officials, and constitutional violations.^{194, 195} The electoral branch is responsible for organizing and overseeing elections. Its members are elected by the National Assembly to 7-year terms.^{196, 197}

The Supreme Tribunal of Justice is the justice arm of the government. Its 32 members are appointed by the National Assembly to 12-year terms. Since 2004, the government has attempted to diminish the autonomy and power of the judicial branch. New legislation has made it easier to remove judges from the bench. There have been reports of reprisals against judges who fail to rule in the government's favor.

Media

Venezuela's constitution guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press. In spite of these guarantees and the presence of both private and state-run media outlets, Venezuela is the only country in South America classified as "not free" by Freedom House.²⁰⁰ The government has stepped up its campaign against media outlets it considers overly critical of



Protest Against Government Censorship Wikimedia / FEGO3011



its policies.²⁰¹ Journalists work in an intimidating climate, fearing detention, criminal penalties, or significant fines. It is a criminal offense to show disrespect for officials. A number of journalists have been jailed, and heavy fines have been levied against some broadcast stations.^{202, 203} More than a dozen new laws have severely restricted media freedoms and made it easier to silence opposition outlets.²⁰⁴

Most of the nation's leading newspapers are privately owned and depend on advertising to meet their operating costs. The government employs a number of statics to encourage self-censorship. This often includes putting pressure on companies that advertise in opposition papers. Private newspapers are thus finding it increasingly difficult to stay in business, while newspapers supported by the government are flourishing.²⁰⁵

The country has nearly 14 million internet users, representing about 47% of the population, although access is more limited in rural areas. ^{206, 207} Internet use is not systematically monitored or regulated, although the government has the right to do so. ²⁰⁸ In 2014, the government proposed amending cyberterrorism laws, making it a crime to use social media to disrupt public peace. Several internet users were detained, and more than 1,000 websites were blocked, between November 2013 and October 2014. ²⁰⁹

Economy

Venezuela's economy is primarily controlled by the government, which has nationalized more than 1,000 companies since 2004. ^{210, 211, 212} Failed economic policies have left the economy in a state of freefall. The country has been in recession since December 2014 and the nation's inflation rate remains the highest in the world at over 200%. ^{213, 214, 215} The

IMF predicts that the economy will contract by as much as 10% in 2016.²¹⁶ Venezuela is running out of money and is seriously at risk of failing on its international debt obligations.²¹⁷

Agriculture generates only 3.6% of GDP and employs about 7% of the workforce.²¹⁸ Most agricultural income is derived from cattle or sheep ranches in the plains (*llanos*) region of central Venezuela.²¹⁹ The nation has a well-developed services sector



"The Pearl", in Venezuela Flickr / Repsol



that employs 71% of the labor force and accounts for 63% of GDP.²²⁰ Yet, oil remains the primary driver of the Venezuelan economy and current low prices have hit the nation hard. Oil accounts for 11% of GDP and 96% of government export revenues.²²¹ The government completely controls this sector, which is overseen by the state-run oil company, PDVSA (Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A.).²²²

Ethnic Groups and Languages

Venezuelans are a fusion of historically distinct groups, which is the result of Spanish and African slave marriages to indigenous Indians. By the early 20th century, the population had become so intermixed that it was no longer possible to categorize people and place them into distinct groups. Thus, Venezuelans possess a uniquely Venezuelan identity.²²³

It is difficult to know the exact composition of the country since Venezuelans are no longer officially identified by ethnicity. Estimates suggest that about two-thirds are mestizos, or people of mixed heritage. A significant proportion of mestizos live in rural areas. Approximately 21% of Venezuelans can trace their ancestry to Europe, and they mainly reside in cities. Blacks represent about 10% of the population and live primarily along the coast and in the Maracaibo lowlands. The remainder of the population is indigenous Indian. ^{224, 225}

There are 28 different indigenous groups in Venezuela, but only four have populations exceeding 10,000.²²⁶ The largest are the mostly nomadic Wayúu (Guajíra), who live in the Maracaibo Basin along the border with Colombia.^{227, 228} The Warao tribe lives



Wayúu Flickr / Franklin Reyes

in thatched-roof huts resting on stilts along the Orinoco Delta in the country's northeast. ^{229, 230} Many of the Pemón tribespeople, live mainly in Canaima National Park in southeast Venezuela. They have left traditional agricultural jobs for employment in mining and tourism. ^{231, 232} Venezuela's most well-known indigenous group is the Yanomami, who maintain their seminomadic ancestral lifestyle. The Yanomami live in the Amazon Basin near the Brazilian border. They are easily recognized by their bowl-shaped haircuts, body painting, bamboo-pierced lips, and lack of clothing. ²³³

Numerous Spanish dialects are spoken throughout Venezuela, but the most common is the *caraqueño*, or Caracas, version.²³⁴ In addition to Spanish, 31 out of 40 living native languages in Venezuela were made official languages in 2002.²³⁵ The most widely spoken native languages are Yanomami and Warao.²³⁶



Endnotes

- 1. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Geography," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 2. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: The Land; Relief," 7 December 2015,

http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela#toc32709

- 3. Rhett Butler, "Venezuela," MongaBay, 23 July 2014, http://rainforests.mongabay.com/20venezuela.htm
- 4. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Geography," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 5. List of Countries of the World, "Animals in Venezuela," 2012, http://www.listofcountriesoftheworld.com/ve-animals.html
- 6. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 48.
- 7. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Venezuela: The Land; Relief," 7 December 2015.

http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela#toc32709

8. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Climate," 7 December 2015,

http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Drainage#toc32712

- 9. Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Venezuela: Climate," (country report, March 2005), https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/Venezuela.pdf
- 10. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Climate," 7 December 2015,

http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Drainage#toc32712

- 11. Richard A. Haggerty, ed., "Geography: Climate," in *Venezuela: A Country Study* (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/9.htm
- 12. Iêda Siqueira Wiarda, "Chapter 2: The Society and its Environment: Geography; Climate," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990),

http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/9.htm

- 13. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Climate," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Drainage#toc32712
- 14. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Land; Relief," 7 December 2015,

http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela#toc32710

- 15. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 8–9.
- 16. Iêda Siqueira Wiarda, "Chapter 2: The Society and its Environment: Geography," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/8.htm

- 17. Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Venezuela," (country report, March 2005), https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/Venezuela.pdf
- 18. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Land; Relief," 7 December 2015,

http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela#toc32710

- 19. World Wildlife Fund, "Llanos," *Encyclopedia of Earth*, 14 May 2014, http://www.eoearth.org/view/article/154273
- 20. World Wildlife Fund, "Llanos," *Encyclopedia of Earth*, 14 May 2014, http://www.eoearth.org/view/article/154273
- 21. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Land; Relief," 7 December 2015,

http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela#toc32710

- 22. Maps of World, "Venezuela Geography," 2 May 2014, http://www.mapsofworld.com/venezuela/geography
- 23. Raul R. Vera, "Republica Bolivariana de Venezuela" (profile for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, May 2006), http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPC/doc/Counprof/Venezuela/venezuela.htm
- 24. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Land; Relief," 7 December 2015,

http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela#toc32710

- 25. Richard A. Haggerty, ed., "Geography," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/8.htm
- 26. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Venezuela," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/625197/Venezuela
- 27. Venezuela EcoPortal, "Venezuela's Eco Regions: Cordillera de la Costa," 6 January 2016, http://ecoalliance.tripod.com/ecoregion-cordilleradelacosta.htm
- 28. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 12–13.
- 29. Raul R. Vera, "Republica Bolivariana de Venezuela" (profile for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, May 2006), http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPC/doc/Counprof/Venezuela/venezuela.htm
- 30. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Venezuela: Land; Relief," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/ Venezuela#toc32710
- 31. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 13.
- 32. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 13.
- 33. Maps of World, "Venezuela Rivers," 2 May 2014, http://www.mapsofworld.com/venezuela/river-map.html



- 34. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 13.
- 35. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Venezuela: Land; Drainage," 7 December 2015,
- http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Drainage
- 36. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Lake Maracaibo," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Maracaibo
- 37. Iêda Siqueira Wiarda, "Chapter 2: The Society and its Environment: Geography; Rivers," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/10.htm
- 38. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Lake Maracaibo," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Maracaibo
- 39. Pietro D. Pitts, "Venezuela's Giant Lake of Endless Oil is a Filthy, Lawless Mess," Bloomberg Business, 3 August 2015, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-08-03/venezuela-s-giant-lake-of-endless-oil-is-a-filthy-lawless-mess
- 40. Iêda Siqueira Wiarda, "Chapter 2: The Society and its Environment: Geography: Rivers," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/10.htm
- 41. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Lake Valencia," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Lake-Valencia
- 42. NASA, Earth Observatory, "Lake Valencia, Venezuela," 27 October 2004,
- http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=5001
- 43. Blue Channel 24, "Venezuela: The Dramatic Situation of Lake Valencia," 5 September 2011,
- https://bluechannel24web.wordpress.com/2011/09/05/venezuela-the-dramatic-situation-of-lake-valencia/
- 44. United Nations, "Venezuela," (report, Universal Periodic Review, 12th session of the UPR working group, October 2011), http://www.aguaclara.org/pdf/INFORME_EPU_2011_ENG.pdf
- 45. Rose Stokes, "Venezuela: Government will Transfer Lake Valencia's Waters to Stop Flooding," Pulse America, 21 October 2012, http://www.pulsamerica.co.uk/2012/10/22/venezuela-government-will-transfer-lake-valencias-waters-to-stop-flooding/
- 46. Maps of World, "Venezuela Rivers," 2 May 2014, http://www.mapsofworld.com/venezuela/river-map.html
- 47. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 13.
- 48. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 13.
- 49. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Orinoco River," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Orinoco-River
- 50. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 13.

- 51. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Orinoco River," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Orinoco-River
- 52. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Caroní River," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Caroni-River-Venezuela
- 53. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Orinoco River," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Orinoco-River
- 54. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Apure River," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Apure-River
- 55. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 52, 107.
- 56. World Population Review, "Major Cities in Venezuela Population 2015," 2015, http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/venezuela-population/major-cities-in-venezuela/
- 57. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Caracas," 6 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Caracas
- 58. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 52–53.
- 59. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Caracas," 6 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Caracas
- 60. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 19–20.
- 61. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 52–53.
- 62. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Caracas," 6 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Caracas
- 63. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 53.
- 64. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Caracas," 6 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Caracas
- 65. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 20.
- 66. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Maracaibo," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Maracaibo
- 67. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 142.
- 68. World Population Review, "Major Cities in Venezuela Population 2015," 2015, http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/venezuela-population/major-cities-in-venezuela/
- 69. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Maracaibo," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Maracaibo
- 70. Pietro D. Pitts, "Venezuela's Giant Lake of Endless Oil is a Filthy, Lawless Mess," Bloomberg Business, 3 August 2015, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-08-03/venezuela-s-giant-lake-of-endless-oil-is-a-filthy-lawless-mess
- 71. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 142.



- 72. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Maracaibo," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Maracaibo
- 73. Claire Antell et al., *Insight Guides: Venezuela* (Maspeth, NY: Langenscheidt Publishers, 2002), 217.
- 74. World Population Review, "Major Cities in Venezuela Population 2015," 2015, http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/venezuela-population/major-cities-in-venezuela/
- 75. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Valencia," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Valencia-Venezuela
- 76. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 21.
- 77. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Valencia," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Valencia-Venezuela
- 78. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 107.
- 79. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Valencia," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Valencia-Venezuela
- 80. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 107.
- 81. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 21.
- 82. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Barquisimeto," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Barquisimeto
- 83. World Population Review, "Major Cities in Venezuela Population 2015," 2015, http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/venezuela-population/major-cities-in-venezuela/
- 84. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Barquisimeto," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Barquisimeto
- 85. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Barquisimeto," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Barquisimeto
- 86. Claire Antell et al., *Insight Guides: Venezuela* (Maspeth, NY: Langenscheidt Publishers, Inc., 2002), 211.
- 87. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 95.
- 88. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Maracay," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Maracay
- 89. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 95.
- 90. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Maracay," 2 July 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Maracay
- 91. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 95–96.
- 92. Global Security, "Air Force: Fuerzas Aereas or Aviacion," 21 April 2013, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/venezuela/airforce.htm

- 93. World Population Review, "Major Cities in Venezuela Population 2015," 2015, http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/venezuela-population/major-cities-in-venezuela/
- 94. Lonely Planet, "Venezuela: History," 2015, http://www.lonelyplanet.com/venezuela/history
- 95. H. Michael Tarver and Julia C. Frederick, *The History of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 19–25.
- 96. Hartford, "Pre-Colombian Hispaniola—Arawak/Taino Indians," n.d.,
- http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/100.html
- 97. H. Michael Tarver and Julia C. Frederick, *The History of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 19.
- 98. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 22–23.
- 99. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; Discovery and Conquest," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/2.htm
- 100. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Sports-and-recreation#toc219051
- 101. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 22–23.
- 102. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 2–3.
- 103. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; Discovery and Conquest," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/2.htm
- 104. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 23.
- 105. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 23.
- 106. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Venezuela: History," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Sports-and-recreation#toc219051
- 107. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 24–25.
- 108. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; Discovery and Conquest," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/2.htm
- 109. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 43–44.



- 110. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; Discovery and Conquest," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/2.htm
- 111. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; Spanish Colonial Life," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/3.htm
- 112. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 25–26.
- 113. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Viceroyalty of New Granada," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Viceroyalty-of-New-Granada
- 114. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 3.
- 115. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 26.
- 116. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Sports-and-recreation#toc219051
- 117. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Sports-and-recreation#toc219051
- 118. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 26.
- 119. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; The Epic of Independence," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/4.htm
- 120. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 26.
- 121. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; The Epic of Independence," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/4.htm
- 122. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 3.
- 123. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Francisco de Miranda," 11 December 2014,
- http://www.britannica.com/biography/Francisco-de-Miranda
- 124. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Simón Bolívar," 8 October 2015, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Simon-Bolivar
- 125. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History; The Independence Movement," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/The-independence-movement
- 126. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 27.

- 127. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Simón Bolívar," 8 October 2015, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Simon-Bolivar
- 128. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 3.
- 129. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; The Century of Caudillismo," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/5.htm
- 130. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Sports-and-recreation#toc219051
- 131. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 28–29.
- 132. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History: The Caudillos (1830-1935)," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/The-independence-movement#toc32702
- 133. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; The Century of Caudillismo," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/5.htm
- 134. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History: The Caudillos (1830-1935)," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/The-independence-movement#toc32702
- 135. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; The Century of Caudillismo," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/5.htm
- 136. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 28–29.
- 137. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 54–58.
- 138. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; The Transition to Democratic Rule," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990),
- http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/6.htm
- 139. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 62.
- 140. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 62.
- 141. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; The Transition to Democratic Rule," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990),
- http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/6.htm



- 142. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History: Venezuela Since 1935, 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/The-Andinos
- 143. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 7.
- 144. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Sports-and-recreation#toc219051
- 145. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 62–63.
- 146. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Rómulo Betancourt," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Romulo-Betancourt
- 147. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 30–31.
- 148. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; The Transition to Democratic Rule," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990),

http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/6.htm

- 149. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 32–33.
- 150. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Rómulo Betancourt," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Romulo-Betancourt
- 151. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 65–69.
- 152. James D. Rudolph, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: History; The Triumph of Democracy," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/7.htm
- 153. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 33.
- 154. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Sports-and-recreation#toc219051
- 155. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 69–72.
- 156. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 34.
- 157. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Hugo Chavez," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Hugo-Chavez
- 158. Candy Hurtado, "Venezuela and the Challenge of a New Democratic Transition," *Florida Atlantic Comparative Studies Journal* 12 (2010–2011): 86, http://home.fau.edu/peralta/web/FACS/venezuelademocratictranstition.pdf

- 159. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Hugo Chavez," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Hugo-Chavez
- 160. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 34.
- 161. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 74.
- 162. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Hugo Chavez," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Hugo-Chavez
- 163. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Hugo Chavez," 2015, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Hugo-Chavez
- 164. Jon Lee Anderson, "Chávez, Cancer, and Cuba," *New Yorker*, 18 July 2011, http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2011/07/chavez-cancer-and-cuba.html
- 165. William Neuman, "Chávez Dies, Leaving Sharp Divisions in Venezuela," *New York Times*, 5 March 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/06/world/americas/hugo-chavez-of-venezuela-dies.html?pagewanted=all&r=0
- 166. CBS News, "Hugo Chavez Died of Massive Heart Attack: Top General," 7 March 2013, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/hugo-chavez-died-of-massive-heart-attack-top-general
- 167. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History; The Hugo Chávez Presidency," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/The-Hugo-Chavez-presidency
- 168. "Maduro Wins Venezuela Presidency," *USA Today*, 15 April 2013, http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/04/14/ venezuela-election-maduro-capriles/2081677
- 169. "Venezuela's Presidential Election: Maduro's Pyrrhic Victory," *Economist*, 15 April 2013, http://www.economist.com/blogs/americasview/2013/04/venezuela%E2%80%99s-presidential-election
- 170. Brian Ellsworth, "Analysis: Venezuela's Maduro Inherits Tough Problems," Reuters, 15 April 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-election-economy-idUSBRE93E0CD20130415
- 171. Catherine E. Shoichet, "Venezuela Expels Top U.S. Diplomat, Two Other Embassy Officials," CNN News, 30 September 2013, http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/30/world/americas/venezuela-us-diplomats-expelled
- 172. BBC News, "Venezuela Profile—Timeline," 9 December 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19652436
- 173. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History; The Hugo Chávez Presidency," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/The-Hugo-Chavez-presidency
- 174. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: History; The Hugo Chávez Presidency," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/The-Hugo-Chavez-presidency



- 175. RT, "Fresh Street Battles as Venezuela Protest Death Toll Hits 39 (PHOTOS, VIDEO)," 1 April 2014,
- https://www.rt.com/news/venezuela-clashes-deaths-39-505
- 176. Catherine E. Shoichet, "Protests Rage in Venezuela, One Month On," CNN 13 March 2014, http://www.cnn.com/2014/03/12/world/americas/venezuela-protests
- 177. Ezequiel Minaya, "Venezuela's Opposition Supporters Protest Government," *Wall Street Journal*, 30 May 2015, http://www.wsj.com/articles/venezuelas-opposition-supporters-protest-government-1433019209
- 178. Brian Walker and Tiffany Ap, "Venezuela's Opposition Party Wins Parliament in a Blow to Maduro," 7 December 2015, http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/07/americas/venezuela-oelections
- 179. BBC News, "Venezuela Election: Opposition 'Supermajority; Confirmed," 9 December 2015,
- http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-35043945
- 180. Martin De Angelis, "Venezuela Opposition Hit, but Chavism isn't Knocked Out," Global Risk Insights, 19 December 2015, http://globalriskinsights.com/2015/12/the-opposition-hits-but-chavism-isnt-knocked-out
- 181. Technical Line, "New Venezuelan Currency Regime Some Accounting and Reporting Considerations," (financial report, Ernst & Young, no. 2015-04, 20 April 2015), http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/TechnicalLine BB2970 Venezuela 20April2015/\$FILE/TechnicalLine BB2970 Venezuela 20April2015.pdf
- 182. Michael Shifter, "Crackdown in Caracas: Venezuela's Crisis Continues," *Foreign Affairs*, 14 October 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/south-america/2015-10-14/crackdown-caracas
- 183. Michael Shifter, "Crackdown in Caracas: Venezuela's Crisis Continues," *Foreign Affairs*, 14 October 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/south-america/2015-10-14/crackdown-caracas
- 184. Michael Shifter, "Crackdown in Caracas: Venezuela's Crisis Continues," *Foreign Affairs*, 14 October 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/south-america/2015-10-14/crackdown-caracas
- 185. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Government," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 186. Andrew Stevens, "Local Government in Venezuela Overshadowed by Strong Centre," City Mayors, 1 May 2009, http://www.citymayors.com/government/venezuela_government.html
- 187. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 35.
- 188. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 35.

- 189. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Government," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Services#toc32728
- 190. Mark P. Sullivan, "Venezuela: Issues for Congress" (Congressional Research Service Report, 10 January 2013), 51, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40938.pdf
- 191. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Government," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 192. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 35.
- 193. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Government," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 194. Antonio Ramirez, "An Introduction to Venezuelan Governmental Institutions and Primary Legal System," Hauser Global Law School Program, October 2015., http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/venezuela1.html
- 195. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 35.
- 196. Antonio Ramirez, "An Introduction to Venezuelan Governmental Institutions and Primary Legal System," Hauser Global Law School Program, October 2015., http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/venezuela1.html
- 197. Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Venezuela," 2 September 2011, http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/venezuela/187555.htm
- 198. Antonio Ramirez, "An Introduction to Venezuelan Governmental Institutions and Primary Legal System," Hauser Global Law School Program, n.d., http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/Venezuela.html
- 199. Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2015: Venezuela," 2015, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/venezuela
- 200. Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press: Venezuela," 2015, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/venezuela
- 201. Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press: Venezuela," 2015, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/venezuela
- 202. Reporters Without Borders, "Venezuelan Authorities Impose 2-Million-Dollar Fine on Private TV Station," 19 October 2011, http://en.rsf.org/venezuela-venezuelan-authorities-impose-2-20-10-2011,41244.html
- 203. Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press: Venezuela," 2015, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/venezuela
- 204. Reporters Without Borders, "Freedom of Expression Threatened by Legislative Reforms Being Rushed Through Parliament," 22 December 2010, http://en.rsf.org/venezuela-freedom-of-expression-threatened-22-12-2010,39132.html



- 205. Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press: Venezuela," 2015, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/venezuela
- 206. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Media," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 207. Sanja Kelly et al. eds., "Freedom on the Net 2015: Privatizing Censorship, Eroding Privacy," (report for Freedom House, October 2015), 913, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FOTN%202015%20Full%20Report.pdf
- 208. Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press: Venezuela," 2015, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/venezuela
- 209. Sanja Kelly et al. eds., "Freedom on the Net 2015: Privatizing Censorship, Eroding Privacy," (report for Freedom House, October 2015), 910-911, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FOTN%202015%20Full%20Report.pdf
- 210. Global Security, "Venezuela—Economy," 12 August 2015, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/venezuela/economy.htm
- 211. "Venezuelan Government Seizes 1,087 Companies in Seven Years," *El Universal*, 9 December 2011, http://www.eluniversal.com/economia/111209/venezuelan-government-seizes-1087-companies-in-seven-years
- 212. Economy Watch, "Venezuela Economy," 30 March 2010, http://www.economywatch.com/world_economy/venezuela/
- 213. Global Security, "Venezuela—Economy," 12 August 2015, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/venezuela/economy.htm
- 214. Michael Shifter, "Crackdown in Caracas: Venezuela's Crisis Continues," *Foreign Affairs*, 14 October 2014, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/south-america/2015-10-14/crackdown-caracas
- 215. Angela Bouzanis, "Economy in Freefall as December Elections Approach," Focus Economics, 8 October 2015, http://www.focus-economics.com/countries/venezuela/news/inflation/economy-in-freefall-as-december-elections-approach
- 216. Nathan Crooks, "Venezuela Worst in World as IMF Forecasts 10% Contraction," Bloomberg Business, 6 October 2015, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-10-06/venezuela-worst-in-world-as-imf-forecasts-economy-to-shrink-10-
- 217. Patrick Gillespie, "Venezuela is Running Out of Money and Selling its Gold," CNN Money, 29 October 2015, http://money.cnn.com/2015/10/29/news/economy/venezuela-selling-gold/
- 218. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html

- 219. Raul R. Vera, "Republica Bolivariana de Venezuela," (profile for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, May 2006), http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPC/doc/Counprof/Venezuela/venezuela.htm
- 220. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 221. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 222. Danielle Renwick, "Venezuela's Economic Fractures," Council on Foreign Relations, 4 December 2015, http://www.cfr.org/economics/venezuelas-economic-fractures/p32853
- 223. Iêda Siqueira Wiarda, "Chapter 2: The Society and its Environment; Ethnic Groups," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/17.htm
- 224. Ièda Siqueira Wiarda, "Chapter 2: The Society and its Environment; Ethnic Groups," in *Venezuela: A Country Study*, ed. Richard A. Haggerty (Washington DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990), http://countrystudies.us/venezuela/17.htm
- 225. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 37.
- 226. Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, "Assessment for Indigenous Peoples in Venezuela," 31 December 2006, http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=10102
- 227. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 38.
- 228. Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, "Assessment for Indigenous Peoples in Venezuela," 31 December 2006, http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=10102
- 229. Encyclopædia Britannia Online, "Warao," 21 January 2015, http://www.britannica.com/topic/Warao
- 230. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 37–38.
- 231. Christopher J. Sharpe and Iokiñe Rodríguez, "Canaima National Park," n.d.,
- http://www.nomadom.net/thelostworld/canaimanp/canaima.htm
- 232. Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples: Venezuela: Pemón," Refworld, 2008, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic,463af2212,49709ecd13 0,49749c82a,0,,,,html



- 233. Orinoco, "Orinoco: Preserving the Material Culture of the Indigenous Societies of the Venezuelan Amazon; Yanomami," n.d., http://www.orinoco.org/apg/lopeopleindiv.asp?lang=en&people=yanomami
- 234. Sabine Loeffler, "El Español de Venezuela," CELA, Centro de Lingüística Aplicada, Slideshare, http://www.slideshare.net/celaspanishschool/spanish-in-venezuela-dialects
- 235. M. Paul Lewis, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig, eds., "Languages of Venezuela," in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 18th ed. (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2015), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=VE
- 236. Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, "Assessment for Indigenous Peoples in Venezuela," 31 December 2006, http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=10102



Overview

Chapter 1 Assessment

1. The plains, or *llanos*, is the largest geographic division in the country.

FALSE

The plains cover a third of the nation. The Guyana Highlands form the largest geographic division, covering about 45% of Venezuela.

2. Most of the nation's oil reserves are located under Lake Maracaibo.

TRUE

Most of Venezuela's vast oil reserves lie under Lake Maracaibo.

3. Venezuela gained its independence in 1811.

FALSE

On 5 July 1811, Venezuela formally declared its independence from Spain, but it did not secure independence until 1821, following the Battle of Carabobo. After seceding from Gran Colombia, Venezuela became an independent nation in 1830.

4. Hugo Chávez became president in 1998 after a successful military coup.

FALSE

Hugo Chávez was elected president in 1998 with 56.2% of the popular vote.

5. Venezuela depends on oil exports for most of its export revenues.

TRUE

Oil remains the primary driver of the Venezuelan economy, and current low prices have hit the nation hard. Oil accounts for 11% of GDP and 96% of government export revenues.





CHAPTER 2

Catedral de San Fernando Rey Wikimedia / Alxe62

Religion

Overview

Catholicism is the predominant religion in Venezuela. About 96% of Venezuelans are nominally Catholic, 2% are Protestant, and the remainder practice other faiths, including Judaism, Islam, or indigenous religions.^{1,2} Protestantism is on the rise, especially among the urban poor, and the country has witnessed a growth of evangelical churches across the nation.^{3,4,5} Venezuelan evangelicals have transformed their religion to accommodate popular Venezuelan beliefs, cultural practices, and superstitions. This has created a uniquely Venezuelan brand of Protestant evangelical theology.^{6,7}



It is estimated that as many as one-third of Venezuelans may follow the cult of Maria Lionza. There are several versions of the legendary figure; one suggests Maria Lionza lived on a mountain sometime around 1400. According to this legend, an anaconda swallowed her and, once inside the snake, Maria Lionza promised to marry the mountain if it would save her. The mountain responded by saving her life and, to this day, they live as one. In another version, Maria Lionza was the daughter of a Yaracuy chief, and she ruled over the wild animals. During Maria Lionza religious rituals, priests call the souls of the dead, who then enter the body of the living. Followers can then engage in conversations with the spirit that has entered into the body of a person.^{8,9,10}

For most Venezuelan Catholics, formal religion does not play a significant role in their daily lives. Yet Venezuelans are still a religious; so, they have created a popular Catholic religion to help them cope with life and comprehend the supernatural. This popular form of Catholicism is a fusion of indigenous, African, and Catholic beliefs and practices. Popular Catholicism, which has replaced many of the formal rituals of the Church, has become the new civil religion. Throughout the country, there is a strong and intensely personal devotion to the Virgin, which often expressed in numerous ways. 11, 12, 13

Religion and Government

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, as long as its practice "does not violate the country's code of morality and decency or public order." These freedoms



Bacilica del Valle Wikimedia / The Photographer

are respected, but groups who are critical of the government may be subject to harassment and intimidation. Religious groups must register with the Directorate of Justice and Religion. All groups are eligible for government funds, yet the largest portion goes to Catholic institutions—particularly Catholic schools and agencies focused on helping the poor. In recent years, allocations to the Catholic Church have been reduced in favor of greater contributions to the Protestant evangelical groups that carry out social missions.^{15, 16}

The Chávez government was concerned about the influence wielded by the Catholic Church, and relations with the Church are frequently tense. The government and its supporters have engaged in campaigns designed to discredit the Church and its officers through state media. In 2010, Chávez contended that the Vatican, the Church in Venezuela, and the United States were conspiring against his government. On several occasions, Chávez accused the Church of attempting to assassinate him, or of fomenting a coup. ^{17, 18} Government accusations against the Church continue. In 2014, Venezuela's foreign minister accused Catholic bishops of being politically biased against the government. ¹⁹

Protestant groups have experienced tensions with the government. Foreign missionaries must hold special visas, and missionary activities have been curtailed. The rate of refusal for special visas has increased, especially for groups with close ties to the United States.^{20, 21}

The state recognizes only civil marriages; yet religious ceremonies may be performed after the priest or minister has received a copy of the government-issued civil marriage certificate.^{22, 23}

Currently unenforced laws require that "communal councils" oversee educational curricula, teachers, and administrators in all schools, including private religious schools. The government has the authority to confiscate any Catholic Church property, including schools and church buildings. Legislation is pending that affects religious organizations that receive at least 10% of their funding from foreign sources. Such organization would have to secure government approval for their activities in advance. This would force them to reveal their funding sources, leadership structure, and activities.²⁴

Influence of Religion on Daily Life

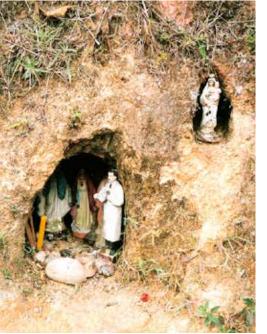
More than 96% of Venezuelans label themselves Catholic and feel attached to the Church emotionally. Thus, Venezuelans frequently turn to the Church in times of

trouble, even though few Venezuelans are regular churchgoers. 25, 26, 27, 28

The veneration of saints is a central element of today's popular Catholicism. Saints are believed to have special powers that can help worshippers. Many people have a favorite saint whom they beseech for help in difficult times, and pilgrimages are often made to shrines dedicated to particular saints.^{29, 30} Many Venezuelans also have small shrines in their homes that they use for personal devotion to saints, political figures (such as Simón Bolívar), and folk heroes or heroines (such as María Lionza). This fusion of Catholic ritual and popular culture has created an original and highly personal form of worship.^{31, 32}

Many Venezuelans believe in magic and in the powers of spirits, and folk healers, especially in the rural areas, carry out ceremonies to exorcise demons and to protect people from the *mal de ojo* or evil eye. It is common to see people wearing charms to protect them from evil or to bring good luck. People often carry images of saints in their wallets or hang pictures of them in their cars.^{33, 34} The *curandero*, or folk healer, still plays a significant role in many communities, providing an alternative to modern medical care. Herbal medicine stores, where people go to seek help with marriages, finances, or various types of adversity, are easy to find, even in cities.^{35, 36} For many in

Venezuela, reliance on magical rituals provides a way to cope with the uncertainties and difficulties of daily life. 37



Street Altar Flickr / Photocapy



Exchange 1: When do you worship?

Visitor:	When do you worship?	kwaando es laa meesa
Local:	On Sunday.	el domeengo

Religious Conventions and Gender Roles

Venezuela's constitution, considered the most progressive in the region, guarantees equality between men and women.³⁸ But legal rights are often subordinate to entrenched



Venezuelan mother with her baby Flickr / Alex Lanz

traditions and social customs. Religious beliefs, particularly Catholic beliefs, have played a fundamental role in shaping the culture and the social institutions of the nation. Patriarchal Church values, which were incorporated into the legal system in 16th and 17th centuries, have had a lasting cultural effect.^{39, 40}

The Church places a high value on family, which is a central feature of Venezuelan life. Church doctrine supports a patriarchal system, in which men hold authority over women, who are expected to be passive and submissive. A woman's most significant role is that of wife and mother.^{41, 42, 43}

The impact of these historical values is evident in contemporary society; men tend to work outside the home and women fill the traditional role of wife and mother. Women compose only 39% of the Venezuelan

workforce.⁴⁴ The Catholic Church denounces divorce, even though divorce is legal. This may account for the country's low divorce rates.^{45, 46, 47} The Church condemns homosexuality, although it is legal. Therefore, this overwhelmingly Catholic nation tends to deny its existence and suppress homosexual behavior. Gays and lesbians are subject to harassment and discrimination.^{48, 49, 50} Abortions are illegal except to save the life of the mother.⁵¹

Religious Holidays and Festivals

National Holidays

The first national religious holiday of the year is the two-day Carnival/ Shrove Tuesday (*Carnaval*) celebrated 40 days before Easter (8-9 February 2016).⁵² Urbanites flock to the coast during *Carnaval*, and urban areas become more dangerous than normal. The murder rate rises and a sense of lawlessness prevails.





Carnavales Güigüe 2008 Flickr / Gary Hans

Carnaval festivities reflect a mix of local cultural and religious traditions. Along the Caribbean coast, processions of drummers wind up and down the streets. Elaborate costumed figures reenact ancient myths and historical events, and male dancers dressed as black women whirl and dance through the streets. *Carnaval* celebrations last for days.⁵³

St Joseph's Day, *Día de San José*, follows (19 March 2016).⁵⁴ The day is filled with parades, expositions, bullfights, beauty pageants, cultural events, dances, and fairs. World famous bullfighters come to Maracay to compete.^{55, 56}

La Semana Santa (Holy Week) begins on Palm Sunday (*Domingo de Ramos*) and ends on Easter,

the day reserved for the biggest celebrations. Especially devout Venezuelans may make pilgrimages to sacred sites during this week.⁵⁷ Saint Peter and Saint Paul Day (29 June 2016) follow, along with the Assumption of Mary (15 August 2016).

The last religious holiday of the year is Christmas.⁵⁸ Christmas celebrations in Venezuela begin on 16 December with daily masses that last through 24 December. On Christmas Eve (*Noche Buena*), families gather to eat traditional food and visit, and children open gifts on Christmas morning. Music is an important part of the holiday and people sing traditional songs known as *aguinaldos*. Christmas celebrations officially end on 6 January, the Day of the Epiphany, also known as the Day of the Three Kings. Children once again receive gifts and attend reenactments of the events surrounding the visit of the magi after the birth of Jesus. Families also attend feasts and festivals celebrating the event.^{59,60}

Other Holidays and Celebrations

The festival of *Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria* occurs on 2 February and commemorates the presentation of the baby Jesus, and the purification of the Virgin Mary following his birth. Candles are lit to symbolize the light that Jesus brought to the world. Regional variations of the celebration are common. In Caracas, residents attend mass at La Iglesia de la Candelaria church. In Mérida, costumed revelers perform dances that are specifically designed for this holiday.

The festival of *Velorios de la Cruz de Mayo* is celebrated on the third of May. It is believed that this festival is based on pagan rituals, but it is still widely celebrated by Christians.⁶³ Participants decorate crosses with flower wreaths, and in candlelit ceremonies, people sing hymns throughout the night.⁶⁴



Venezuelans also celebrate other religious holidays.
These include The Three Wise Men Day (6 January 2016),
Ascension Day (5 May 2016),
The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul (2 July 2016), Assumption Day (15 August 2016), All Saints' Day (1 November 2016), and The Feast of the Immaculate 26 May 2016).^{65,}



Holiday Procession Wikimedia / Riccardo Spoto

festival, devil dancers wear masks and elaborate costumes as they wind through the streets, accompanied by drums and loud bells to frighten away evil spirits. The dance symbolizes the battle between good and evil. In the early morning before the festivities begin, the devil dancers visit the graves of ancestors.^{68, 69}

Places of Worship

60 days after Easter (26 May 2016).⁶⁷ On this colorful

Catholic churches can be found throughout the country. Church architecture includes grand cathedrals and basilicas in the major cities. ^{70,71} These buildings range from extremely old to modern, and exhibit many different architectural styles. Church of Our Lady of Mercies in Caracas is one of the oldest in the country. The church was built in 1614 in the Baroque style, with Solomonic (corkscrewshaped) columns and scroll-shaped ornamental design. ⁷² The unimposing neoclassical church of Santa Rosalía de Palermo is small but has a spectacular interior. ⁷³ The Basilica of Saint Teresa, with stained glass windows and



San Miguel Church, Maracaibo Wikimedia / Wilfredo Rodriguez

columns, is actually two churches unified by a single altar.⁷⁴ Followers of the popular María Lionza cult often meet at Sorte Mountain, their most sacred site.⁷⁵

Exchange 2: May I enter the church?

Visitor:	May I enter the church?	pweydo entRaaR en laa eegleseeya
Local:	Yes.	see



Behavior in Places of Worship

General rules for visiting any church should be followed when entering a house of worship in Venezuela. Visitors should dress conservatively. Women should avoid tank tops and tight-fitting clothing.⁷⁶ Men should remove their hats.⁷⁷ In Venezuela, appearance is always an important consideration and Venezuelans often wear their "Sunday best."⁷⁸

It is not appropriate to eat, chew gum, or smoke in church buildings. Be silent and respectful, especially during a mass, and turn off all cell phones.^{79, 80}

Exchange 3: May I take photographs inside the church?

Visitor:	May I take photographs inside the church?	pweydo tomaaR fotos dentRo dey laa eegleseeya
Local:	Yes.	see

When entering a church, most Catholics bless themselves with holy water and make the sign of the cross. This is optional and non-Catholics are not obligated to do so.⁸¹



Rosalía de Palermo Wikimedia / Fev



Endnotes

- 1. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 2. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "Venezuela 2014 International Religious Freedom Report" (country report, U.S. Department of State, 2014),
- http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238792.pdf
- 3. Bryan Froehle, "Pentecostals and Evangelicals in Venezuela: Consolidating Gains, Moving in New Directions," in *Power*, *Politics, and Pentecostals in Latin America*, eds. Edward L. Cleary and Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 201, http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/sam/ven/Froehle-pente-ven.pdf
- 4. Chris Arsenault, "Evangelicals Rise in Latin America," Aljazeera, 26 March 2012, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/03/201232593459332334.html
- 5. Stan Guthrie, "After Chavez: Evangelicals in Venezuela Face a Fork in the Road," Christian Headlines, 8 March 2013, http://www.christianheadlines.com/news/after-chavez-evangelicals-venezuela-fork-in-the-road.html
- 6. Bryan Froehle, "Pentecostals and Evangelicals in Venezuela: Consolidating Gains, Moving in New Directions," in *Power*, *Politics, and Pentecostals in Latin America*, eds. Edward L. Cleary and Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 204–8, http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/sam/ven/Froehle-pente-ven.pdf
- 7. David Masci, "Why has Pentecostalism Grown so Dramatically in Latin America?" Pew Research Center, 14 November 2014, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/11/14/why-has-pentecostalism-grown-so-dramatically-in-latin-america
- 8. Marco Tosatti, "A Third of Venezuelans Believe Maria Lionza," Vatican Insider World News," 12 March 2011, http://www.lastampa.it/2011/12/03/vaticaninsider/eng/world-news/a-third-of-venezuelans-believe-maria-lionza-Z4aaO9sgSI7tfj7z0svzcJ/pagina.html
- 9. Rhodri Davies, "The Cult of Maria Lionza," Aljazeera, 18 November 2011, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/11/20111112111035654633.html
- 10. Lucy Beaumont, "Maria Lionza: Pilgrimage to Magic Mountain," Religion News Blog, 18 November 2007, http://www.religionnewsblog.com/20055/maria-lionza
- 11. Elizabeth Gackstetter Nichols and Kimberly J. Morse, *Venezuela* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood/ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 173–78, 182.

- 12. Brian Froehle, "The Catholic Church and Politics in Venezuela: Resource Limitations, Religious Competition, and Democracy," in *Conflict and Competition: The Latin American Church in a Changing Environment*, eds. Edward L. Cleary and Hannah Stewart-Gambino (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1992).
- 13. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 96–97.
- 14. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "Venezuela 2014 International Religious Freedom Report," (country report, U.S. Department of State, 2014), http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238792.pdf
- 15. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "Venezuela 2014 International Religious Freedom Report," (country report, U.S. Department of State, 2014),
- http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238792.pdf
- 16. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, *USCIRF Annual Report 2011: The Commission's Watch List: Venezuela*, Refworld, 28 April 2011, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USCIRF, 4dbe90b52d,0.html
- 17. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, *USCIRF Annual Report 2011: The Commission's Watch List: Venezuela*, Refworld, 28 April 2011, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USCIRF, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USCIRF, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USCIRF, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USCIRF, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USCIRF, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher, https://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher, https://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher, https://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher, https://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher, https://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher/)
- 18. Hugh O'Shaughnessy, "Priests, Plots...and Hugo Chávez," *Venezuelanalysis*, 3 July 2013, http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/6322
- 19. Ryan Mallett-Outtrim, "Venezuelan Foreign Minister Hits Out at Catholic Church," *Venezuelanalysis*, 7 April 2014, http://venezuelanalysis.com/news/10585
- 20. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, "USCIRF Annual Report 2011: The Commission's Watch List: Venezuela," Refworld, 28 April 2011, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USCIRF, 4dbe90b52d, 0.html
- 21. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "Venezuela 2014 International Religious Freedom Report," (country report, U.S. Department of State, 2014),
- http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238792.pdf
- 22. IMMI Group, "Marrying and Sponsoring a Venezuelan Citizen," n.d., http://www.immigroup.com/marrying-and-sponsoring-venezuelan-citizen
- 23. World Intellectual Property Organization, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), "Código Civil: Articulo 45," 26 July 1982, http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=130145



- 24. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, "USCIRF Annual Report 2011: The Commission's Watch List: Venezuela," Refworld, 28 April 2011, http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USCIRF, 4dbe90b52d, 0.html
- 25. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 26. eDiplomat, "Venezuela: The People," n.d., http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_ve.htm
- 27. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 51.
- 28. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 24.
- 29. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 34–36.
- 30. Miguel Tinker Salas, Venezuela: What Everyone Needs to Know (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 125. <a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=gLprBgAAQBAJ&pg=PA175&lpg=PA175&dq=venezuela+veneration+of+saints&source=bl&ots=ThMjT3-6Ds&sig=ZXtsYBnG88csHssBAZmLV2SylWU&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiy5MH9jILKAhUJ_mMKHZaLDSEQ6AEIIzAB#v=onepage&q=venezuela%20veneration%20of%20saints&f=false
- 31. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 34–36.
- 32. Miguel Tinker Salas, *Venezuela: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 178. <a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=gLprBgAAQBAJ&pg=PA175&lpg=PA175&dq=venezuela+veneration+of+saints&source=bl&ots=ThMjT3-6Ds&sig=ZXtsYBnG88csHssBAZmLV2SylWU&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiy5MH9jILKAhUJ_mMKHZaLDSEQ6AEIIzAB#v=onepage&q=venezuela%20veneration%20of%20saints&f=false
- 33. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 36–37.
- 34. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 124.
- 35. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 36–37.
- 36. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 124.
- 37. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 36–37.

- 38. Venezuela Information Office, "Revolutionizing Women's Roles in Venezuela," (information guide, Venezuela Information Office, 11 October 2008), 1–2, http://www.womenandcuba.org/Documents/viowomen.pdf
- 39. Laura Guzmán Stein, "The Politics of Implementing Women's Rights in Catholic Countries of Latin America," in *Globalization*, *Gender, and Religion: The Politics of Women's Rights in Catholic and Muslim Contexts*, eds. Jane H. Bayes and Nayereh Tohidi (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 127–32.
- 40. Tamara Pearson, "Venezuela: The Dangers of a Revolution Against a Woman's Right to Abortion," *Venezuelanalysis*, 12 September 2012, http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/7249
- 41. Laura Guzmán Stein, "The Politics of Implementing Women's Rights in Catholic Countries of Latin America," in *Globalization*, *Gender, and Religion: The Politics of Women's Rights in Catholic and Muslim Contexts*, eds. Jane H. Bayes and Nayereh Tohidi (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 130–32.
- 42. Yolanda Quiñones Mayo and Rosa Perla Resnick, "The Impact of Machismo on Hispanic Women," *Affilia* 11, no. 257 (1996): 262–63.
- 43. Candida Moss and Joel Baden, "Pope Francis' Woman Problem," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 December 2014, http://www.latimes.com/opinion/la-oe-moss-pope-francis-women-20141208-story.html
- 44. Trading Economics, "Labor Force—Female (% of Total Labor Force in Venezuela)," 29 December 2015, http://www.tradingeconomics.com/venezuela/labor-force-female-percent-of-total-labor-force-wb-data.html
- 45. World Intellectual Property Organization, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), "Parágrafo Sexto: Código Civil: De la Disolución y de la Liquidación de la Comunidad," 26 July 1982, http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=130145
- 46. Charts Bin, "Crude Divorce Rate," 2006, http://chartsbin.com/view/3230
- 47. Ryan Fitzgerald, "Venezuelan Bishops Rail against No-fault Divorce," Church Militant, 21 July 2015, http://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/venezuelan-bishops-rail-against-no-fault-divorce
- 48. Laura Guzmán Stein, "The Politics of Implementing Women's Rights in Catholic Countries of Latin America," in *Globalization*, *Gender, and Religion: The Politics of Women's Rights in Catholic and Muslim Contexts*, eds. Jane H. Bayes and Nayereh Tohidi (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 141.
- 49. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Venezuela: Situation and Treatment of Homosexuals: Recourse Available to Those Who Have Been Harassed Based on Their Sexual Orientation (2010–June 2010)," Refworld, 13 June 2014, http://www.refworld.org/docid/53b126844.html



- 50. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 270–71.
- 51. UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, "World Abortion Policies 2011," (country report, 2011), http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/2011abortion/2011wallchart.pdf
- 52. Time and Date, "Holidays in Venezuela in 2016," 2016, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016
- 53. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 184–85.
- 54. Time and Date, "Holidays in Venezuela in 2016," 2016, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016
- 55. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 189–90, 198.
- 56. World Guides, "Maracay Events, Things to Do and Festivals 2014/2015," 31 December 2015,
- http://www.maracay.world-guides.com/maracay_events.html
- 57. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 185–86.
- 58. Time and Date, "Holidays in Venezuela in 2016," 2016, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016
- 59. California Mall, "Holiday Traditions of Venezuela: 'Feliz Navidad," n.d., http://www.californiamall.com/holidaytraditions/traditions-Venezuela.htm
- 60. Time and Date, "Holidays in Venezuela in 2016," 2016, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016
- 61. Alborada Tour Operator, "Venezuela: Traditional Fests," 6 January 2016, http://www.alboradavenezuela.com/en/country/venezuela/destinations/traditional_fests.html
- 62. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 188–89.
- 63. Maps of World, "May Cross Celebrations," n.d., http://www.mapsofworld.com/venezuela/culture/may-cross-celebrations.html
- 64. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 190–91.
- 65. Time and Date, "Holidays in Venezuela in 2016," 2015, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016

- 66. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 198–200.
- 67. Time and Date, "Holidays in Venezuela in 2016," 2015, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016
- 68. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 189.
- 69. "Venezuela Celebrates Corpus Cristi with Dancing Devils in San Francisco de Yare (PHOTOS)," Huffington Post, 28 July 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/31/venezuela-corpus-cristing3366651.html
- 70. GCatholic, "Basilicas: Venezuela (15)," 30 June 2013, http://www.gcatholic.org/churches/data/basVE.htm
- 71. GCatholic, "Cathedrals: Venezuela (40)," 2016, http://www.gcatholic.org/churches/data/cathVE.htm
- 72. GPSmyCity.com, "Self-Guided Religious Buildings Tour of Caracas," 2012, http://www.gpsmycity.com/tours/self-guided-religious-buildings-tour-of-caracas-3163.html
- 73. Caracas Ciberturista, "Parroquia Santa Rosalía (Caracas)," n.d., http://caracas.ciberturista.com/parroquia-santa-rosalia/
- 74. Lonely Planet, "Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes," 2015, http://www.lonelyplanet.com/dominican-republic/santo-domingo/sights/other/iglesia-nuestra-senora
- 75. Elizabeth Gackstetter Nichols and Kimberly J. Morse, *Venezuela* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood/ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 178.
- 76. Suzanne Molino Singleton, Catholic Review, "Church Etiquette Review," Catholic Online, 13 April 2006, http://www.catholic.org/hf/family/story.php?id=19458
- 77. Fish Eaters, "Attire and Etiquette," n.d., http://www.fisheaters.com/TLMetiquette.html
- 78. Kitt Baguley, Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 96.
- 79. Fish Eaters, "Attire and Etiquette," n.d., http://www.fisheaters.com/TLMetiquette.html
- 80. William Saunders, "Appropriate Behavior in Church," Catholic Education Resource Center, 1 January 1999, http://catholicherald.com/stories/Appropriate-Behavior-in-Church,6475
- 81. Suzanne Molino Singleton, Catholic Review, "Church Etiquette Review," Catholic Online, 13 April 2006, http://www.catholic.org/hf/family/story.php?id=19458



Overview

Chapter 2 Assessment

1. Formal religion plays a significant part in the daily lives of most Venezuelans.

FALSE

Venezuelan Catholics are not regular churchgoers, and formal religion does not play a significant role in their lives.

2. The constitution guarantees freedom of religion.

TRUE

The nation's constitution guarantees freedom of religion, as long as its practice "does not violate the country's code of morality and decency or public order."

3. Venezuelan society is generally patriarchal.

TRUE

The historical values of patriarchy are advanced by the Catholic Church and are evident in modern Venezuelan society. Men tend to work outside the home, while women fill the traditional role of wife and mother.

4. Curanderos, or folk healers, are important figures in many communities.

TRUE

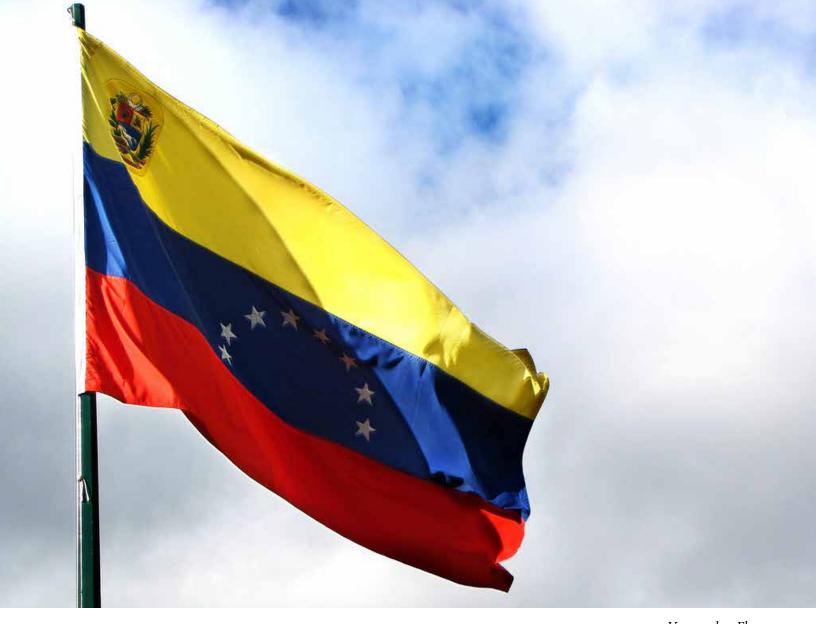
The *curandero*, or folk healer, plays a significant role in many communities, providing an alternative to modern medical care. Curanderos, especially in rural areas, conduct ceremonies to exorcise demons and to protect people from the mal de ojo, or evil eye.

5. Abortions are illegal under every circumstance in Venezuela.

FALSE

Abortions are illegal, except to save the mother's life.





CHAPTER 3

Venezuelan Flag Flickr / Cristóbal Alvarado Minic

Traditions

Introduction

Venezuelans are extremely patriotic and take great pride in their independence movement and historic heroes. The flag, the national shield, and the national anthem are all important symbols of Venezuelan national identity.^{1,2}

Society is open and friendly, and Venezuelans value honesty, generosity, and humor.³ Venezuelans can be quite informal, quick to form relationships with others, and direct in their conversations. Friendships form quickly, but they can dissipate just as fast.^{4,5,6}



Families are very important in Venezuela, and whenever possible, families try to live close together. Family members generally exhibit great loyalty to one another; sons and daughters take care of aging parents and integrate elderly relatives into family life.^{7,8,9}

Personal appearance is important to the fashion-conscious Venezuelans. Good clothes should be worn, even in informal situations. People are meticulous when it comes to personal hygiene; most shower at least twice a day and change clothes at least once. 10, 11, 12

Venezuelans have a relaxed view of time and of the transitory nature of life. Idling away hours in casual conversation is considered an essential element of friendliness. For Venezuelans, things happen when they happen, so living in the present and taking advantage of life is a key feature of the Venezuelan lifestyle. 13, 14, 15

Values

Venezuelan society is highly stratified and scores high on the dimension of "power distance." This means that inequality is broadly accepted throughout society.¹⁶



Cherun Meru Venezuelan Dance Group Flickr / Heather

Venezuelans score very low on individualism; it is therefore one of the most collectivist places in the world. This means that belonging to a group is particularly important for individuals whose self-identity is often tied to their class. Loyalty is extremely important and Venezuelans do all they can to avoid a loss of face and the maintenance of group harmony. Relationships are among the most important aspects of life and take precedence over tasks and work.¹⁷

Venezuelan society is also success oriented and the most performance-oriented nation in Latin America. Although they are competitive and status-conscious, their competitiveness is often directed towards members of other social groups, rather than toward members of their own families and social groups.¹⁸

Venezuelan culture has a low tolerance for ambiguity and the people are driven to avoid uncertainly. One of the ways they avoid uncertainty is to devise rules for virtually everything, although in many cases these rules are ignored. Following rules will often depend on whether or not the group views the rules as appropriate or applicable to the needs of the group.¹⁹ The conservative nature of the country is thus the result of its desire to avoid uncertainty.



Codes of Politeness

It is customary for men to greet close male friends with an embrace and a pat on the back. Female friends greet each other with a hug and a kiss on the cheek (sometimes



Blowing Kisses Flickr / Deornelas4

both cheeks) and hug when departing. Both men and women greet acquaintances with a light kiss on the cheek, although an "air kiss" is appropriate. For strangers, a firm handshake between males is acceptable and is sometimes accompanied by a pat on the back. A lighter handshake is appropriate for females.^{20, 21, 22}

Venezuelans need less personal space and often stand closer to each other than do people in the United States. Do not back away, as this is seen as a sign of rejection. People in the Andean region often stand farther apart than most Venezuelans.^{23, 24} Venezuelans commonly touch each other during conversations, though crossgender touching is limited.²⁵

Exchange 4: Good morning!

Visitor:	Good morning!	bweynos deeyaas
Local:	Good morning to you!	bweynos deeyaas

Exchange 5: Good night!

Visitor:	Good night!	bweynaas noches
Local:	Good night to you!	bweynaas noches

Typical greetings include good morning (*buenos días*), good afternoon (*buenas tardes*), and good evening (*buenas noches*). Younger people often use the less formal hello (*hola*) when greeting each other. When speaking with the elderly, or when in smaller cities, it is appropriate to greet people using the titles *Don* (for males) and *Doña* (for females), followed by the first name. Professionals are usually addressed by their title (such as *Doctor*) followed by the surname.^{26, 27, 28}

Exchange 6: How are you?

Visitor:	How are you?	komo estaa oosted
Local:	Fine, very well.	beeyen, moowee beeyen



Exchange 7: Hi, Mr. Aristeguieta! (Informal)

Visitor:	Hi, Mr. Aristeguieta!	olaa, senyoR aaReestegeeyeyta
Local:	Hello!	olaa
Visitor:	Are you doing well?	estaa beeyen
Local:	Yes.	see

Venezuelans maintain direct eye contact during conversations. They regard this as a sign of interest. It also establishes an atmosphere of trust.^{29, 30}

Male/Female Interaction

Venezuelan women have achieved levels of success and independence unusual in the rest of Latin America. Many women occupy positions of power in politics and business.



Venezuelan Couple Flickr / Aaron C

Nevertheless, the country remains traditional in many respects. Women enjoy being courted by men, who are obliged to demonstrate gentlemanly behavior by opening doors, paying when sharing taxis, and picking up dinner tabs. Males flirt openly with women, and they often follow women down the street, make catcalls, or stare.^{31, 32}

A strong value is placed on female beauty and sensuality. Women generally take great care to maintain and enhance their appearance by dressing in stylish, tight-fitting, revealing clothes, and adorning themselves with makeup. 33, 34, 35

The pervasive culture of machismo often pressures men to have more than one girlfriend. Anyone is a potential partner, regardless of marital status. Casual friends may have sexual relations, and the expression *amigos con derechos* (friends with rights) is frequently used to

characterize such interactions.^{36,37} Women can sometimes be extremely possessive and jealous. Such women are often referred to as *cuaima*, in reference to a type of snake in which the females fight over the males.^{38,39}

Traditional patriarchal values require men to work outside the home and provide for the family. Women, on the other hand, are expected to be faithful and fulfill the major roles of taking care of the house and the children.⁴⁰ But more women are bypassing these traditional roles as they assume diverse functions in all areas of life.^{41, 42, 43}

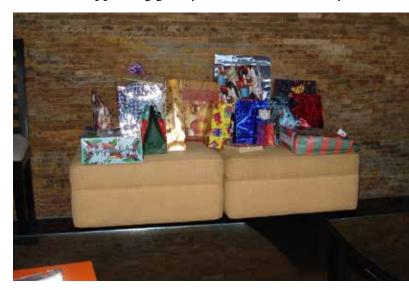


Hospitality and Gift Giving

Venezuelans take great pride in their hospitality. Invitations to a person's home are usually reserved only for close friends. If invited, it is appropriate to arrive 15–30 minutes later than the specified time to avoid appearing greedy or overanxious. Always

dress well when visiting a Venezuelan home. 44, 45

Gifts are frequently exchanged, and are required for birthdays, Christmas, weddings, and baptisms. Presents should be wrapped and accompanied by a card with a personal message. 46 When visiting a home, gifts are not expected but are appreciated. 47 Gifts are usually opened as soon as they are received. 48, 49 Alcohol, particularly high-quality scotch and wine, is a good choice. Chocolates, small



Gifts Flickr / Alex Lanz

electronics, and perfume are also appropriate. Sending flowers, especially orchids, in advance of attending a dinner party is appreciated. Never give a handkerchief as a gift because handkerchiefs are considered bad luck. Small presents for children are well received. Customarily, thank-you notes should be sent after visiting or dining with a family.^{50, 51}

Exchange 8: I really appreciate your hospitality.

Guest:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	moochaas gRaaseeyaas poR soo ospeetaaleedaad
Host:	It's my pleasure.	es oon plaaseR paaRaa mee

Coffee is more than simply a drink in Venezuela. It is an important part of the lifestyle, and an invitation to join a Venezuelan for coffee symbolizes the person's hospitality. Declining such an invitation is considered rude. 52, 53

Exchange 9: The food tastes so good.

Guest:	The food tastes so good.	laa komeeda estaa moowee saa- bRosa
Host:	Thanks for the compliment.	gRaaseeyaas poR el koompleedo



Eating Habits

Eating Customs and Etiquette

In the past, Venezuelans ate three daily meals, and breakfast was a large meal.^{54,55} Today, breakfast is often a light meal of cereal or *arepas* (round cornmeal bread filled with a



Eating Habits Flickr / Dan Cunningham

mixture of foods) accompanied by a cup of coffee or chocolate milk. Lunch used to be the largest meal of the day; families gathered for this mid-day meal between noon and 2:00 p.m. Contemporary Venezuelan families try to eat lunch and dinner together, but many families in large cities no longer eat lunch together.^{56, 57, 58} Large family gatherings for Sunday lunch remain a common tradition.⁵⁹

In the past, dinner was often lighter fare and eaten between 8:00 p.m. and 10 p.m. ^{60, 61} However, food shortages in the country have changed eating patterns. According to a national survey, 30% of the population now eats only one or two meals a day. ⁶²

When guests are present, they will usually be seated by the host. Men and women sit on opposite sides of the table. The host typically takes a seat at the head

of the table. Guests should stand by their chairs until the host sits. Men should remain standing until women are seated.⁶³

Venezuelans follow the continental style of eating; they place the fork in their left hand and the knife in their right. It is also appropriate to follow the U.S. custom of placing the fork in the right hand, unless using the knife to cut food. Wishing others a good meal by saying buen provecho before the meal begins is considerate and shows respect.^{64,65}

Venezuelans never put their elbows on the table. Napkins are always placed in the lap when eating. When not eating, put the tips of utensils on the edge of the plate with the handles on the table. It is considered rude to "clean your plate," so always leave a small amount of food. When you have finished eating, place the knife and fork diagonally across the plate (in the 10 oʻclock position) with the prongs facing down and the handles facing to the right. ^{66, 67, 68}

Types of Food

European cuisine has had a strong influence on Venezuelan fare, particularly Spanish, Italian, and French. African influences are also evident, especially in the Caribbean coastal region.⁶⁹ Common ingredients include corn, fish, fruits, rice, and beans.^{70,71} The national dish is *Pabellón criollo*, a combination of shredded beef, white rice, black beans, and fried plaintains arranged to mirror the national flag.⁷²



Exchange 10: What type of meat is this?

Guest:	What type of meat is this?	key kaaRney es eysta
Host:	Beef.	kaaRney dey Reys

Exchange 11: What is this food called?

Guest:	What is this food called?	komo sey yaamaa eysta komeeda
Host:	These are arepas.	estaas son aaReypaas

Venezuelan food varies significantly by region. Along the coast, fish and shellfish are commonly served in soups and stews (*sancochos*).⁷³ A coastal specialty is *Chivo al coco* made from pieces of shredded goat cooked in coconut milk, accompanied by mashed fired green bananas known as *mofongo*.⁷⁴

In the Andean region, food often consists of cured meats, sausage, beef, lamb, and trout.^{75,} 76,77 *Pisca Andina*, a chickenbroth and potato soup, is staple of the region.⁷⁸ In the northcentral



Pabellón Criollo Flickr / Encel Sanchez

and plains region, a popular dish is *sopa de mondongo*, which is a soup made from tripe and mixed vegetables.⁷⁹ In the Amazonian region, main ingredients include yucca, corn, plantains, and bananas. Turtles, tapirs, monkeys, and ants are common forms of protein.^{80,81}

Exchange 12: What ingredients are used to make arepas with beef?

Guest:	What ingredients are used to make arepas with beef?	key eengReydeeyenteys sey oosaan paaRaa aaseR laas aaReypaas kong kaaRney
Host:	Corn meal, water, salt, beef, avocados, and onions.	aaReenaa dey maa-eez, aagwaa, saal, kaaRney dey Reys, aawaakaates ee seyboyaas

Venezuelans have a sweet tooth and a fondness for desserts. Popular sweet choices include *huevos chimbos* (egg yolks in sugar syrup), *besitos de coco* (coconut cookies), and *bien me sabe* (sponge caked soaked in coconut milk).^{82, 83} Fruits, including pineapples, papayas, mangos, and chirimoyas are local favorites.⁸⁴



Dress Codes

Venezuelans are attentive to dress and appearance almost to the point of obsession. 85 They generally wear Western-style clothes and prefer designers from the United States and Europe. Women typically dress in fashionable, tight-fitting, revealing clothes and wear makeup when they go out. Even working women may wear short skirts, tight blouses, and jewelry. 86, 87

Men, especially in business settings, should dress conservatively. Dark business suits are appropriate, although casual clothing is acceptable on the weekends. 88 The traditional *liqui liqui* is experiencing a slight rebirth, thanks to local celebrities who have publicly worn traditional styles in recent years. This two-piece suit is usually made of cream-colored cotton or linen. The tight-fitting jacket, which has long



Fashionable Clothes Flickr / Gabriel S. Delgado C.

sleeves and a Nehru-style collar, is closed at the neck in cuff-link fashion. The trousers are full length. A narrow-brimmed Panama-style hat and white shoes complete the look.^{89, 90, 91}

Exchange 13: Is this acceptable to wear?

Visitor:	Is this acceptable to wear?	sey pweydey yeyvaaR
Local:	Yes.	see

Baggy jeans and T-shirts are not considered appropriate, although men can be seen in stylish jeans and T-shirts at informal weekend events. Shorts and sandals are generally only worn at the beach or at home. 92, 93, 94

Non-Religious Holidays

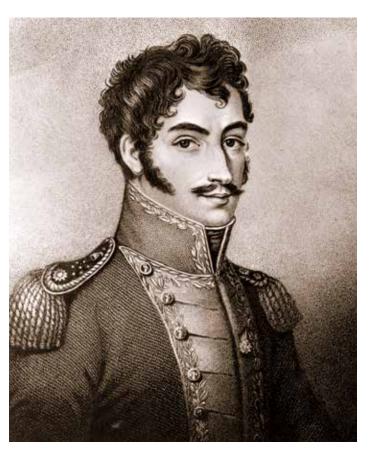
The first holiday of the year is New Year's Day. 95 On New Year's Eve, people typically go out to parties to celebrate. At midnight, it is customary to eat 12 grapes (each symbolizing a month of the year) for good luck. Big family dinners with traditional champagne drinks are customary. People don yellow underwear on New Year's Day believing this will bring them good luck. Another belief is that writing wishes for the coming year and then burning the paper, ensures that the wishes will come true. 96



Declaration of Independence Day is celebrated on 19 April. This day commemorates the declaration of Venezuela's independence and the beginning of its struggle for independence from Spain.97,98 Venezuelans celebrate Labor Day on 1 May. Rallies, parades, and workers' meetings fill the day.99, 100 Battle of Carabobo Day, sometimes referred to as Army Day (24 June), commemorates the victory over the Spanish in 1821. Festivities usually include a military parade and an air show in Corobobo state. 101, 102, 103



Puerto La Cruz Happy New Year 2013 Flickr / Ernesto Borges



Independence Day is celebrated on 5 July.¹⁰⁴ On this day, in a ceremony attended by thousands, the president lays a wreath at the tomb of Simón Bolívar. This event is followed by a ceremonial session of Congress in which the president opens a chest containing the proclamation of independence, which is then put on public display.¹⁰⁵ Next comes the Birthday of Simón Bolívar on 24 July.¹⁰⁶ Venezuelans celebrate Bolívar's birth with civil and military ceremonies and stories recounting his exploits.¹⁰⁷

The final secular holiday of the year is Columbus Day, commemorating his arrival on Venezuelan soil. In 2002, the government renamed the holiday *Día de la Resistencia Indígena* (Day of Indigenous Resistance). This revised holiday celebrates mestizos, who are a racial mix of indigenous peoples, Spanish colonizers, and African slaves. ^{108, 109}

Simon Bolivar Wikimedia / M. N. Bate



Dos and Don'ts

Do ask permission before taking someone's photograph. This is especially true for indigenous Indians.

Do stand close when speaking to another person. Moving away is regarded as offensive.

Do maintain eye contact when addressing someone.

Do dress well and be attentive to appearance.

Do not decline an invitation to coffee.

Do not refer to the United States as America.

Do not make the OK symbol by placing your thumb and forefinger together.

Do not eat while walking.

Do not slouch when standing.

Do not prop your feet up on furniture.

Do not point with your index finger; instead, motion with your entire hand.

Do not pass between people who are conversing.



Endnotes

- 1. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 81–82.
- 2. University of Chicago News Office, "Americans and Venezuelans Lead the World in National Pride," 1 March 2006, http://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/06/060301.nationalpride.shtml
- 3. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 81–82.
- 4. Kwintessential, "Venezuela: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," n.d., http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/venezuela-country-profile.html
- 5. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: The People: General Attitudes," Culture Grams Online Edition, 2016.
- 6. Claire Antell et al., *Insight Guides: Venezuela* (Maspeth, NY: Langenscheidt Publishers, Inc., 2002), 64.
- 7. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 91–92
- 8. Jessica Morelock, "Traditions in Caracas, Venezuela," USA Today, n.d., http://traveltips.usatoday.com/traditions-caracas-venezuela-100375.html
- 9. Culture Smart! Consulting, "Venezuela—Values and Attitudes," n.d., http://www.culturesmartconsulting.com/venezuela-values-and-attitudes
- 10. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 85–87
- 11. eDiplomat, "Venezuela: Dress," n.d., http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural etiquette/ce ve.htm
- 12. Culture Crossing Guide, "Venezuela: Dress," 2014., http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics-business-student-details.php?Id=11&CID=222
- 13. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 79–81.
- 14. Claire Antell et al., *Insight Guides: Venezuela* (Maspeth, NY: Langenscheidt Publishers, Inc., 2002), 64.
- 15. Culture Crossing Guide, "Venezuela: Time," n.d., http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics-business-student-details.php?Id=11&CID=222
- 16. The Hofstede Centre, "Venezuela," n.d., http://geert-hofstede.com/venezuela.html

- 17. The Hofstede Centre, "Venezuela," n.d., http://geert-hofstede.com/venezuela.html
- 18. The Hofstede Centre, "Venezuela," n.d., http://geert-hofstede.com/venezuela.html
- 19. The Hofstede Centre, "Venezuela," n.d., http://geert-hofstede.com/venezuela.html
- 20. Culture Crossing Guide, "Venezuela: Greetings," n.d., http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics-business-student-details. php?Id=7&CID=222
- 21. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 104
- 22. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Centre for Intercultural Learning, "Cultural Information: Venezuela," 15 October 2009,
- http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/ci-ic-eng.asp?iso=ve
- 23. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Customs and Courtesies: Greetings," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 24. Culture Crossing Guide, "Venezuela: Personal Space and Touching," n.d., http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=9&CID=222
- 25. Culture Crossing Guide, "Venezuela: Personal Space and Touching," n.d., http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics-business-student-details.php?Id=9&CID=222
- 26. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Customs and Courtesies: Greetings," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 27. Kwintessential, "Venezuela—Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," n.d., http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/venezuela-country-profile.html
- 28. Culture Crossing Guide, "Venezuela: Titles and Business Cards," n.d., http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics_business student details.php?Id=20&CID=222
- 29. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Centre for Intercultural Learning, "Cultural Information: Venezuela," 15 October 2009,
- http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/ci-ic-eng.asp?iso=ve
- 30. Culture Crossing Guide, "Venezuela: Eye Contact," n.d., http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics business student details. php?Id=10&CID=222
- 31. Claire Antell et al., *Insight Guides: Venezuela* (Maspeth, NY: Langenscheidt Publishers, Inc., 2002), 64–65.
- 32. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 89–90, 95–96.



- 33. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 84–85.
- 34. Claire Antell et al., *Insight Guides: Venezuela* (Maspeth, NY: Langenscheidt Publishers, Inc., 2002), 74–75.
- 35. Matt Roper, "Butt Implants Age 12, Waists Crushed into Painful Straps for Weeks and Intestines Removed by 16: Inside the Extreme Venezuelan 'Beauty Factories' Where Girls Go to Shocking Lengths to Become Miss World,"

 Daily Mail, 12 December 2014, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2868260/Butt-implants-aged-12-waists-crushed-painful-straps-weeks-intestines-removed-16-Inside-extreme-Venezuelan-beauty-factories-lengths-pump-Miss-World-winners.html
- 36. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 89–90.
- 37. Sarah DuPaul, "Venezuela: Politics, Gender Roles and Popular Culture," Blog, 28 March 2011, http://sarahdupaul.blogspot.com/2011/03/machismo-and-marianismo-in-ciudad.html
- 38. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 89–90.
- 39. Sarah DuPaul, "Venezuela: Politics, Gender Roles and Popular Culture," Blog, 28 March 2011, http://sarahdupaul.blogspot.com/2011/03/machismo-and-marianismo-in-ciudad.html
- 40. Sarah DuPaul, "Venezuela: Politics, Gender Roles and Popular Culture," Blog, 28 March 2011, http://sarahdupaul.blogspot.com/2011/03/machismo-and-marianismo-in-ciudad.html
- 41. William Wardrope, *Countries of the World: Venezuela* (Milwaukee: Gareth Stevens Publishing, 2003), 22.
- 42. Z.C. Dutka, "UN Women's Conference in Geneva Highlights Venezuela's Efforts toward Gender Equality," *Venezuelanalysis*, 22 October 2014, http://venezuelanalysis.com/news/10977
- 43. "Venezuela Celebrates Women's Advances, but More Efforts Needed," *Correo del Orinoco International*, 11 March 2011, 2, http://www.correodelorinoco.gob.ve/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/COI55.pdf
- 44. Kwintessential, "Venezuela: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," n.d., http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/venezuela-country-profile.html
- 45. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Customs and Courtesies: Visiting," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 46. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 102.
- 47. Culture Crossing Guide, "Venezuela: Gift Giving," n.d., http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics business student details. php?Id=23&CID=222

- 48. Culture Crossing Guide, "Venezuela: Gift Giving," n.d., http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=23&CID=222
- 49. Kwintessential, "Venezuela: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," n.d., http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/venezuela-country-profile.html
- 50. Kwintessential, "Venezuela: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," n.d., http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/venezuela-country-profile.html
- 51. eDiplomat, "Venezuela: Gifts," 2012, http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_ve.htm
- 52. Kwintessential, "Venezuela: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," n.d., http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/venezuela-country-profile.html
- 53. Empowerlingua, "Dining and Food Etiquette in Venezuela," 2012, http://www.empowerlinguatranslation.com/cultural-information/dining-and-food-etiquette-in-venezuela/
- 54. Safari the Globe, "Food, Dining, and Drinks in Venezuela," April 2013,
- http://www.safaritheglobe.com/venezuela/culture/food-drinks
- 55. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 138.
- 56. Safari the Globe, "Food, Dining, and Drinks in Venezuela," April 2013,
- http://www.safaritheglobe.com/venezuela/culture/food-drinks
- 57. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 138.
- 58. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Customs and Courtesies: Eating," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 59. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Customs and Courtesies: Eating," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 60. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 138.
- 61. Safari the Globe, "Food, Dining, and Drinks in Venezuela," April 2013,
- http://www.safaritheglobe.com/venezuela/culture/food-drinks
- 62. Maolis Castro and Kejal Vyas, "Venezuela's Food Shortages Trigger Long Lines, Hunger and Looting," *Wall Street Journal*, 26 August 2015, http://www.wsj.com/articles/venezuelas-food-shortages-trigger-long-lines-hunger-and-looting-1440581400
- 63. Safari the Globe, "Food, Dining, and Drinks in Venezuela," April 2013, http://www.safaritheglobe.com/venezuela/culture/food-drinks
- 64. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Customs and Courtesies: Eating," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.



- 65. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Customs and Courtesies: Eating," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 66. Kwintessential, "Venezuela: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," n.d., http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/venezuela-country-profile.html
- 67. Etiquette Scholar, "Venezuela: Dining Etiquette," 2015, http://www.etiquettescholar.com/dining_etiquette/table-etiquette/sa_table_manners/venezuelan.html
- 68. Safari the Globe, "Food, Dining, and Drinks in Venezuela," April 2013,
- http://www.safaritheglobe.com/venezuela/culture/food-drinks
- 69. South America, "Typical Venezuelan Food," 1 May 2015, http://www.southamerica.cl/Venezuela/Food.htm
- 70. ifood, "Venezuelan, n.d., http://ifood.tv/south-american/venezuelan/about
- 71. Safari the Globe, "Food, Dining, and Drinks in Venezuela," April 2013,
- http://www.safaritheglobe.com/venezuela/culture/food-drinks
- 72. Venezuelan Food and Drinks, "Pabellon Criollo—Venezuela's National Dish," 8 August 2008, http://venezuelas-national.html
- 73. South America, "Typical Venezuelan Food," 1 May 2015, http://www.southamerica.cl/Venezuela/Food.htm
- 74. South America, "Typical Venezuelan Food," 1 May 2015, http://www.southamerica.cl/Venezuela/Food.htm
- 75. South America, "Typical Venezuelan Food," 1 May 2015, http://www.southamerica.cl/Venezuela/Food.htm
- 76. World Travel Guide, "Venezuela Food and Drink," 2016, http://www.worldtravelguide.net/venezuela/food-and-drink
- 77. Safari the Globe, "Food, Dining, and Drinks in Venezuela," April 2013,
- http://www.safaritheglobe.com/venezuela/culture/food-drinks/
- 78. Andy Kryza, "These are the 7 Essential Venezuelan Foods Everyone Should Know," Thrill list, 2 March 2014, https://www.thrillist.com/eat/nation/top-venezuelan-food-the-best-dishes-from-venezulea-thrillist-nation
- 79. South America, "Typical Venezuelan Food," 1 May 2015, http://www.southamerica.cl/Venezuela/Food.htm
- 80. South America, "Typical Venezuelan Food," 1 May 2015, http://www.southamerica.cl/Venezuela/Food.htm
- 81. World Travel Guide, "Venezuela Food and Drink," 2016, http://www.worldtravelguide.net/venezuela/food-and-drink
- 82. World Travel Guide, "Venezuela Food and Drink," 2016, http://www.worldtravelguide.net/venezuela/food-and-drink
- 83. South America, "Typical Venezuelan Food," 1 May 2015, http://www.southamerica.cl/Venezuela/Food.htm

- 84. World Travel Guide, "Venezuela Food and Drink," 2016, http://www.worldtravelguide.net/venezuela/food-and-drink
- 85. Virginia Lopez, "Venezuelans 'Obsessed' with Beauty," *Guardian*, 12 September 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/12/venezuelans-obsessed-with-beauty
- 86. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 84–86.
- 87. Claire Antell et al., *Insight Guides: Venezuela* (Maspeth, NY: Langenscheidt Publishers, Inc., 2002), 74–75.
- 88. Kwintessential, "Venezuela: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette," n.d., http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/venezuela-country-profile.html
- 89. Thomas Kohnstamm et al., *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), 376.
- 90. Richard A. Crooker, *Modern World Nations: Venezuela* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2006), 86.
- 91. Leanne Rose Thachil, "An Essence of South American Clothing," Vida de Latinos, n.d., http://www.vidadelatinos.com/article/essence-south-american-clothing
- 92. Culture Crossing Guide, "Venezuela: Dress," n.d., http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics business student details. php?Id=19&CID=222
- 93. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 85–86.
- 94. Richard A. Crooker, *Modern World Nations: Venezuela* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2006), 86.
- 95. Time and Date, "Public Holidays in Venezuela 2016," 2015, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016
- 96. Facts on File, "Venezuela: Holidays and Celebrations," World Geography and Culture Online, 2011.
- 97. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 199.
- 98. Time and Date, "Public Holidays in Venezuela 2016," 2015, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016
- 99. Kitt Baguley, Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 197.
- 100. Kiraz Janicke, "International Worker's Day: Caracas May 1, 2010," *Venezuelanalysis*, 3 May, 2010, http://venezuelanalysis.com/images/5326
- 101. Time and Date, "Public Holidays in Venezuela 2016," 2015, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016



- 102. Facts on File, "Venezuela: Holidays and Celebrations," World Geography and Culture Online, 2011.
- 103. Anyday Guide, "Battle of Carabobo Day in Venezuela," 2016, https://anydayguide.com/calendar/2142
- 104. Time and Date, "Public Holidays in Venezuela 2016," 2015, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016
- 105. Facts on File, "Venezuela: Holidays and Celebrations," World Geography and Culture Online, 2011.
- 106. Time and Date, "Public Holidays in Venezuela 2016," 2015, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016
- 107. Facts on File, "Venezuela: Holidays and Celebrations," World Geography and Culture Online, 2011.
- 108. Facts on File, "Venezuela: Holidays and Celebrations," World Geography and Culture Online, 2011.
- 109. Time and Date, "Public Holidays in Venezuela 2016," 2015, http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/venezuela/2016



Overview

Chapter 3 Assessment

1. It is appropriate for a male to greet a casual female acquaintance with a kiss on the cheek.

TRUE

Men and women both greet acquaintances with a light kiss on the cheek. An "air kiss" is appropriate.

2. It is inappropriate to make direct eye contact when speaking with a Venezuelan.

FALSE

Venezuelans maintain direct eye contact during conversations. This behavior not only signals interest, but it also establishes an atmosphere of trust.

3. Tight-fitting revealing clothing is appropriate professional wear for Venezuelan women.

TRUE

Venezuelan women, who are very attentive to dress and appearance, usually wear tight-fitting, revealing, and fashionable clothes. Even working women may wear short skirts, tight blouses, and jewelry.

4. Living in the present is an important part of Venezuelan life.

TRUE

Venezuelans have a relaxed view of time and of the fleeting nature of life. Living in the present and taking advantage of life is a key element of the Venezuelan lifestyle.

5. The main meal of the day is dinner.

FALSE

The main meal of the day is lunch. Dinner is light and may be a sandwich or *arepas* and juice.





Caracas

C H A P T E R 4

Flickr / Walter Vargas

Urban Life

Introduction

Most Venezuelans lived in rural areas in the 1950s, but with the discovery of oil, many people moved to the cities. This resulted in the melding of rural and urban cultural traditions, creating a hybrid city culture.^{1, 2} In many ways, urban life reflects traditional rural lifestyles in spite of the modern high-rises that populate the landscape.³

Today, 89% of the population live in urban areas, making Venezuela the third-most urbanized country in South America.^{4,5} Nearly a third of all urbanites live near four cities in the north and northwest: Caracas, Maracaibo, Valencia, and Barquisimeto. One in 10 Venezuelans lives in or around the capital city of Caracas.^{6,7,8}

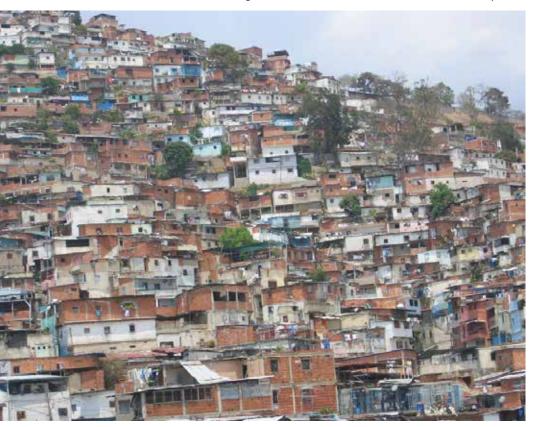


Rapid urban growth resulted in the creation of shantytowns, known as *ranchitos* or barrios. Many of the houses are constructed of substandard materials, making them both illegal and unsafe. Life in the barrios is difficult and often characterized by deprivation, violence, and crime.^{9, 10, 11} Even so, the country's oil revenue have allowed the country to escape the most severe abject poverty levels found in other parts of the continent.¹² Subsidized food, expanded medical programs, and new housing programs have improved life for many.^{13, 14, 15} However, current low world oil prices have hurt the economy and raised poverty rates. The flagging economy has caused food, energy, medical, and other shortages throughout the nation.^{16, 17, 18, 19}

The Urban Condition

Poverty and the Slums

There is a significant gap between rich and poor in Venezuela.²⁰ The nation's poverty rate is one of the highest in Latin America.²¹ Nearly 32% of the people live below the poverty line but some estimates place the number as high as 76%.^{22, 23} Other experts suggest that, for those not living in poverty, 60% of households are classified as poor.²⁴ Approximately 50% of all urban residents live in informal communities characterized by substandard housing and the lack of basic amenities. Heavy rains often cause houses built on



Hillside homes Flickr / Procsilas Moscas

unstable hillsides to collapse.^{25, 26 27} Reportedly, every few days a house collapses.²⁸

Steep hillside locations present transportation challenges. The narrow winding streets make most vehicular traffic impossible, contributing to the lack of public transportation. Public services, including police and fire departments, have limited access to respond. Travelling to the city center, where many jobs are located, can be difficult and challenging. Access to healthcare remains limited, despite recent efforts to locate medical facilities in the barrios. Further, the continuing emigration of Venezuelan healthcare professionals is likely to worsen the problem. 29, 30, 31



Many cities in Venezuela have insufficient sanitation infrastructure.³² Proper waste disposal is a major concern, especially in slum areas where people often dump trash in the streets.^{33, 34} Air-polluting waste is burned in more than 300 open landfills.^{35, 36}

The official unemployment rate in Venezuela in October 2015 was roughly 7%.³⁷ About 56% of jobs are in the formal sector, many of them with the state. The number of state employees has grown since 2004, partly because of the government's nationalization of numerous industries. A substantial number of people (nearly 41%) remain employed in the informal sector.^{38, 39} In 2014, however, amid growing economic weakness, only 35% of all jobs generated were in the formal sector.⁴⁰

Crime and Violence

The country's most pressing urban problem is crime and violence. Venezuela is the most crime-ridden country in South America, with Caracas the second-most violent city in the world. Approximately 40% of all murders are committed in Caracas, which are largely the result of fights between organized criminal groups. According to recent reports, this means Caracas is becoming the capital of organized crime. According to crime statistics, 24,763 murders occurred in the nation in 2014 and an estimated 27,000 homicides occurred in 2015. In response, the government created a new armed force, the People's Guard, to support and assist the police in cities.

The increase in crime is mostly due to the presence of armed gangs and drug traffickers.⁵⁰ Venezuela has become a primary transit country for illegal drugs destined for the United States and Europe from the Caribbean. Small-arms smuggling contributes to the high rates of violence. Gun control is lax and many people own small arms. Kidnappings particularly express kidnappings in which quick cash is demanded for a victim's release—are endemic. In 2010, between 20 and 40 such kidnappings occurred daily.51,52 In 2012, an estimated 90% of all kidnappings fell into this category.⁵³ Kidnappings surged again in 2015, during Venezuela's economic meltdown.54



Venezuela Opposition Demonstration Flickr / Diariocritico de Venezuela



Healthcare

Venezuela's healthcare system became another victim of the nation's sagging 2015 economy. Thousands were denied medical care because hospitals and doctors lacked the necessary supplies and medicines to provide care. ^{55, 56} A study by Doctors without Borders found that 44% of operating rooms in public hospitals had closed, and 94% lacked the resources for complete operation. ⁵⁷ Public hospitals in the nation had waitlists with as many as 20,000 patients, including 4,000 at the main hospital in Caracas. ⁵⁸ It was estimated that only 36% of beds in public hospitals were operational. ⁵⁹

Both public and private hospitals provide medical care in urban centers. Medical care in public facilities is limited and may be



Dental Care Flickr / Franklin Reyes

substandard. Medical care in private hospitals and clinics is generally good. ^{60, 61} Care in private clinics is expensive, and payment is usually required in advance. Some facilities accept credit cards, but many expect payment in cash. Patients who are unable to pay are referred to a public hospital. ⁶²

Exchange 14: Is there a hospital nearby?

Visitor:	Is there a hospital nearby?	aay aalgoon ospeetaal seRkaa
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	see, eng el sentRo

Although many pharmacies are open 24 hours, prescription medications may be difficult to obtain. Visitors should take their own supply, packed in original prescription containers.⁶³

Exchange 15: Is Dr. Gonzales in, Sir?

Visitor:	Is Dr. Gonzales in, Sir?	senyoR, estaa el doktoR gonsaaleys
Local:	No.	no

Barrio Adentro is a community health program that provides a variety of services to residents, including primary and preventive care. These small community clinics, mostly staffed with Cuban doctors, are typically located in the barrios and provide free health services to anyone.^{64,65}



Exchange 16: Do you know what is wrong?

Local:	Do you know what is wrong?	saabey lo key estaa mal
Visitor:	No.	no

Education

The constitution guarantees education as a right to every citizen. According to government statistics, 37% of Venezuelans are currently enrolled in some kind of educational program.^{66,67} These gains in universal access have created a country in which 93%–98.6% of Venezuelans are literate.^{68,69,70}

The school year runs from September through June or July.⁷¹ Pre-primary education is free, but not compulsory.⁷² Basic or primary education includes grades 1-9; it is compulsory and free in public schools.⁷³ Secondary education is also free at public schools and takes another two to three years to complete, depending on the course of study.^{74, 75, 76} Students may attend either private or public schools.⁷⁷

Following secondary school, students may apply to one of roughly 100 institutions of higher education. Undergraduate education is free at state universities. Students may earn either a short-cycle *téchnico superior* degree or a *licenciado*, which typically takes five years to complete.⁷⁸ They then can choose to go to graduate school, where they may earn a *diploma de especialista*, *a magister* (or Master's degree), a *doctorado* (or doctorate degree).^{79,80}

Venezuelan dropout rates are high, especially among the urban poor. Enrollment rates for secondary school are markedly low, although most children are enrolled in primary school.^{81,82} Boys from the poorest urban families typically complete three years of education, while girls complete four and a half years. Urban education completion rates are lower than in rural areas, where the poorest children obtain 6.5 years of schooling.⁸³

A lack of access to schools, indirect costs of education, and poverty all contribute to the high dropout rates.⁸⁴

Many gains in education are due to community-based programs, called *misiones* (missions), which exist outside the formal education system. *Misiones* target those who have been excluded from the formal system of education. ⁸⁵ *Misiones* have often been criticized for their focus on advancing the Bolivarian agenda of President Chávez and his supporters, and the curriculum is often viewed as little more than political indoctrination. Others claim that the curriculum inspires pride in being Venezuelan and guards against a Eurocentric curriculum. ^{86, 87}



School Girl Ariel López

Restaurants

Major cities offer a variety of cuisines and types of restaurants. Many Venezuelans make a quick stop for breakfast or lunch at a *panadería* (bakery) to purchase pastries, hamand-cheese *pasteles*, or *empanadas* (stuffed deepfried turnovers), and a cup of espresso.^{88,89}

Empanadas Wikimedia / The Photographer



Exchange 17: Are you still serving breakfast?

Customer:	Are you still serving breakfast?	todaaveeyaa sey estaa seeRveeyendo el desaayoono
Waiter:	Yes.	see

Exchange 18: I would like coffee with milk.

Customer:	I would like coffee with milk.	keeyeRo oon kaafey kon leychey
Waiter:	Sure.	klaaRo

There are usually two silver bowls containing two different sauces on restaurant tables. One is a hot red sauce, *salsa picante*, made with red chili powder. The other is a green avocado-based sauce. There is usually a basket of bread or *arepitas* (small grilled corncakes).⁹⁰

Exchange 19: May I have a bottle of water?

Customer (male):	May I have a bottle of water?	mey pweydey daaR oona boteyaa dey aagwa
Waiter:	Yes, sir!	see

Exchange 20: I'd like some hot soup.

Customer:	I'd like some hot soup.	mey goostaaReeya oona sopaa kaaleeyentey
Waiter:	Okay.	okey

Venezuelan desserts are sweet. *Bien me* sabe is a liquor-soaked sponge cake with coconut cream filling and meringue topping. *Quesillo*, made with egg yolks and syrup, is similar



to flan. Besitos de coco are coconut cookies. 91 Popular sweet drinks include batidos (fruit juices), merengadas (milk shakes), chichi (a milk drink made from rice and sugar), and papelón con limón (sugarcane juice and lemon). 92

Exchange 21: Do you have dessert?

Customer:	Do you have dessert?	teeyeney postReys
Waiter:	Yes, we have quesillo.	see, teneymos keseeyo

Exchange 22: Where is the restroom?

Customer:	Where is the restroom?	dondey estaa el baanyo
Waiter:	That room to your left, over there.	esey kwaaRto aa soo eezkeeyeRda, poR aayaa

The person issuing an a 10% surcharge, but an expected.94,95 To get the bill, catch the waiter's eye, and say "la cuenta por favor."96

invitation to a restaurant is expected to pay.93 Most restaurant checks include additional 5%–10% tip is



Flickr / Dan Cunningham

Restaurant

Exchange 23: Please bring the bill to me.

Customer:	Please bring the bill to me.	tReygaamey laa kwentaa aa mee
Waiter:	Okay.	okey

Marketplaces and Street Vendors

Most cities have shopping malls with brand-name clothing, modern supermarket food courts (ferias), theaters, and restaurants. The largest mall in South America is the El Centro Sambil in Caracas. Smaller cities generally have commercial zones along the main street or close to bus stations.97,98

Exchange 24: Is the mercado nearby?

Visitor:	Is the <i>mercado</i> nearby?	aay aalgoon meRkaado seRkaa
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	see, aayaa aa laa deReycha



Venezuelans generally do not bargain, but shoppers can always ask if the merchant will give them a discount.⁹⁹

Exchange 25: May I examine this close up?

Buyer:	May I examine this close up?	mey peRmeetey eksaameenaaR eysto maas dey seRkaa
Seller:	Sure.	klaaRo

Exchange 26: Do you have any more of these?

Buyer:	Do you have any more of these?	teeyeney maas dey eystos
Seller:	Yes.	see

Shops are located outside the big malls. Some of these shops feature crafts by Venezuelan artists. 100

Exchange 27: Do you sell hammocks?

Buyer:	Do you sell hammocks?	oosted vendey aamaakaas
Seller:	Yes.	see

Exchange 28: Can I buy a hammock with this much money?

Buyer:	Can I buy a hammock with this much money?	pweydo kompRaaR oona aamaakaa kong eysta kaanteedaad dey deeneRo
Seller:	No.	no

Street vendors (*buhoneros*) operate from stalls. These stalls are often located in dangerous parts of a city, and the products are of inferior quality. Vendors are often a source of black market goods. *Buhoneros* also move through the streets around apartment and residential buildings to hawk their wares. Delivery people and service people, such as cobblers, often ring apartment doorbells to advertise their services.¹⁰¹



Selling Mangoes on the Highway Wikimedia / Electrolito

Exchange 29: How much longer will you be here?

Buyer:	How much longer will you be here?	aasta kwaando estaa aakee
Seller:	Until 5 this evening.	aasta laas seenko dey laa taaRdey dey oy

Exchange 30: Please, buy something from me.

Seller:	Please, buy something from me.	poR faavoR, kompRemey aalgo
Buyer:	Sorry, I have no money left.	lo seeyento, no nos keydaa deeneRo

Money, Credit Cards, and ATMs

In 2008, the government changed the currency to the *bolivar fuerte* (currency code: VEF).¹⁰² In January 2016, USD 1 traded for approximately VEF 6.3.¹⁰³ Foreign currency



5000 Bolívares with Simón Bolívar

Ammon Beckstrom

Flickr /

can be exchanged at the international airport and at officially sanctioned exchange offices in the capital. However, foreign visitors to Venezuela are encouraged to forego changing money at the international airport in Caracas. New currency regulations also prohibit hotels from exchanging currency. Furthermore, authorized foreign exchange offices cannot change the *bolivar fuerte* back U.S. dollars. 106

Travelers should not depend on ATMs as their major

source of access to currency because of the restrictions on the amount of money that can be withdrawn at ATM machines, and because of the risk of being victimized at those machines. ^{107, 108} Instead, visitors should use major credit cards or debit cards, which are widely accepted throughout the nation, rather than carrying large amounts of cash. ^{109, 110} Travelers should be aware that international credit cards might not be accepted in some places.

Exchange 31: Can you give me change for this?

Buyer:	Can you give me change for this?	mey pweydey daaR el kaambeeyo poR esto
Seller:	No.	no

Additionally, traveler's checks are difficult to cash. Official money exchange offices (*casas de cambio*) might cash them, but they charge a commission of 3% or higher. Tour operators sometimes accept them as payment.^{111,112}



Exchange 32: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Buyer:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	aaseptaa dolaaReys aameReekaanos
Seller:	No, we only accept Bolivars.	no, solo aaseptaamo boleevaReys

It is possible to exchange dollars for bolivares fuertes on the black market, and at a better rate than those offered at official centers. However, such transactions are illegal. Individuals who participate in these transactions might be detained; they can face imprisonment.¹¹³

Transportation and Traffic

Automobiles

Traffic in Chacao Flickr / David Sasaki

Driving in Venezuela can be dangerous, especially at night. Outside major cities, drivers risk being detained at roadblocks set up by illegal armed groups, some of whom may



be disguised in police uniforms.¹¹⁴ Roads are frequently poorly maintained. Potholes and other road damage are frequently marked with a pile of rocks or sticks, even in urban areas, causing additional hazards.¹¹⁵ Locals regularly ignore traffic signals, fail to use turn signals, and drive at high rates of speed.^{116,117} Traffic jams in Caracas are a major problem, especially during the rush hour, which begins around 6:00.p.m.¹¹⁸ Being stuck in traffic presents a unique problem because armed motorcycle gangs hold up motorists.^{119,120,121}

Buses and Metros

Buses operate throughout the country and are generally efficient and inexpensive. Urban areas have several types of buses: busetas (medium-sized buses), colectivos (vans or minivans), rapiditos (old cars carrying up to five passengers), and por puestos (minibuses). Rapiditos generally follow fixed routes between a



Buses Flickr / mono EA city center and the suburbs.¹²² Speeding bus drivers and poor road conditions often contribute to accidents involving buses. Additionally, there is high incidence of criminal activity on public transportation, and there are occasional kidnappings of entire buses. Consequently, bus travel should be avoided, especially after dark.^{123, 124, 125}

Venezuela has a limited rail system with only 447 km (278 mi) of track, and trains carry mostly freight, but also some passengers. ^{126, 127} Several major cities, including Caracas and Valencia, have metro systems. ^{128, 129} The metro system is inexpensive but can be extremely crowded during rush hour. Robberies on metro cars are frequent and the U.S. embassy advises against using metros. ¹³⁰



Taxis Wikimedia / RubenMontilla38



154av - Aeropostal DC-9-32 Flickr / Aero Icarus

Taxis

In Caracas, taxis generally do not use meters, so fares are negotiated beforehand.¹³¹ Unlicensed taxis, known as *piratas*, should be avoided. There have been reports that drivers of *piratas* have overcharged, robbed, and injured passengers. Official taxis in Caracas are always white and carry yellow plates.^{132, 133, 134} It is not safe to hail a taxi from the street after dark. Call a taxi service or board only at an official taxi station. Travelers are strongly discouraged from using airport taxis because passengers have been robbed by drivers.^{135, 136}

Airplanes

Venezuela airlines comply with international aviation safety standards and have a good safety record. ^{137, 138} Be especially careful when traveling to and from Maiquetía International Airport, which serves Caracas. Thefts, muggings, and express kidnappings have been reported. In some cases, such crimes have involved individuals who possess valid credentials and wear uniforms. Make advance plans for transportation whenever possible. Drug traffickers are especially active at this airport. Travelers are advised to be extremely cautious of all strangers. ^{139, 140}

Exchange 33: Is this airline safe for domestic travel?

Visitor:	Is this airline safe for domestic travel?	eysta aa-eRoleenya es segooRaa paaRaa los weylos naaseeyonaales
Local:	Yes, of course.	see, poR soopwesto



Street Crime and Solicitations

Venezuela suffers from one of the highest crime and murder rates in the world. ¹⁴¹ Five of the world's top 50 most violent cities are in Venezuela: Caracas (#2), Barquisimeto (#10), Ciudad Guyana (#17), Maracaibo (#42), and Valencia (#50). ¹⁴² Poorly trained police, violent gangs, and the easy access to weapons helps make the country dangerous. Another factor contributing to the escalating levels of crime and violence are the deteriorating economic conditions in the nation. ^{143, 144, 145} The police are increasingly targets of violent crime. In the first 10 months of 2015, 252 police officers were killed, many for their guns. ^{146, 147}

Most crime aimed at foreigners is about money but violent crime against foreigners is rising, especially in tourist destinations. Travelers should avoid central Caracas and the Sabana Grande region, as well as the barrios where crime rates tend to be higher, especially after dark. Thefts from hotel rooms, safety deposit boxes, and parked cars are frequent. Express kidnappings are frequent, averaging approximately two a day in Caracas. Individuals, including foreigners, are taken from homes, airports, or hotels and held for cash. Express kidnappings or violent robberies have also occurred at ATM machines. Some victims have been killed in such attacks.



Metropolitan Police Wikimedia / Plantabaja



Endnotes

- 1. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 12.
- 2. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 39–40.
- 3. Claire Antell et al., *Insight Guides: Venezuela* (Maspeth, NY: Langenscheidt Publishers, Inc., 2002), 61.
- 4. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 5. Central Intelligence Agency, ""Urbanization: Country Comparison to the World," in *The World Factbook*, 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2212.html
- 6. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Settlement Patterns," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Drainage#toc32714
- 7. World Population Review, "Major Cities in Venezuela Population 2015," 2015, http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/venezuela-population/major-cities-in-venezuela/
- 8. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 9. Whitney Eulich, "Slums: The Future," Policy Innovations, 16 March 2010,
- http://www.policyinnovations.org/ideas/innovations/data/000161
- 10. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Venezuela: Settlement Patterns," 7 December 2015,
- http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/Drainage#toc32714
- 11. Eyanir Chinea, "Victims and Killers: Venezuela Youth at Sharp End of Crime," Reuters, 2 December 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-crime-youth-insight-idUSKBN0TL1PZ20151202
- 12. Anthony Boadle, "Chavez Revolution Losing Steam in Venezuelan Slums," Reuters, 22 April 2010, http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/04/22/us-venezuela-shanties-idUSTRE63L4QL20100422
- 13. "Venezuela Reduced Poverty by 50%, Affirms ECLAC," *Correo del Orinoco International*, 26 August 2011, 6, http://www.correodelorinoco.gob.ve/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/COI78.pdf
- 14. Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, to the U.S., "Fact Sheet: Thirteen Years, Thirteen Advances," (Factsheet, January 2012),
- http://eeuu.embajada.gob.ve/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=72&Itemid=97&lang=en

- 15. Ali Greenberg, "Hugo Chávez's Anti-poverty Legacy: A Complicated Case," (paper, Washington and Lee University, 5 March 2013), 3, 8-14,
- 16. Juan Cristóbal Nagel, "Poverty Shoots Up in Venezuela," Foreign Policy, 4 June 2014, http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/06/04/ poverty-shoots-up-in-venezuela
- 17. Kenzi Abou-Sabe, "Photos: Venezuelans Contend with Food, Medicine Shortages, as Low Oil Prices Cripple Economy," PBS Newshour, 22 August 2015,
- http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/venezuelans-battlechronic-shortages-low-oil-prices-leave-economy-crippled/
- 18. Shehryar Sohail, "Oil Prices Pushing Venezuela to Economic Collapse?" Investopedia, 12 March 2015, http://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/031215/oil-prices-pushing-venezuela-economic-collapse.asp
- 19. Girish Gupta, "Venezuela's Food Shortage Keeps Getting Worse," Business Insider, 13 August 2015, http://www.businessinsider.com/venezuelas-food-shortage-keeps-getting-worse-2015-8
- 20. United Nations Development Programme, "Income Gini Coefficient," 2013,
- http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/income-gini-coefficient
- 21. Central Intelligence Agency, "Population Below Poverty Line," in *The World Factbook*, 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2046.html
- 22. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 23. Danielle Renwisk, "Venezuela's Economic Fractures," Council on Foreign Relations, 4 December 2015, http://www.cfr.org/economics/venezuelas-economic-fractures/p32853
- 24. BBC News, "Venezuela Country Profile—Overview," 11 March 2015,
- http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19649648
- 25. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 10–12.
- 26. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2005), 39.
- 27. Anthony Boadle, "Chavez Revolution Losing Steam in Venezuelan Slums," Reuters, 22 April 2010, http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/04/22/us-venezuela-shanties-idUSTRE63L4QL20100422



- 28. Andrew Cawthorne, "Venezuela Housing Shortage a Headache for Chavez," Reuters, 2 June 2011, http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/02/us-venezuela-housing-idUSTRE7513EO20110602
- 29. Sarah O'Neill, Claire Sullivan, and Tamara Nisic, "Barrio Revolución," (written proposal, Loans for Living to the Ministry of Urban Development, Venezuela), 2008, 23–24, http://www.lehigh.edu/~bm05/courses/Venezuela%20Proposal.pdf
- 30. Steve Brouwer, *Revolutionary Doctors: How Venezuela and Cuba Are Changing the World's Conception of Health Care* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2011), 84–88.
- 31. BMI Research, "Industry Trend Analysis—Emigration of Healthcare Workers will Further Impair Healthcare Market," July 2015, http://www.pharmaceuticalsinsight.com/industry-trend-analysis-emigration-healthcare-workers-will-further-impair-healthcare-market-july
- 32. Cardinal Resources, "Cardinal Resources—Making a Global Impact since 2004," 17 November 2014, http://www.cardinalres.com/media-center/press-releases/detail/14/cardinal-resources----making-a-global-impact-since-2004
- 33. Emma Lynch and Nathalie Malinarich, "Photo Journal: Life in a Caracas Barrio," BBC News, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/picture_gallery/06/in-pictures_life_in_a_caracas_barrio/html/9.stm
- 34. Camille Ramos, Adriana Vicentini, and Daniela Ortega, "Challenges and Opportunities of Waste Collection in Caracas: Sucre Municipality Case Study," *Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development* 7, no 1 (2012): 119-121, http://www.consiliencejournal.org/index.php/consilience/article/viewFile/233/98
- 35. Humberto Márquez, Inter Press Service, "Biodiverse Venezuela Flunking Basic Conservation," Global Issues, 13 June 2011, http://www.globalissues.org/news/2011/06/13/10071
- 36. Blue Channel 24, "Venezuela: Environmentalists Warns [*sic*] about the Serious Environmental Impact of Waste Disposal," 3 July 2013, https://bluechannel24web.wordpress.com/2013/07/03/venezuela-blue-environmentalists-foundation-warns-about-the-serious-environmental-impact-of-waste-disposal-in-zulia-state/
- 37. Telesur, "Newly Released Government Figures Put Unemployment at 6.7 Percent, a Rate Dramatically Lower than when Former President Hugo Chavez Took Office," 1 December 2015, http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Venezuela-Unemployment-Rate-Drops-Nearing-Historic-Low-20151201-0038.html
- 38. Ricardo Rojas, "Venezuela's Unemployment Rate Drops," Press TV, 4 November 2011, http://edition.presstv.ir/detail/208302.html
- 39. Prensa Latina, "Venezuela: Marked Reduction in Unemployment Rate," Correo del Orinoco International, 23 December 2011, 4, http://www.correodelorinoco.gob.ve/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/COI95.pdf

- 40. Jhean Cabrera, trans., "Venezuelan Employment Rises in a More Informal Market," El Universal, 26 January 2015, http://www.eluniversal.com/economia/150126/venezuelan-employment-rises-in-a-more-informal-market
- 41. Citizen Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice, "Por Cuarto Año Consecutivo, San Pedro Sula Es la Ciudad Más Violento Del Mundo," Seguridad, Justicia Y Paz, 19 February 2015, http://www.seguridadjusticiaypaz.org.mx/sala-de-prensa/1165-por-cuarto-ano-consecutivo-san-pedro-sula-es-la-ciudad-mas-violenta-del-mundo
- 42. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 7 January 2016, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 43. Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela 2015 Crime and Safety Report," 19 February 2015, https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=17137
- 44. Carlos Camacho, "Venezuela becoming the Capital of Organized Crime, amid Raging Scarcity," Fox News Latino, 12 October 2015,
- http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2015/10/12/venezuelabecoming-capital-organized-crime-amid-raging-scarcity/
- 45. Bart P. Schut, "As Elections Approach, Venezuela is a Crime Scene Out of Control," Daily Beast, 3 December 2015, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/12/03/as-elections-approach-venezuela-is-a-crime-scene-out-of-control.html
- 46. Roque Planas, "Venezuela has World's Second-Highest Homicide Rate: NGO," Huffington Post, 30 December 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/30/venezuela-homocide-rate-2014 n 6395960.html
- 47. Bart P. Schut, "As Elections Approach, Venezuela is a Crime Scene Out of Control," Daily Beast, 3 December 2015, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/12/03/as-elections-approach-venezuela-is-a-crime-scene-out-of-control.html
- 48. BBC News, "Chavez Deploys Troops to Fight Venezuela Crime Wave," 17 November 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-15786541
- 49. Telesur, "Venezuela Introduces Plan to Fight Organized Crime," 14 July 2015, http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Venezuela-Introduces-Plan-to-Fight-Organized-Crime-20150714-0032.html
- 50. Bart P. Schut, "As Elections Approach, Venezuela is a Crime Scene Out of Control," Daily Beast, 3 December 2015, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/12/03/as-elections-approach-venezuela-is-a-crime-scene-out-of-control.html
- 51. Mimi Yagoub, "Venezuela Kidnapping Figures Mask True Scale of Problem," InSight Crime, 11 July 2014, http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/venezuela-kidnapping-figures-mask-true-scale-of-problem



- 52. Matthew Fisher, "Kidnap and Murder on the Bloody Streets of Caracas: 'If the Families Don't Pay Up, We Eliminate that Person," *National Post*, 16 March 2015, http://news.nationalpost.com/news/kidnap-and-murder-on-the-bloody-streets-of-caracas-if-the-families-dont-pay-up-we-eliminate-that-person
- 53. Mimi Yagoub, "Venezuela Kidnapping Figures Mask True Scale of Problem," InSight Crime, 11 July 2014, http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/venezuela-kidnapping-figures-mask-true-scale-of-problem
- 54. Aloysio Santos, "Latin American Criminals have Found a Low-risk, Lucrative Trade in 'Express Kidnapping," *Epoch Times*, 25 July 2015, http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/1411057-latin-american-criminals-have-found-a-low-risk-lucrative-trade-in-express-kidnapping/
- 55. Diederik Lohman, "Venezuela's Health Care Crisis," Human Rights Watch, 29 April 2015, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/29/venezuelas-health-care-crisis
- 56. Juan Forero, "Venezuelans Suffer amid Crumbling Health System," *Wall Street Journal*, 13 March 2015, http://www.wsj.com/articles/venezuelans-suffer-amid-crumbling-health-system-1426265474
- 57. Diederik Lohman, "Venezuela's Health Care Crisis," Human Rights Watch, 29 April 2015, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/29/venezuelas-health-care-crisis
- 58. Diederik Lohman, "Venezuela's Health Care Crisis," Human Rights Watch, 29 April 2015, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/29/venezuelas-health-care-crisis
- 59. Juan Forero, "Venezuelans Suffer amid Crumbling Health System," *Wall Street Journal*, 13 March 2015, http://www.wsj.com/articles/venezuelans-suffer-amid-crumbling-health-system-1426265474
- 60. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Health," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 61. Smartraveller, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Venezuela: Health," 1 October 2015, http://smartraveller.gov.au/countries/venezuela
- 62. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Health," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 63. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Health," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 64. Gregory Wilpert, "Venezuela's Mission to Fight Poverty," Venezuelanalysis, 11 November 2003, http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/213
- 65. Rebecca Trotzky Sirr, "Misión Barrio Adentro: Experiencing Health Care As a Human Right in Venezuela," Upside Down World, 24 May 2007,

http://upsidedownworld.org/main/content/view/746/1/

- 66. Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela, Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación, "Venezuela: The World's Largest Classroom," (education report, n.d.),
- http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf11/2nvp_venezuela.pdf
- 67. Caitlin McNulty, "Inclusive Education in Venezuela," Venezuelanalysis, 24 August 2009, http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/4742
- 68. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 69. Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela, Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación, "Venezuela: The World's Largest Classroom," (report, n.d.),
- http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf11/2nvp_venezuela.pdf
- 70. UNESCO, *Reaching the Marginalized* (England: Oxford University Press, 2010), 63, 280, 312, 336, 328, 361, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001866/186606e.pdf
- 71. Classbase, "Education System in Venezuela," n.d., http://www.classbase.com/countries/venezuela/education-system
- 72. Nick Clark, "Education in Venezuela: Reform, Expansion and an Uncertain Future," World Education News and Reviews, 1 May 2013, http://wenr.wes.org/2013/05/education-in-venezuela-reform-expansion-and-an-uncertain-future
- 73. Nick Clark, "Education in Venezuela: Reform, Expansion and an Uncertain Future," World Education News and Reviews, 1 May 2013, http://wenr.wes.org/2013/05/education-in-venezuela-reform-expansion-and-an-uncertain-future
- 74. Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela, Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación, "Venezuela: The World's Largest Classroom," n.d.,
- http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf11/2nvp_venezuela.pdf
- 75. State University, "Venezuela: Preprimary and Primary Education," n.d., http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1664/Venezuela-PREPRIMARY-PRIMARY-EDUCATION.html
- 76. Nick Clark, "Education in Venezuela: Reform, Expansion and an Uncertain Future," World Education News and Reviews, 1 May 2013, http://wenr.wes.org/2013/05/education-in-venezuela-reform-expansion-and-an-uncertain-future
- 77. Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela, Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación, "Venezuela: The World's Largest Classroom," n.d.,
- http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf11/2nvp_venezuela.pdf
- 78. Nick Clark, "Education in Venezuela: Reform, Expansion and an Uncertain Future," World Education News and Reviews, 1 May 2013, http://wenr.wes.org/2013/05/education-in-venezuela-reform-expansion-and-an-uncertain-future
- 79. Nick Clark, "Education in Venezuela: Reform, Expansion and an Uncertain Future," World Education News and Reviews, 1 May 2013, http://wenr.wes.org/2013/05/education-in-venezuela-reform-expansion-and-an-uncertain-future



- 80. Classbase, "Education System in Venezuela," n.d., http://www.classbase.com/countries/venezuela/education-system
- 81. UNICEF, "The State of the World's Children 2012: Urban Disparities," (report, United Nations Children's Fund, n.d.), 7, http://www.unicef.org/sowc2012/pdfs/SOWC-2012-Focus-On-Urban-Disparities.pdf
- 82. Susan Carpio, "Chapter 1: The Venezuelan Context: Economy and Education System," in *Education and the Informal Sector: Evidence from Venezuela and Brazil*, (doctoral dissertation, Science and Economies, University of Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand I, 2014), 1-3,
- https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01168572/document
- 83. UNICEF, "The State of the World's Children 2012: Urban Disparities," (report, United Nations Children's Fund, n.d.), 7, http://www.unicef.org/sowc2012/pdfs/SOWC-2012-Focus-On-Urban-Disparities.pdf
- 84. Susan Carpio, "Chapter 1: The Venezuelan Context: Economy and Education System," in *Education and the Informal Sector: Evidence from Venezuela and Brazil*, (doctoral dissertation, Science and Economies, University of Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand I, 2014), 4-5,
- https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01168572/document
- 85. Jo Williams, "Venezuela's Higher Education: A Model of Real Social Inclusion," *Direct Action* 9 (March 2009), http://directaction.org.au/issue9/venezuela-higher-education-a-model of real social inclusion
- 86. Nalylee Padilla, "Venezuela: Op-Ed," (opinion paper, Dickinson University, n.d.),
- http://www2.dickinson.edu/departments/commstud/PDF_files/studentpapers/venezuela07/nalyleepadillaOpEd.pdf
- 87. James Suggett, "Venezuelan Education Law: Socialist Indoctrination or Liberatory Education?" Venezuelanalysis, 21 August 2009, http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/4734
- 88. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 41–42.
- 89. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 149–51.
- 90. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 150
- 91. South America, "Typical Venezuelan Food," 31 January 2012, http://www.southamerica.cl/Venezuela/Food.htm
- 92. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 41–42.
- 93. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 43.

- 94. Trip Advisor, "Venezuela: Tipping and Etiquette," n.d., http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g294324-s606/
 Venezuela: Tipping. And. Etiquette. html
- 95. Lonely Planet, "Venezuela: Money and Costs," 7 January 2016, http://www.lonelyplanet.com/venezuela/money-costs
- 96. Monkey Business, "Etiquette," n.d., http://www.venezuela-monkey.biz/etiquette.html

128.

- 97. Kitt Baguley, Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 128.
- 98. World Travel Guide, "Venezuela Shopping and Nightlife: Shopping in Venezuela," n.d, http://www.worldtravelguide.net/venezuela/shopping-nightlife
- 99. Kitt Baguley, Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008),
- 100. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 273.
- 101. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 129.
- 102. República de Venezuela, "Currency of Venezuela," 2011, http://www.republica-de-venezuela.com/about-venezuela/currency-of-venezuela.php
- 103. Oanda, "Currency Converter," 4 January 2016, http://www.oanda.com/
- 104. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 105. Government of the United Kingdom, "Foreign Travel Advice: Venezuela; Money," 4 January 2016, https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/venezuela/money
- 106. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Local Laws and Special Circumstances," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 107. Government of the United Kingdom, "Foreign Travel Advice: Venezuela; Money," 4 January 2016, https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/venezuela/money
- 108. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 109. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html



- 110. Government of the United Kingdom, "Foreign Travel Advice: Venezuela; Money," 4 January 2016, https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/venezuela/money
- 111. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 272.
- 112. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 113. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Local Laws and Special Circumstances," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 114. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Travel and Transportation," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 115. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Travel and Transportation," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 116. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Travel and Transportation," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 117. Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela 2015 Crime and Safety Report," 19 February 2015, https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=17137
- 118. Jing Xi, "Traffic Jams in Venezuela Becoming a Daily Routine," ICS Caracas from the *National News*, 10 November 2015, http://icscaracas.com/themint/?p=2646
- 119. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Travel and Transportation," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 120. Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela 2015 Crime and Safety Report," 19 February 2015, https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=17137
- 121. Daniel Wallis, "Venezuela Seeks to Tame 'Wild West' Motorcycle Chaos," Reuters, 31 October 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-bikers-idUSBRE99U0EV20131031
- 122. Lonely Planet, "Venezuela: Getting Around; Local Transport," 2016, http://www.lonelyplanet.com/venezuela/transport/getting-around/local-transport
- 123. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 124. Lonely Planet, "Venezuela: Getting Around; Local Transport," 2016, http://www.lonelyplanet.com/venezuela/transport/getting-around/local-transport

- 125. Phil Sylvester, "Public Transport Safety in Venezuela: Top Tips!" World Nomads, n.d., https://www.worldnomads.com/travel-safety/venezuela/travel-in-venezuela
- 126. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Transportation," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 127. World Travel Guide, "Getting Around Venezuela: Rail," n.d., http://www.worldtravelguide.net/venezuela/getting-around
- 128. Railway Technology, "Caracas Metro, Venezuela," n.d., http://www.railway-technology.com/projects/caracas-metro/
- 129. Geodata, "Valencia Metro—Line 1: Venezuela," n.d., http://www.geodata.it/en/metro/29-metro/venezuela/35-valencia-metro-line-1-venezuela
- 130. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 131. Lonely Planet, "Venezuela: Getting Around; Local Transport," 2016, http://www.lonelyplanet.com/venezuela/transport/getting-around/local-transport
- 132. Lonely Planet, "Venezuela: Getting Around; Local Transport," 2016, http://www.lonelyplanet.com/venezuela/transport/getting-around/local-transport
- 133. World Travel Guide, "Getting around Venezuela," n.d., http://www.worldtravelguide.net/venezuela/getting-around
- 134. Alice Park, ed., South America on a Budget: Venezuela (London, UK: Rough Guides Ltd., 2015). https://books.google.com/books?id=1IwpCgAAQBAJ&pg=PT34&lpg=PT34&dq=official+taxis+in+venezuela+have+yellow+plates&source=bl&ots=OyXKMh-6Ld&sig=cXDcfnkw3bemD2q9ohO5duAxE&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiS2PPjl5HKAhUM6WMKHZTwDP4Q6AEIRDAH#v=onepage&q=official%20taxis%20in%20venezuela%20have%20yellow%20plates&f=false
- 135. Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela 2015 Crime and Safety Report," 19 February 2015, https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=17137
- 136. Government of the United Kingdom, "Foreign Travel Advice: Venezuela; Safety and Security," 4 January 2016, https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/venezuela/safety-and-security
- 137. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Travel and Transportation," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 138. Kevin Raub, Brian Kluepfel, and Tom Masters, *Lonely Planet: Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 2010), 279.
- 139. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html



- 140. Smartraveller, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 1 October 2015, http://smartraveller.gov.au/countries/venezuela
- 141. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 142. Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela 2015 Crime and Safety Report," 19 February 2015, https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=17137
- 143. "Crime in Venezuela: Justice Decayed," *Economist*, 9 August 2015, http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21662569-government-wrongly-blames-colombia-its-high-murder-rate-justice-decayed
- 144. Carlos Camacho, "Venezuela becoming the Capital of Organized Crime, amid Raging Scarcity," Fox News, 12 October 2015,
- http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2015/10/12/venezuela-becoming-capital-organized-crime-amid-raging-scarcity/
- 145. Bart P. Schut, "As Elections Approach, Venezuela is a Crime Scene Out of Control," *Daily Beast*, 3 December 2015, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/12/03/as-elections-approach-venezuela-is-a-crime-scene-out-of-control.html
- 146. Alicia Hernández, "Murdered for their Guns, Venezuela's Police are Now Victims of Crime," *Guardian*, 4 November 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/nov/04/murdered-for-their-guns-venezuelas-police-are-now-victims-of
- 147. Sabrina Martín, "Crime Wave Downs 100 Venezuelan Police Officers," PanAm Post, 29 September 2015, http://panampost.com/sabrina-martin/2015/09/29/crime-wave-downs-100-venezuelan-police-officers/

- 148. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 149. Smartraveller, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Venezuela: Safety and Security; Crime," 1 October 2015, http://smartraveller.gov.au/countries/venezuela
- 150. Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela 2015 Crime and Safety Report," 19 February 2015, https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=17137
- 151. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 152. Andrew Roasti, "Watch: Venezuelan Gang Leader Explains the Booming Business of Express Kidnappings," Fusion, 19 February 2015,
- http://fusion.net/video/51521/watch-venezuelan-gang-leader-explains-the-booming-business-of-express-kidnappings
- 153. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Safety and Security," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 154. Andrew Roasti, "Watch: Venezuelan Gang Leader Explains the Booming Business of Express Kidnappings," Fusion, 19 February 2015,
- http://fusion.net/video/51521/watch-venezuelan-gang-leader-explains-the-booming-business-of-express-kidnappings/
- 155. Smartraveller, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Venezuela: Safety and Security; Crime," 1 October 2015, http://smartraveller.gov.au/countries/venezuela



Overview

Chapter 4 Assessment

1. Rail travel is the safest form of public transportation in Venezuela.

FALSE

Venezuela has a severely limited rail system with only 447 km (278 mi) of track. Trains carry mostly freight and very few passengers.

2. Education missions are part of the formal education system.

FALSE

Many of the gains in education are due to community-based programs called misiones (missions). Misiones are outside the formal education system and target those who have been excluded from the system.

3. Approximately half of all city residents live in informal communities.

TRUE

Approximately 50% of all urban residents live in informal communities. These are characterized by substandard housing and the lack of basic amenities. In hillside shantytowns, heavy rains often cause poorly built houses to collapse.

4. Transportation to and from Maiquetía International Airport, which serves Caracas, is extremely dangerous.

TRUE

Getting to and from Maiquetía International Airport is dangerous. Thefts, muggings, and express kidnappings are reported. In some cases, these involve people with valid credentials wearing official uniforms. Whenever possible, make advance plans for transportation.

5. Girls from poor urban families have the lowest rate of educational attainment in the nation.

FALSE

Boys from the poorest urban families typically complete only three years of education, while girls typically complete four and a half years.





CHAPTER 5

Farmer from Yaracuy Wikimedia / The Photographer

Rural Life

Introduction

Venezuela is primarily an urban nation, with only about 11% of the population living in rural areas.¹ Most rural villages developed around colonial plantations. Thus, they are located far from urban centers. Rural life is less hectic than urban life, values are more traditional, and the people are more conservative.² Yet, life in rural communities is difficult; half of the rural population lives in poverty, while 30% live in extreme poverty.³, ¹ The poorest rural residents are indigenous Indians and Afro-Venezuelans. Households headed by women are especially at risk.⁵, ⁶ The causes of poverty are varied, but studies suggest that a lack of education, non-ownership of property and other assets, and economic cycles are contributing factors.^{7,8}



There is renewed interest in the revitalization of rural areas and agriculture in Venezuela. Agriculture is heavily dependent on rainfall, and only 10% of the country's arable land is irrigated. The agricultural program, Misión Agro-Venezuela, focuses on increasing the production of staple crops, increasing the amount of land under production, and stimulating urban agriculture.10 These revitalization efforts have been somewhat successful; there has been an increase in the number of acres of land in production and the level of food production.^{11, 12} Further, the political and ecological movement called food sovereignty has been deemed a national priority and a constitutional guarantee. However, Venezuela has failed to meet either food sovereignty or food security targets. 13, 14, 15 The nation currently imports between 50-70% of its food. 16, 17

Land Tenure

In 1998, land ownership was highly concentrated. Approximately 60% of all agricultural land was owned by less than 1% of the population, while 88% was controlled by only 5%. 18, 19, 20 Shortly after his election in 1998, President Chávez initiated policies to break up these large land holdings (latifundos) and redistribute the land. In 2001, the Law of Land and Agrarian Development and the Law of Food Sovereignty and Security were enacted, laying the groundwork for future redistributions. 21, 22, 23

Under the law, people or groups who occupied a parcel of land, or who worked the land as tenant farmers, could be granted the right of self-management or land comanagement. The law stated that any piece of land larger than the regional average, or that produced less than 80% of its capacity, was subject to redistribution.²⁴ Redistributed lands belong to the state, but they are considered the property of the farmers or cooperative workers as long as they are productive.²⁵

The first redistributed lands were state-owned, but in 2005 the government began

Farmland Flickr / Cristóbal Alvarado Minic

less than 20 hectares (roughly 49 acres).30

redistributing private lands.^{26, 27, 28} By 2009, more than 5 million acres had been reapportioned, an area the size of Massachusetts.²⁹ Nearly one million of the 1.7 million peasants received some land under these reforms but most holdings were

> Powerful landholders oppose these reforms and continue to resist expropriation through political and violent means. Hired criminals and paramilitaries have attacked leaders and individual farmers trying to enact the reforms. 31, 32 In recent years, more than 200 rural leaders have been murdered. Kidnappings, torture, and other crimes against those trying to enact the reforms continue. 33, 34, 35 Evidence further suggests that when land is about to be redistributed, landowners hire



gunmen to intimidate small farmers and peasants.^{36, 37, 38} In 2014, Venezuela's Supreme Court ruled that some of the redistributed lands must be returned to the wealthy landowners from which they were seized.³⁹

Exchange 34: Do you own this land?

Official:	Do you own this land?	oosted es el dyeynyo dey estaa teeyeRaa
Local:	No.	no

Agriculture

Agriculture in Venezuela accounts for about 3.6% of GDP (gross domestic product) and employs about 7.3% of the population.⁴⁰ The main crops include grains, sugarcane, bananas, vegetables but the main cash crop is coffee.^{41, 42} The most important domestic crops are corn and rice. Rice is grown in sufficient quantity to meet domestic needs.⁴³

The most heavily cultivated lands are in the north in the foothills and mountain regions. 44 Cattle are an important component of the livestock sector, which accounts for the largest land use. 45 Most of Venezuela's cattle industry is concentrated in the central part of the country in the Llanos region and the Maracaibo Lowlands. 46

Agriculture plays not only an economic but also a political role. Venezuela's constitution declares that food sovereignty



Agricultural Land Flickr / Cristóbal Alvarado Minic

is a right, and that food products can only be imported if agricultural production does not meet the needs of the country. The government land reforms were based on the belief that transferring ownership to farmers or to cooperative workers would help the nation meet its food needs.⁴⁷ The reforms, however, have failed to boost productivity sufficiently to meet domestic food demands.^{48, 49, 50} Improving output and productivity in the future requires providing smaller farmers with more land access, more credit, and better technology including sustainable production methods.⁵¹



Rural Transportation

Driving in rural areas presents serious challenges. Road conditions are generally poor, and roads are often steep and winding. Frequent landslides close routes. Driving early in the morning or late at night should be avoided. Locals frequently fail to use headlights, signage is often poor, and livestock often wander on the roads. 52, 53, 54 Motorists should avoid driving at night,



Rural Town Wikimedia / Bobjgalindo

especially outside of major cities due to risks of kidnapping and carjacking.⁵⁵

Exchange 35: Is there a gas station nearby?

Visitor:	Is there a gas station nearby?	aay aalgoona estaaseeyon dey gaasoleena seRkaa
Local:	Yes.	see

Exchange 36: Where can I rent a car?

Visitor:	Where can I rent a car?	dondey pweydo aalkeelaaR oon kaaRo
Local:	By the square.	poR laa plaasaa

Buses are available for travel between most cities and towns. Economy buses are often in poor condition, and overcrowding can make travel uncomfortable. Travel can be unreliable because of road closures or fuel shortages. Small rural towns may lack bus service, although por puestos (minibuses) provide an alternative. Criminal activity on buses is common, so bus travel should be avoided.56,57,58



Rural Bus Wikimedia / The Photographer



Exchange 37: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

Visitor:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	aay aalgoon taayeR mekaaneeko seRkaa
Local:	Yes.	see

Exchange 38: Will the bus be here soon?

Visitor:	Will the bus be here soon?	el aawtoboos yeygaaRaa Raapeedo
Local:	Yes.	see

Curiaras (canoes) are available to take travelers to remote regions of the Amazon, along the Orinoco River, or to Canaima National Park.⁵⁹ These boats are a common mode of transportation among the local people.^{60,61}

Rural Healthcare

Venezuela's worsening economic situation is adversely the healthcare industry. Shortages of doctors, medicines, supplies, and equipment limit access for everyone. 62, 63, 64 Healthcare in rural area was already limited, and has been especially hard-hit. 65 The national social health care program, known as Barrio Adentro, provides medical services in rural areas. 66, 67



Dental Clinic Flickr / kafka4prez

Exchange 39: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Official:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	aay aalgoona kleeneeka seRkaa
Local:	Yes, over there.	see, aayaa

Exchange 40: I am in pain, Doctor. Can you help me?

Patient:	I am in pain, Doctor. Can you help me?	tengo doloR, doktoR. mey pweydey aayoodaaR
Doctor:	Yes, I can help you.	see, pweydo aayoodaaRlaa



Curanderos (folk healers) practice traditional medicine. Many of the practices involve magic and superstition. *Curanderos* provide treatments for a wide variety of maladies, including problems related to the evil eye, *mal de ojo*.⁶⁸

Certain diseases commonly found in Venezuela can be especially troublesome. Common mosquito-borne illnesses include Dengue fever and yellow fever. Chagas disease is a potential risk for those staying in rural areas of the states of Trujillo, Lara, Portuguesa, and Barinas. Visitors staying in older adobe buildings, buildings with thatched roofs, or sleeping in the open are especially vulnerable. Chagas disease may be contracted through the bite of the triatomine insect or through ingesting contaminated food, particularly noncommercial fruit juices. The disease can cause permanent heart damage and even death. Malaria is a risk in the states of Amazonas, Bolivar, Delta Amacuro, Sucre, and Monagas.^{69, 70}

Rural Education

Venezuela's school year runs from September through June or July.⁷¹ Pre-primary education is free but not compulsory.⁷² Basic or primary education in grades 1-9 is



School Kids in Cumana Flickr / schlymay

compulsory and free in public schools.⁷³ Primary schools are widely attended, with approximately 92% of students under the age of 11 attending school.⁷⁴ Secondary education is also free at public schools, and takes another two to three years depending on the course of study.^{75, 76, 77}

Following secondary school, students may apply to one of the roughly 100 institutions of higher education. Although university education at public universities is free, most of these universities are located in or near urban centers.^{78,79}

Venezuelan dropout rates are high

after primary school, with significantly fewer students attending secondary and tertiary education. 80,81 Rich students, whether rural or urban, normally complete about 12 years of education, compared to about 6.5 years of education for the poorest rural children. In contrast, boys from the poorest urban families typically complete just three years of education and girls four and a half years. 82,83 The main reasons for such high dropout rates are a lack of access to schools, indirect costs of education, and poverty. 84



Who's in Charge?



President Nicolás Maduro Flickr / Presidencia de la República del Ecuador Venezuela is a federal republic divided into 23 states and roughly 335 municipalities that are further divided into about 1,100 parishes (*parroquias*). 85,86 Rural communities with at least 20 families, or indigenous groups with at least 10 families, can form a communal council that makes decisions for the community on matters related to budget allocation and the prioritization of projects. Rather than replacing the traditional governance of mayors and city councils, communal councils represent a parallel government structure. Anyone age 15 or older can participate. Council authority is limited to districts defined by the geographic residences of the families. 87,88,89

Council members are elected by the community. In addition to issue-specific groups, each council is organized into a financial committee, a communal bank, and an oversight committee. An elected spokesperson from each group attends *comunas* (assembly meetings), involving other councils from nearby communities. Council decisions may be overturned by popular vote if at least 20% of all members over the age of 15 are present.⁹⁰

Exchange 41: Do you know this area very well?

Official:	Do you know this area very well?	oosted konosey beeyen estey loogaaR
Local:	Yes, I grew up here.	see, yo kResee aakee

Border Crossings and Checkpoints

Travel to Venezuela-Colombia border areas is dangerous. Violence, kidnapping drug trafficking, and smuggling are common in this region. Travelers are advised not to travel within 80 km (50 mi) of the Colombian border. Several border crossings between Venezuela and Colombia have been closed due to tensions between the nations. 91, 92, 93

The National Guard and local police set up frequent checkpoints where all drivers must stop. Officials often conduct vehicle searches. All drivers must be prepared to show vehicle and insurance papers, as well as passports.⁹⁴



Exchange 42: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Official:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	dondey estaa laa aalkaabaala maas seRkaana
Local:	Two kilometers from here.	aa dos keelometRo dey aakee

Exchange 43: Is this all the ID you have?

Guard:	Is this all the ID you have?	eysta es todaa laa eedenteefeekaasiyon key teeyeney
Driver:	Yes.	see



Sometimes armed gangs are disguised as police and set up their own checkpoints. Travelers who suspect that a checkpoint is manned by criminals should call the U.S. Embassy or a friend, and keep the phone line open while the "officer" approaches. Always comply with any request. Resistance is unwise. Many Americans have reported being robbed by people claiming to be members of the national guard or police. 95, 96

Border Crossing to Colombia Flickr / Gary Hans

Exchange 44: Are you carrying any guns?

Guard:	Are you carrying any guns?	yeyvaa aalgoon aaRma
Driver:	No.	no

Exchange 45: Please get out of the car.

Guard:	Please get out of the car.	poR faavoR, saalga del kaaRo
Driver:	Okay.	okey

Landmines

Venezuela has not joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions, but it has destroyed some of its stockpiles of cluster munitions. It is uncertain whether they have destroyed all of their munitions stockpiles.⁹⁷ In 2013, government reported that all of the mines planted in the nation had been cleared and the country was mine-free.⁹⁸



Exchange 46: Show us the car registration.

Guard:	Show us the car registration.	muweystReynos el teetoolo del kaaRo
Driver:	Okay.	okey

Exchange 47: Is this area mined?

Visitor:	Is this area mined?	eysta aaReya estaa meenaada
Local:	No.	no



Venezuelan Countryside Flickr / alejandro_s_l

Endnotes

- 1. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 2. Wendy Aalgaard, *Venezuela in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 2005), 40.
- 3. IFAD, "Enabling Poor Rural People to Overcome Poverty in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela" (report, International Fund for Agricultural Development, June 2009), 1, http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/pl/factsheet/venezuela e.pdf
- 4. Kenneth W. Kliesner, "Reducing Poverty: Venezuela's New President," The Borgen Project Blog, 11 April 2014, http://borgenproject.org/reducing-poverty-venezuelas-new-president/
- 5. IFAD, "Enabling Poor Rural People to Overcome Poverty in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela" (report, International Fund for Agricultural Development, June 2009), 1, http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/pl/factsheet/venezuela e.pdf
- 6. Kenneth W. Kliesner, "Reducing Poverty: Venezuela's New President," The Borgen Project Blog, 11 April 2014, http://borgenproject.org/reducing-poverty-venezuelas-new-president
- 7. Rural Poverty Portal, "Rural Poverty in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela," n.d.,
- http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/venezuela;jsessionid=856F21032699E89F1F05376A10C4A9E3
- 8. IFAD, "Enabling Poor Rural People to Overcome Poverty in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela" (report, International Fund for Agricultural Development, June 2009), 2, http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/pl/factsheet/venezuela e.pdf
- 9. Rural Poverty Portal, "Rural Poverty in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela," n.d.,
- http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/venezuela;jsessionid=856F21032699E89F1F05376A10C4A9E3
- 10. Juan Reardon, "Venezuela's Chávez Uses Legislative Authority to Help Rural Producers, Launch New Agricultural Mission," Venezuelanalysis, 27 January 2011, http://venezuelanalysis.com/news/5962
- 11. Lisa Macdonald, "Venezuela, Revolution and Food Sovereignty," Australia Venezuela Solidarity Network, November 2011, 4, http://www.scribd.com/doc/73331471/Australia-Venezuela-Solidarity-Network-broadsheet-November-2011
- 12. Paula Crossfield, *Nation*, "Venezuela's Radical Food Experiment," Revolución Alimentaria, 3 October 2011, http://revolucionalimentaria.wordpress.com/2011/09/29/venezuelas-radical-food-experiment/
- 13. Andreína Trujillo, trans., "Venezuela Fails to Meet Food Security Criteria," *El Universal*, 18 October 2014, http://www.eluniversal.com/economia/141018/venezuela-fails-to-meet-food-security-criteria

- 14. Alexandra Olson and Frank Bajak, Associated Press, "In Venezuelan Election, Food Security—or Lack thereof—Can Turn Votes," Fox News, 10 April 2013,
- http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/04/10/in-venezuelan-election-food-security-or-lack-thereof-can-turn-votes.html
- 15. Telesur, "UN: Stronger Food Sovereignty Battling Hunger in Venezuela," 17 May 2015,
- http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/UN-Stronger-Food-Sovereignty-Battling-Hunger-in-Venezuela-20150517-0021.html
- 16. Ewan Robertson, "Venezuelan Government Announces 'Massive' Food Imports to Combat Shortages," Venezuelanalysis, 25 October 2013, http://venezuelanalysis.com/news/10122
- 17. International Business Publications, *Venezuela Business and Investment Opportunities Yearbook*, Vol. 1 (Washington DC: International Business Publications, USA), 2015), 151. <a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=gwxJCgAAQBAJ&pg=PA150&dp=PA150&dq=%25+food+venezuela+imports&sour ce=bl&ots=NtCnd_ZA5A&sig=t4Ahmf8bx-hOCKOmnlTdoPVJKHg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiT5b78k5PKAhUU-WMKHYTwAdc4ChDoAQg1MAQ#v=onepage&q=%25%20food%20venezuela%20imports&f=false
- 18. V.K. Ramachandran, "Land Reform in Venezuela," *Marxist* XXII, no. 2–3 (April–September 2006): 2–3, http://www.cpim.org/marxist/200602-land-reform-venezuela-2.pdf
- 19. Adam Kott and David Rosenblum Felson, "Chávez and Morales Force Sweeping Land Reform Measures," *Cutting Edge*, 5 May 2009, http://www.thecuttingedgenews.com/index.php?article=11296&pageid=13&pagename=Analysis
- 20. Gregory Wilpert, "Chávez's Legacy of Land Reform for Venezuela," *Review of Agrarian Studies* 3, no. 2 (July 2013–January 2014).
- http://ras.org.in/chavezs legacy of land reform for venezuela
- 21. Alan Broughton, "Venezuela: Land Reform, Food Sovereignty and Agroecology," Global Research, 20 September 2010, http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=21109
- 22. Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela, "Decreto Con Rango, Valor Y Fuerza de Ley Orgánica de Seguridad y Soberanía Agroalimentaria," (full text of the law, 2008), http://images.eluniversal.com//2008/08/04/leyh25.pdf
- 23. Food and Agriculture Organization, "Ley de Tierras y Desarrollo Agrario," (official document, Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela, 13 November 2001), http://faolex.fao.org/docs/texts/ven28661.doc
- 24. Ben McKay and Ryan Nehring, "The 'State' of Food Sovereignty in Latin America: Political Projects and Alternative Pathways in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia," (Conference Paper #57, Food Sovereignty: A Critical Dialogue, International conference, Yale University 14-15 September 2013), 11, https://www.tni.org/files/download/57 mckay nehring 2013 0.pdf



- 25. Anna Isaacs et al., "The Food Sovereignty Movement in Venezuela, Part 1," Venezuelanalysis, 26 November 2009, http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/4952
- 26. Adam Kott and David Rosenblum Felson, "Chávez and Morales Force Sweeping Land Reform Measures," *Cutting Edge*, 5 May 2009, http://www.thecuttingedgenews.com/index.php?article=11296&pageid=13&pagename=Analysis
- 27. V.K. Ramachandran, "Land Reform in Venezuela," *Marxist* XXII, no. 2–3 (April–September 2006): 8, http://www.cpim.org/marxist/200602-land-reform-venezuela-2.pdf
- 28. Gregory Wilpert, "Chávez's Legacy of Land Reform for Venezuela," *Review of Agrarian Studies* 3, no. 2 (July 2013–January 2014),
- http://ras.org.in/chavezs_legacy_of_land_reform_for_venezuela
- 29. Juan Forero, "In Venezuela, Land Redistribution Program Backfires," National Public Radio, 15 July 2009, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=106620230
- 30. Gregory Wilpert, "Chávez's Legacy of Land Reform for Venezuela," *Review of Agrarian Studies* 3, no. 2 (July 2013–January 2014),
- http://ras.org.in/chavezs_legacy_of_land_reform_for_venezuela
- 31. V.K. Ramachandran, "Land Reform in Venezuela," *Marxist* XXII, no. 13–14 (April–September 2006): 8, http://www.cpim.org/marxist/200602-land-reform-venezuela-2.pdf
- 32. Joe Emersberger and Jeb Sprague, "Impunity for Venezuela's Big Landowners," Venezuela Analysis, 14 November 2011, http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/6628
- 33. Edward Ellis, "Murder of the Campesinos," *Guardian*, 2 October 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/oct/02/venezuela-land-rights-chavez-farmers
- 34. Federico Fuentes, "Venezuela: Rural Killers Enjoy Impunity," *Green Left*, 22 May 2011, http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/47646
- 35. Ewan Robertson, "Action Demanded over 178 Peasant Killings in Venezuela's Land Struggle," Venezuelanalysis, 20 November 2014, http://venezuelanalysis.com/news/11032
- 36. Adam Kott and David Rosenblum Felson, "Chávez and Morales Force Sweeping Land Reform Measures," *Cutting Edge*, 5 May 2009, http://www.thecuttingedgenews.com/index.php?article=11296&pageid=13&pagename=Analysis
- 37. Edward Ellis, "Murder of the Campesinos," *Guardian*, 2 October 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/oct/02/venezuela-land-rights-chavez-farmers
- 38. Federico Fuentes, "Venezuela: Rural Killers Enjoy Impunity," *Green Left*, 22 May 2011, http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/47646
- 39. Joe Emersberger, "Why Hasn't Land Reform in Venezuela Done Much More to Boost Production?" Telesur, 14 July 2014, http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/Why-Hasnt-Land-Reform-in-Venezuela-Done-Much-More-to-Boost-Production-20140801-0042.html

- 40. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 41. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 42. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Economy; Agriculture, Fishing, and Forestry," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/The-economy#toc32723
- 43. Lisa Macdonald, "Venezuela, Revolution and Food Sovereignty," Australia Venezuela Solidarity Network, November 2011, 4, http://www.scribd.com/doc/73331471/Australia-Venezuela-Solidarity-Network-broadsheet-November-2011
- 44. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Economy; Agriculture, Fishing, and Forestry," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/The-economy#toc32723
- 45. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 46. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Venezuela: Economy; Agriculture, Fishing, and Forestry," 7 December 2015, http://www.britannica.com/place/Venezuela/The-economy#toc32723
- 47. Alan Broughton, "Venezuela: Land Reform, Food Sovereignty and Agroecology," Global Research, 20 September 2010, http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=21109
- 48. Ewan Robertson, "Venezuelan Government Announces 'Massive' Food Imports to Combat Shortages," Venezuelanalysis, 25 October 2013, http://venezuelanalysis.com/news/10122
- 49. International Business Publications, *Venezuela Business and Investment Opportunities Yearbook*, Vol. 1 (Washington DC: International Business Publications, USA), 2015), 151. <a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=gwxJCgAAQBAJ&pg=PA150&lpg=PA150&dq=%25+food+venezuela+imports&source=bl&ots=NtCnd_ZA5A&sig=t4Ahmf8bx-hOCKOmnlTdoPVJKHg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiT5b78k5PKAhUU-WMKHYTwAdc4ChDoAQg1MAQ#v=onepage&q=%25%20food%20venezuela%20imports&f=false
- 50. Joe Emersberger, "Why Hasn't Land Reform in Venezuela Done Much More to Boost Production?" Telesur, 14 July 2014, http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/Why-Hasnt-Land-Reform-in-Venezuela-Done-Much-More-to-Boost-Production-20140801-0042.html
- 51. Joe Emersberger, "Why Hasn't Land Reform in Venezuela Done Much More to Boost Production?" Telesur, 14 July 2014, http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/Why-Hasnt-Land-Reform-in-Venezuela-Done-Much-More-to-Boost-Production-20140801-0042.html
- 52. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Travel and Transportation," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html



- 53. Expat Focus, "Venezuela—Driving and Public Transportation," n.d., http://www.expatfocus.com/expatriate-venezuela-driving-transport
- 54. Phil Sylvester, "Public Transport Safety in Venezuela: Top Tips!" World Nomads, n.d., https://www.worldnomads.com/travel-safety/venezuela/travel-in-venezuela
- 55. Bureau of Consular Affairs, "U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela Travel Warning," 18 September 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings/venezuela-travel-warning.html
- 56. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 57. Lonely Planet, "Venezuela: Getting Around; Local Transport," 2016, http://www.lonelyplanet.com/venezuela/transport/getting-around/local-transport
- 58. Phil Sylvester, "Public Transport Safety in Venezuela: Top Tips!" World Nomads, n.d., https://www.worldnomads.com/travel-safety/venezuela/travel-in-venezuela
- 59. Kitt Baguley, Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 36.
- 60. The Venezuela Eco Portal, "Camps by State: Camp; Ucaima Description," n.d.,
- http://ecoportal.tripod.com/campboli-ucaima-descrption.htm
- 61. Wild Frontiers, "Venezuela Encompassed (Recce Tour)," (travel brochure, n.d.), http://www.wildfrontierstravel.com/axum/Dossiers%20-%20FTP/2016/Latin%20America/Venezuela%20 Encompassed%20(Recce%20Tour)%2025May16%20(A).pdf
- 62. Diederik Lohman, "Venezuela's Health Care Crisis," Human Rights Watch, 29 April 2015, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/29/venezuelas-health-care-crisis
- 63. Juan Forero, "Venezuelans Suffer amid Crumbling Health System," *Wall Street Journal*, 13 March 2015, http://www.wsj.com/articles/venezuelans-suffer-amid-crumbling-health-system-1426265474
- 64. Peter Wilson, "The Collapse of Chávezcare," Foreign Policy, 27 April 2015, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/27/chavez-maduro-healthcare-venezuela-cuba/
- 65. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Health," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 66. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008), 124–25.
- 67. In 2013, government reported that the all of the mines planted in the nation had been cleared and the country was mine-free. http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/10092

- 68. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 124–25.
- 69. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Health," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 70. Smartraveller, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Venezuela: Health," 1 October 2015, http://smartraveller.gov.au/countries/venezuela
- 71. Classbase, "Education System in Venezuela," n.d., http://www.classbase.com/countries/venezuela/education-system
- 72. Nick Clark, "Education in Venezuela: Reform, Expansion and an Uncertain Future," World Education News and Reviews, 1 May 2013, http://wenr.wes.org/2013/05/education-in-venezuela-reform-expansion-and-an-uncertain-future
- 73. Nick Clark, "Education in Venezuela: Reform, Expansion and an Uncertain Future," World Education News and Reviews, 1 May 2013, http://wenr.wes.org/2013/05/education-in-venezuela-reform-expansion-and-an-uncertain-future
- 74. Emily Walthouse, "Compulsory Education in Venezuela," Blog, The Borgen Project, 14 July 2014, http://borgenproject.org/compulsory-education-helping-venezuela
- 75. Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela, Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación, "Venezuela: The World's Largest Classroom," n.d., http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf11/2nvp_venezuela.pdf
- 76. State University, "Venezuela: Preprimary and Primary Education," n.d., http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1664/Venezuela-PREPRIMARY-PRIMARY-EDUCATION.html
- 77. Nick Clark, "Education in Venezuela: Reform, Expansion and an Uncertain Future," World Education News and Reviews, 1 May 2013, http://wenr.wes.org/2013/05/education-in-venezuela-reform-expansion-and-an-uncertain-future/
- 78. Nick Clark, "Education in Venezuela: Reform, Expansion and an Uncertain Future," World Education News and Reviews, 1 May 2013, http://wenr.wes.org/2013/05/education-in-venezuela-reform-expansion-and-an-uncertain-future/
- 79. 4ICU, "Universities in Venezuela," 2015, http://www.4icu.org/ve
- 80. UNICEF, "The State of the World's Children 2012: Urban Disparities," (report, United Nations Children's Fund, n.d.), 7, http://www.unicef.org/sowc2012/pdfs/SOWC-2012-Focus-On-Urban-Disparities.pdf
- 81. Susan Carpio, "Chapter 1: The Venezuelan Context: Economy and Education System," in *Education and the Informal Sector: Evidence from Venezuela and Brazil*, (doctoral dissertation, Science and Economies, University of Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand I, 2014), 1-3,

https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01168572/document



- 82. UNICEF, "The State of the World's Children 2012: Urban Disparities," (report, United Nations Children's Fund, n.d.), 7, http://www.unicef.org/sowc2012/pdfs/SOWC-2012-Focus-On-Urban-Disparities.pdf
- 83. Hans Botnen Eide, "The Struggle to Learn Skills in the City," Word Education Blog, 28 February 2012, https://efareport.wordpress.com/2012/02/28/the-struggle-to-learn-skills-in-the-city/
- 84. Susan Carpio, "Chapter 1: The Venezuelan Context: Economy and Education System," in *Education and the Informal Sector: Evidence from Venezuela and Brazil*, (doctoral dissertation, Science and Economies, University of Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand I, 2014), 4-5, https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01168572/document
- 85. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: government," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 86. Andrew Stevens, "Local Government in Venezuela Overshadowed by Strong Centre," City Mayors, 1 May 2009, http://www.citymayors.com/government/venezuela_government.html
- 87. Josh Lerner, "Communal Councils in Venezuela: Can 200 Families Revolutionize Democracy?" Venezuelanalysis, 6 March 2007, http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/2257
- 88. Federico Fuentes, "Venezuela: Power to the People," *Green Left*, 26 April 2006, http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/34084
- 89. Katie Bowen and Caitlin McNulty, "Moving Beyond Representation: Participatory Democracy and Communal Councils in Venezuela," Upside Down World, 3 September 2009, http://upsidedownworld.org/main/venezuela-archives-35/2090-moving-beyond-representation-participatory-democracy-and-communal-councils-in-venezuela

- 90. Katie Bowen and Caitlin McNulty, "Moving Beyond Representation: Participatory Democracy and Communal Councils in Venezuela," Upside Down World, 3 September 2009, http://upsidedownworld.org/main/venezuela-archives-35/2090-moving-beyond-representation-participatory-democracy-and-communal-councils-in-venezuela
- 91. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Travel and Transportation," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 92. Juan Forero, "Venezuela Extends Closing of Border with Colombia," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 September 2015, http://www.wsj.com/articles/venezuela-extends-border-closing-with-colombia-1441724246
- 93. Jacabo Garcia, "Venezuela Closes Another Colombian Border Crossing," *Star*, 9 September 2015, http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2015/09/09/venezuela-closes-another-colombian-border-crossing.html
- 94. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Venezuela: Travel and Transportation," 2 October 2015, http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/venezuela.html
- 95. Association for Safe International Road Travel, "Road Travel Report: Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela," 2009, 7, http://www.asirt.org/portals/0/Reports/Venezuela.PDF
- 96. Smartraveller, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Venezuela: Local Travel," 1 October 2015, http://smartraveller.gov.au/countries/venezuela
- 97. Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, "Venezuela: Cluster Munition Ban Policy," 12 August 2014, http://archives.the-monitor.org/index.php/cp/display/region_profiles/theme/3986
- 98. Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, "Venezuela: Mine Action," 9 October 2014, http://archives.the-monitor.org/index.php/cp/display/region_profiles/theme/3984



Overview

Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Approximately one in ten Venezuelans lives in rural areas.

TRUE

Venezuela is primarily an urban nation. Only about 11% of the population lives in rural areas.

2. About eight in ten rural Venezuelans lives below the poverty line.

FALSE

Half of the rural population lives in poverty, and 30% live in extreme poverty. The poorest rural residents are indigenous Indians and Afro-Venezuelans. Households headed by women are particularly at risk.

3. Driving at night in rural areas should be avoided.

TRUE

Motorists should avoid driving at night, especially outside of major cities due to risks of kidnapping and carjacking.

4. Most cultivated lands in Venezuela are located in the south, along the Amazon River.

FALSE

The most heavily cultivated lands are in the north, in the foothills and mountain regions.

5. Children in rural areas have the lowest levels of educational attainment in the nation.

FALSE

The poorest rural children obtain about 6.5 years of schooling. In contrast, boys from the poorest urban families typically complete just three years of education and girls four and a half years.





CHAPTER 6

Venezuelan Family Flickr / Cristian Borquez

Family Life

Introduction

Family is the center of Venezuelan life.¹ Family ties are strong and family members make efforts to live near each other.² Marriage, however, is not necessarily at the core of the family.^{3,4} About 88% of women regard family as the most important element in their lives. However, 72% of women do not consider marriage necessary in order to have a family.⁵ Venezuelan families tend to be female-centered; women are generally the most stable figures in the family and the decision-makers.^{6,7} Oftentimes, the most important family relationship is between mothers and their children.⁸



Venezuela remains a largely patriarchal nation with traditional gender roles. Men are expected to fulfill their duties as the breadwinner, while women are in charge of domestic affairs. ^{9, 10} In recent years, however, women are more likely to work outside the home and to contribute to the financial stability of the family. ^{11, 12}

Divorce rates in Venezuela are higher than most other Latin American countries, but it is still low by Western standards. Since the turn of the 21st century, divorce rates have climbed and, according to the latest census, 2.3% of Venezuelans are divorced.^{13, 14}

Typical Household and Family Structure

According to the latest census figures, approximately 40% of all Venezuelans are single. Only 24% of the population aged 15 and older is married. The vast majority (83%) of households are nuclear, although extended families account for roughly 17% of households. The parents are not always bound by marriage, but they may be joined by an alternative arrangement known as a consensual union. In 18, 19 In extended families, parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins often live close together,

sometimes in one home. Family members, extended or nuclear, are expected to be loyal to one another and to help out in a variety of ways, from acquiring jobs to supporting elderly relatives.^{20, 21}

Large families were the norm in Venezuela until recently. By the 1990s, the average household size had dropped to 3.9 persons.^{22, 23} Venezuela's low fertility rate (2.3 children per woman) is likely to reduce that number even more in the future.²⁴



Indigenous Family Flickr / Ariel López

Exchange 48: How many people live in this house?

Official:	How many people live in this house?	kwaanta hentey veevey en esta kaasa
Local:	Five.	seenko

Many Venezuelans (28%) live in a parallel legal family structure, referred to as a consensual union.²⁵ Recent changes in the law have made the offspring of such unions equal to those of legal marriages. It also provides marital rights for both parties.

Therefore, this form of union is popular as an alternative to traditional marriage.²⁶



Status of Women

In the past, Venezuelan women held a lower social and legal status than men. Until the 1980s, married women or women living in consensual unions could not legally manage their own affairs; they could not legally make decisions for their children, work, own property, or sign official documents without the approval of their spouse



Girls Studying Flickr / Oriana Eliçabe

or partner.²⁷ The situation took a leap forward in 1999 with the adoption of a new constitution, which guarantees all citizens equal rights and prohibits gender-based discrimination.²⁸

These reforms have significantly elevated the status of women. Venezuela has one of the region's best gender equality index scores—0.476 (based on 0 for full equality and 1 for total inequality). The constitution is regarded as one of the most gender-progressive in the world, and uses masculine and feminine words for all roles. This makes explicit the equality of men and women under the law. Domestic work is formally recognized as a productive economic activity, and homemakers are eligible to receive social security pensions. 12

Males are no longer considered legally superior to women, and parity exists in regard to parental obligations and custodial rights. Women enjoy the right to enter into contracts and to have decision-making authority over joint property.³² In spite of several laws that provide for the physical protection of women against all forms of violence, Venezuelan women are frequent victims of rape, domestic abuse and other forms of violence.³³

Reality falls somewhat short of legal guarantees, and the country struggles with full integration and participation of women in society. More women have active roles in government, and in 2014 occupied 28 of the 165 legislative seats.^{34, 35} More women are working outside the home within Venezuela's formal economy, although their salaries lag behind those of men.^{36, 37, 38}

Married Life and Divorce

Marriage

Marriage no longer holds the importance it once did in Venezuelan society. According to the most recent census figures, about seven in ten Venezuelans over the age of 14 are



not married. Of that number, 43% are single and 28% are cohabitating.³⁹ Most people who chose to marry do so in their 20s, even though the legal age for marriage is 14 for



Marriage Flickr / Junior Chacon

females and 16 for males. For women who marry, most do so before they turn 30.40, 41, 42

One common alternative to marriage is the consensual union, which is a longstanding tradition in Venezuela. The earliest form of a consensual union was made popular by poor rural women; it served as a substitute for formal marriage. Modern consensual unions are embraced by educated women in urban areas. This alternative family structure is still more common in rural areas (59.5%) than in urban areas (42.2%). For some Venezuelans, it represents a pretrial marriage, but for many it offers the option of forming only temporary ties. Time has increased both the recognition and acceptance of consensual unions, which are accepted as similar to traditional marriages. 43, 44, 45

Divorce

Amendments to Venezuela's family code in 1982 made it easier to get a divorce. All divorces require a judicial (legal) separation of one year before a divorce can be granted, and a de facto separation of five years must be met. Additionally, both parties must declare that the marriage is over. Women may not remarry for 10 months following the granting of a divorce, unless they are pregnant. In certain cases, alimony may be granted to either spouse. Ustody of the children goes to the woman if the children are under the age of seven. Otherwise, both parents must agree to custodial arrangements. Since 2000 the divorce rate has increased dramatically, with some estimates ranging as high as 21.5%. This makes Venezuela's divorce rate the highest in Latin America. Half of consensual unions dissolve, compared to about 15% of legal marriages.

Family Social Events

Weddings

Only civil marriages are legally recognized by the government. Many Venezuelans also have a religious ceremony, however, which by law cannot take place until after the civil marriage has been registered.^{53, 54} Venezuelan wedding traditions are quite varied and are influenced by country's various cultures, including Latin, Hispanic, African, and





Wedding Flickr / The Wedding Traveler

European (Portuguese, German, and Italian).^{55, 56} Religious wedding ceremonies are generally larger than civil proceedings, and commonly take place in a church building or other religious venue.⁵⁷ During a traditional religious ceremony, the families of the bride and groom often exchange 13 gold coins (arras). The coins symbolize good luck and prosperity. Good luck is further assured when the couple slips away from the reception without notice.^{58, 59}

The couple and guests usually attend an elaborate reception after the wedding, where there is an abundance of food. Ornate masks, wigs, hats, and noisemakers are passed out to guests so they dress

up in disguises. Dancing is a common part of the festivities.^{60, 61} The newlyweds will quietly slip away at some point during the reception, while the guests remain and continue partying.⁶²

Exchange 49: Congratulations on your marriage!

Visitor:	Congratulations on your marriage!	feliseedaadeys poR el maatReemoneeyo
Local:	We are honored to have you here.	nos senteemos onRaados kon soo pRezenseeya

Funerals

Venezuelan ties to dead family members are strong. It is common for family members to make Sunday visits family graves so they can groom cemetery plots and decorate the graves with flowers.^{63,} ⁶⁴ Most funerals take place in funeral parlors. Family members dress the deceased in his/her best clothes, before being transporting the body to the funeral parlor. Family members and friends often stay through the night, offering prayers for the deceased.65



Funeral Flickr / Globovisión



For most in this predominantly Catholic nation, a mass is performed. Afterwards, the body is transported to the gravesite for burial.⁶⁶

Following the internment, the family returns home and friends bring food. Many families create an altar dedicated to their deceased relative. The altar typically has flowers, rosaries, photos, and lit candles that are meant to guide the soul to heaven. Family members often wear black or white clothing for a year as a sign of mourning. The *novenario*, a Catholic prayer for the eternal rest of the deceased, is repeated for nine consecutive evenings after the burial. Cremation is not widely practiced because it conflicts with Catholic belief.

Afro-Venezuelans often hold a *velorio*. This ceremony consists of small groups of people that go from house to house, dancing to the accompaniment of drums before the image of a saint. If a child dies before being baptized, funerals are considered happy because the child goes directly to heaven in the form of an angel.⁶⁹

Exchange 50: I offer my condolences to you and your family.

Visitor:	I offer my condolences to you and your family.	mee senteedo peysaamey paaRaa oosted ee soo faameeleeya
Local:	Thank you for being with us.	gRaaseeyaas poR estaaR kon nosotRos

Rites of Passage

Venezuelans practice several important rites of passage. The first is the baptism. Children are traditionally baptized twice. The first baptism is informal and is performed



Baptism Flickr / Antonio Jordana

shortly after birth by family members. This ceremony ensures that the child receives the sacrament of baptism, in the event that death occurs before the child can be formally baptized in the church. This tradition is still common in rural areas, but it is on the wane in the larger cities.^{70,71} The godparents typically present the child with a rosary, a prayer book, or a patron saint medal. Afterwards, family and friends gather for a party.⁷²

A second significant rite is the first communion, which usually occurs between the ages of 8–11. This event is attended by family members and close friends, as well as godparents selected by the child.^{73, 74} The *quinceañeras* is a coming-of-age party for girls who have reached the age of 15. It symbolizes a girls passage into womanhood.^{75, 76, 77}



Naming Conventions

Many Venezuelan names have four components: two given names and two surnames. Of the two given names, the first one is typically used. For example, a person named José Luís would normally go by José. But Luís or José Luís might be preferred, so it is always best to check.⁷⁸

The first surname is the father's last name, and the second is the mother's last name. Therefore, if Juan Luís Díaz Sanchez marries Gabriela Marta Palomares Rodríguez, their children would have the last name Díaz Palomares (the two paternal surnames). When addressing a person by his or her surname (as in the above example), it would be proper to say Señor Díaz or Señora Palomares. Women generally retain their last names when they marry. A woman may take her husband's last name. If she does take her husband's last name, it would be preceded by the word de, signifying "wife of." Thus, if Juana Paula Olmos Martínez marries Hector Joel García Robles, she might be known as Juana Paula Olmos de García. 80

Venezuelans are noted for their tendency to give their children unusual names. Some view it as a chance to rebel against tradition. Given names may be spelled backward, such as Nabeste (for Esteban). Others names may be a combination of parental names, such as Nelmar for Nelson and Marta.81 Current law prohibits giving a child a name that could be the source of ridicule, but it is mostly unenforced. There is some sense that the government needs to crack down to prevent children from being given names like Superman or Sparkplug.^{82, 83}



Children Flickr / ZiLiv



Endnotes

- 1. O. Hugo Benavides, "Venezuela: Marriage, Family and Kinship," in *Countries and Their Cultures*, Vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2410.
- 2. Jessica Morelock, "Traditions in Caracas, Venezuela," *USA Today*, n.d., http://traveltips.usatoday.com/traditions-caracas-venezuela-100375.html
- 3. *Marriage and Family Encyclopedia*, "Venezuela: Family, Society, and Culture," n.d., http://family.jrank.org/pages/1736/Venezuela-Family-Society-Culture.html
- 4. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 47.
- 5. Sofía Esqueda and Cindy Herrera, "La Mujer en la Venezuela Contemporánea," *Debates IESA* 16, no. 1 (January–March 2011): 42.
- 6. *Marriage and Family Encyclopedia*, "Venezuela: Family, Society, and Culture," n.d., http://family.jrank.org/pages/1736/Venezuela-Family-Society-Culture.html
- 7. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 47.
- 8. *Marriage and Family Encyclopedia*, "Venezuela: Excessive Motherhood," n.d., http://family.jrank.org/pages/1737/Venezuela-Excessive-Motherhood.html
- 9. Culture Smart Consulting, "Venezuela—Values and Attitudes," n.d., http://www.culturesmartconsulting.com/venezuela-values-and-attitudes
- 10. Jessica Morelock, "Traditions in Caracas, Venezuela," *USA Today*, n.d., http://traveltips.usatoday.com/traditions-caracas-venezuela-100375.html
- 11. O. Hugo Benavides, "Venezuela: Gender Roles and Status," in *Countries and Their Cultures*, Vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2410.
- 12. Claire Antell et al., *Insight Guides: Venezuela* (Maspeth, NY: Langenscheidt Publishers, Inc., 2002), 64–66.
- 13. Bill Kte'pi, "Venezuela," in *Cultural Sociology of Divorce*: *An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, ed. Robert E. Emery (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 1263. https://books.google.com/books?id=wzJdSIfeeTQC@pg=PA1263&dq=divorce+rate+in+venezuela&source=bl&ots=qATXux7 tV&sig=VGUG6Yxfxy8jR66Q78omMX-Nvqk&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwia6b-2wpXKAhVL32MKHehbBuw4ChDoAQgbMAA#v=onepage&q=divorce%20rate%20in%20venezuela&f=false
- 14. Instituto Nacional de Estadística, República Bolivariana de Venezuela, "XIV Censo Nacional de Poblacíon y Vivienda: Resultados Total Nacional de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela," (census report, May 2014), 24, http://www.ine.gov.ve/documentos/Demografia/CensodePoblacionyVivienda/pdf/nacional.pdf

- 15. Instituto Nacional de Estadística, República Bolivariana de Venezuela, "XIV Censo Nacional de Poblacíon y Vivienda: Resultados Total Nacional de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela," (census report, May 2014), 24, http://www.ine.gov.ve/documentos/Demografia/CensodePoblacionyVivienda/pdf/nacional.pdf
- 16. Instituto Nacional de Estadística, República Bolivariana de Venezuela, "XIV Censo Nacional de Poblacíon y Vivienda: Resultados Total Nacional de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela," (census report, May 2014), 26-27, http://www.ine.gov.ve/documentos/Demografia/CensodePoblacionyVivienda/pdf/nacional.pdf
- 17. María Di Brienza P., "Modalidad de las Uniones Conyugales en Venezuela: Continuidad Y Cambios," *Temas de Coyuntura* 55 (June 2007): 29, 31–34.
- 18. Elizabeth Fussell and Alberto Palloni, "Persistent Marriage Regimes in Changing Times," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66, no. 5 (November 2004): 1208.
- 19. Brígida García and Olga Rojas, "Recent Transformations in Latin American Families: A Socio-Demographic Perspective," (paper presented at the XXIV General Population Conference of the IUSSP, Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, 18–24 August 2001), 35.
- 20. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 91.
- 21. O. Hugo Benavides, "Venezuela: Marriage, Family and Kinship," in *Countries and Their Cultures*, Vol. 4, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001), 2410.
- 22. Brígida García and Olga Rojas, "Recent Transformations in Latin American Families: A Socio-Demographic Perspective," (paper presented at the XXIV General Population Conference of the IUSSP, Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, 18–24 August 2001), 33.
- 23. UN Statistics Division, "Population, Number of Households, Number of Living Quarters, Average Size of Households, Average Number of Households and Persons in Living Quarters: Country or Area, Urban-Rural Areas, Cities," 1995, 198, http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/housing/comp1995/TABLE06.pdf
- 24. Central Intelligence Agency, "Venezuela: People and Society," in *The World Factbook*, 9 December 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html
- 25. Instituto Nacional de Estadística, República Bolivariana de Venezuela, "XIV Censo Nacional de Poblacíon y Vivienda: Resultados Total Nacional de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela," (census report, May 2014), 24, http://www.ine.gov.ve/documentos/Demografia/CensodePoblacionyVivienda/pdf/nacional.pdf



- 26. María Di Brienza P., "Modalidad de las Uniones Conyugales en Venezuela: Continuidad Y Cambios," *Temas de Coyuntura* 55 (June 2007): 29, 31–34.
- 27. Sarah Wagner, "Women and Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution," Venezuelanalysis, 15 January 2005, http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/877
- 28. Venezuela Information Office, "Revolutionizing Women's Roles in Venezuela," 10 November 2008, 2, http://www.womenandcuba.org/Documents/viowomen.pdf
- 29. AVN, "Venezuela: Highest Gender Equality in Latin America," Venezuelanalysis, 11 March 2011, http://venezuelanalysis.com/news/6057
- 30. United Nations Development Programme, "Table 5: Gender Inequality Index," in *Human Development Report 2015*, http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII
- 31. Gregory Wilpert, "Venezuela's New Constitution," Venezuelanalysis, 27 August 2003, http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/70
- 32. Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Gender Equality and Social Institutions in Venezuela, RB," 2014, http://genderindex.org/country/venezuela-rb
- 33. Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Gender Equality and Social Institutions in Venezuela, RB," 2014, http://genderindex.org/country/venezuela-rb
- 34. Humberto Márquez, "Venezuela: Mixed Results for Gender Policies," Global Issues, 23 April 2010, http://www.globalissues.org/news/2010/04/23/5340
- 35. Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Gender Equality and Social Institutions in Venezuela, RB," 2014, http://genderindex.org/country/venezuela-rb
- 36. Humberto Márquez, "Venezuela: Mixed Results for Gender Policies," Global Issues, 23 April 2010, http://www.globalissues.org/news/2010/04/23/5340
- 37. Inter-American Development Bank, "Latin American and Caribbean Women: Better Educated, Lower Paid," 15 October 2012, http://www.iadb.org/en/news/webstories/2012-10-15/wage-gap-between-men-and-women,10155.html
- 38. Venezuelan Information Office, "Revolutionizing Women's Roles in Venezuela," 10 November 2008, 1–3, http://www.womenandcuba.org/Documents/viowomen.pdf
- 39. Instituto Nacional de Estadística, República Bolivariana de Venezuela, "XIV Censo Nacional de Poblacíon y Vivienda: Resultados Total Nacional de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela," (census report, May 2014), 24, http://www.ine.gov.ve/documentos/Demografia/CensodePoblacionyVivienda/pdf/nacional.pdf
- 40. Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Gender Equality and Social Institutions in Venezuela, RB," 2014, http://genderindex.org/country/venezuela-rb

- 41. Sofía Esqueda and Cindy Herrera, "La Mujer en la Venezuela Contemporánea," *Debates IESA* 16, no. 1 (January–March 2011): 40.
- 42. Emilio A. Parrado, "Socioeconomic Context, Family Regimes, and Women's Early Labor Market Experience: The Case of Colombia and Venezuela," *World Development* 30, no. 5 (May 2002): 802–3.
- 43. María Di Brienza P., "Modalidad de las Uniones Conyugales en Venezuela: Continuidad Y Cambios," *Temas de Coyuntura* 55 (June 2007): 30–32, 40.
- 44. Emilio A. Parrado and Marta Tienda, "Women's Roles and Family Formation in Venezuela: New Forms of Consensual Unions?" *Biodemography and Social Biology* 44, no. 1–2 (1997): 1–2.
- 45. Population Council, "Population and Development Review: 'Childbearing within Marriage and Consensual Union in Latin America, 1980-2010," 17 March 2015, http://www.popcouncil.org/news/just-published-childbearing-within-marriage-and-consensual-union-in-latin-a
- 46. Bill Kte'pi, "Venezuela," in *Cultural Sociology of Divorce*: *An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, ed. Robert E. Emery (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 1264. <a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=wzJdSIfeeTQC-kpg=PA1263&lpg=PA1263&dq=divorce+rate+in+venezuela&so-urce=bl&ots=qATXux7-tV&sig=VGUG6Yxfxy8jR66Q78omMX-Nvqk&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwia6b-2wpXKAhVL32MKHehbBuw4ChDoAQgbMAA#v=onepage&q=divorce%20rate%20in%20venezuela&f=false
- 47. Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), "Código Civil: Articulo 195," 26 July 1982, http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=130145
- 48. Social Institutions and Gender Index, "Venezuela, RB," 2014, http://genderindex.org/country/venezuela-rb
- 49. Bill Kte'pi, "Venezuela," in *Cultural Sociology of Divorce*: *An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, ed. Robert E. Emery (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 1264. https://books.google.com/books?id=wzJdSIfeeTQC &pg=PA1263&dpg=PA1263&dq=divorce+rate+in+venezuela&so urce=bl&ots=qATXux7 tV&sig=VGUG6Yxfxy8jR66Q78omMX-Nvqk&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwia6b-2wpXKAhVL32MKHehbBuw4ChDoAQgbMAA#v=onepage&q=divorce%20rate%20in%20venezuela&f=false
- 50. Sofía Esqueda and Cindy Herrera, "La Mujer en la Venezuela Contemporánea," *Debates IESA* 16, no. 1 (January–March 2011): 40
- 51. Brígida García and Olga Rojas, "Recent Transformations in Latin American Families: A Socio-Demographic Perspective," (paper presented at the XXIV General Population Conference of the IUSSP, Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, 18–24 August 2001), 31.
- 52. María Di Brienza P., "Modalidad de las Uniones Conyugales en Venezuela: Continuidad Y Cambios," *Temas de Coyuntura* 55, (June 2007): 47.



- 53. Republic of Venezuela, Consulate in Vancouver, "Marriage in Venezuela," n.d., http://www.consulvenvancouver.org/index.php?lang=en&Itemid=214
- 54. Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), "Código Civil: Articulo 45," 26 July 1982,
- http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=130145
- 55. World Wedding Traditions, "Venezuelan Wedding Traditions," n.d., http://www.worldweddingtraditions.net/venezuelan-wedding-traditions
- 56. Media Systems in South America, "Weddings in Venezuela," n.d., http://sites.psu.edu/culturecrewsouthamerica/2014/12/14/ weddings-in-venezuela
- 57. World Wedding Traditions, "Venezuelan Wedding Traditions," n.d., http://www.worldweddingtraditions.net/venezuelan-wedding-traditions
- 58. World Wedding Traditions, "Wedding Traditions in Venezuela," n.d., http://www.worldweddingtraditions.net/venezuelan-wedding-traditions
- 59. Media Systems in South America, "Weddings in Venezuela," n.d., http://sites.psu.edu/culturecrewsouthamerica/2014/12/14/ weddings-in-venezuela
- 60. World Wedding Traditions, "Wedding Traditions in Venezuela," n.d., http://www.worldweddingtraditions.net/venezuelan-wedding-traditions
- 61. Media Systems in South America, "Weddings in Venezuela," n.d., http://sites.psu.edu/culturecrewsouthamerica/2014/12/14/ weddings-in-venezuela
- 62. World Wedding Traditions, "Wedding Traditions in Venezuela," n.d., http://www.worldweddingtraditions.net/venezuelan-wedding-traditions
- 63. Christopher Toothaker, "Honoring the Dead becomes a Dying Tradition in Venezuela," Los Angeles Times, 11 July 2004, http://articles.latimes.com/2004/jul/11/news/adfg-burden11
- 64. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Life Cycle; Death," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 65. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Life Cycle; Death," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 66. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Life Cycle; Death," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 67. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Life Cycle; Death," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 68. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 46–47.

- 69. David Guss and Lise Waxer, ""Afro-Venezuelans," in *Encyclopedia of World Cultures* (Detroit: Gale Group, 1996), http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3458001136.html
- 70. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 45–46.
- 71. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Life Cycle; Birth," CultureGrams World Edition, 2016.
- 72. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Life Cycle; Birth," CultureGrams World Edition, 2016.
- 73. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 46.
- 74. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Life Cycle; Birth," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 75. Mark Dinneen, *Culture and Customs of Venezuela* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 46.
- 76. Alyse Shorland, "Quinceañeras Often Symbolize Family's Hard Work, Success," CNN, 19 October 2009, http://www.cnn.com/2009/LIVING/10/19/lia.quinceaneras/index.html?eref=time_us
- 77. ProQuest, "Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: Life Cycle; Milestones," CultureGrams Online Edition, 2016.
- 78. Kitt Baguley, Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 104.
- 79. My Heritage, "Spanish Naming Conventions—Part 1: The Basics," 2012, http://blog.myheritage.com/2011/07/spanish-naming-conventions-%E2%80%93-part-1-the-basics/
- 80. Kitt Baguley, *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 106.
- 81. Simon Romero, "What's in a Name? In Venezuela, Just About Anything," *New York Times*, 7 January 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/07/world/americas/07iht-venez.4124068.html?pagewanted=all
- 82. Metro, "Venezuela to Ban Stupid Names," 2012, http://www.metro.co.uk/weird/64558-venezuela-to-ban-stupid-names
- 83. Simon Romero, "A Culture of Naming That Even a Law May Not Tame," *New York Times*, 5 September 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/05/world/americas/05venez.html



Overview

Chapter 6 Assessment

1. Most Venezuelans live in extended families.

FALSE

Most families in Venezuela are nuclear. Extended families make up 17% of households.

2. Religious weddings are legally recognized.

FALSE

Only civil marriages are legally recognized. Many Venezuelans also have a religious ceremony. According to law, religious ceremonies cannot take place until after the civil wedding has been registered.

3. The 1999 Venezuelan constitution is one of the most gender progressive in the world.

TRUE

The 1999 constitution is regarded as one of the most gender-progressive in the world, using masculine and feminine words for all roles.

4. Divorce rates in Venezuela are among the highest in Latin America.

TRUE

Divorce rates in Venezuela are higher than in most of the rest of Latin America, but still low by Western standards. Since the turn of the 21st century, divorce rates have climbed and, according to the latest census, 2.3% of Venezuelans are divorced.

5. Women normally change their surnames when they marry.

FALSE

Women generally retain their last names when they marry. If a woman takes her husband's last name, it is preceded by *de*, signifying "wife of." In this case, the woman drops her maternal surname and keeps her paternal surname.



Spanish-Venezuela Cultural Orientation

Final Assessment

1. Venezuela is approximately the size of California.

FALSE

Venezuela measures 912,050 sq km (352,144 sq mi), making it approximately twice the size of California.

2. Venezuela's main river is the Orinoco and it divides the nation roughly in half, from west to east.

TRUE

The Orinoco flows in a northwesterly direction. It then bisects the country as it flows east to the North Atlantic Ocean.

3. Gran Colombia was a federation of Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador.

TRUE

In 1819, Bolívar proclaimed Gran Colombia, a federation of Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador. The federation was a step toward his vision of a united continent.

4. The legislative branch of the government is the most powerful.

FALSE

The executive arm is constitutionally the most powerful branch of government.

5. Approximately two-thirds of the Venezuelan population are mestizos, or people of mixed racial heritage.

TRUE

Venezuelans are no longer officially identified by ethnicity, but estimates suggest that about two-thirds are mestizos, or people of mixed racial heritage. Approximately 21% of Venezuelans are of white European ancestry. Blacks represent about 10% of the population, and indigenous Indians make up the remainder.



6. Catholicism is the official state religion of Venezuela.

FALSE

There is no official state religion in Venezuela, yet Catholicism is the country's predominant religion. About 96% of Venezuelans are nominally Catholic.

7. Catholicism in Venezuela represents a fusion of indigenous, African, and Catholic rituals and beliefs.

TRUE

Catholicism in Venezuela has incorporated many elements of indigenous and African beliefs and practices, resulting in a popular form of Catholicism.

8. Religious weddings are officially recognized by the government.

FALSE

The state only recognizes civil marriages. Religious ceremonies can be performed after the priest or minister has received a copy of the civil marriage certificate issued by the government.

9. The veneration of saints is a central element in the religious practices of most Venezuelans.

TRUE

The veneration of saints is central to the popular form of Catholicism practiced in Venezuela. Saints are believed to have particular powers that they can use to help worshippers. Many Venezuelans erect small shrines to saints in their homes.

10. The cult of Maria Lionza has only a few thousand followers.

FALSE

It is estimated that as many as one-third of Venezuelans might follow the cult of Maria Lanza at some time in their life.

11. Venezuelans are very attentive to their appearance.

TRUE

Personal appearance is very important to the fashion-conscious Venezuelans. It is important to wear good clothes, even in informal situations.



12. Shorts are appropriate attire anywhere as long as they are stylish.

FALSE

Shorts and sandals are generally worn only at the beach or at home.

13. Venezuelan women expect men to open doors and pay dinner tabs.

TRUE

Women enjoy being courted by men. Men are expected to demonstrate courteous behavior by opening doors, paying shared taxi rides, and picking up dinner tabs.

14. Venezuelans usually stand at least an arm's length apart when speaking to each other.

FALSE

Venezuelans need less personal space, and often stand closer to each other than people in the United States. Do not back away because this is viewed as a sign of rejection.

15. When invited to someone's home, you should arrive exactly at the specified time.

FALSE

It is appropriate to arrive 15–30 minutes later than the specified time, to avoid appearing greedy or overanxious.

16. Rail travel is the safest form of public transportation in Venezuela.

FALSE

Venezuela has a severely limited rail system with only 447 km (278 mi) of track. Trains carry mostly freight and very few passengers.

17. Education missions are part of the formal education system.

FALSE

Many of the gains in education are due to community-based programs called *misiones* (missions). *Misiones* are outside the formal education system and target those who have been excluded from the system.



18. Approximately half of all city residents live in informal communities.

TRUE

Approximately 50% of all urban residents live in informal communities. These are characterized by substandard housing and the lack of basic amenities. In hillside shantytowns, heavy rains often cause poorly built houses to collapse.

19. Transportation to and from Maiquetía International Airport, which serves Caracas, is extremely dangerous.

TRUE

Getting to and from Maiquetía International Airport is dangerous. Thefts, muggings, and express kidnappings are reported. In some cases, these involve people with valid credentials wearing official uniforms. Whenever possible, make advance plans for transportation.

20. Girls from poor urban families have the lowest rate of educational attainment in the nation.

FALSE

Boys from the poorest urban families typically complete only three years of education, while girls typically complete four and a half years.

21. Land redistribution programs began in the late 1970s, and stopped when Hugo Chávez was elected president.

FALSE

Shortly after his election in 1998, Chávez initiated policies aimed at the redistribution of land. In 2003, the redistribution began in earnest.

22. Communal councils can make decisions for rural communities on a number of issues including budget

TRUE

Rural communities with at least 20 families, or indigenous groups with at least 10 families, can form a communal council that makes decisions on matters such as budget allocation and the prioritization of projects.



23. Most of the country's landmines are located in the Amazon border region with Colombia.

FALSE

In 2013, government reported that the all of the mines planted in the nation were cleared and the country was mine-free.

24. A *curandero* is a type of socialist health mission.

FALSE

The national social health program is known as Barrio Adentro. A *curandero* is a folk healer who practices traditional medicine.

25. Much of the nation's livestock activity takes place in the central plains.

TRUE

Most of Venezuela's cattle industry is concentrated in the central part of the country, in the Llanos region and the Maracaibo Lowlands.

26. Marriage is an important feature of family life in Venezuela.

FALSE

Marriage is not regarded as a central tenet to families, which tend to be centered on the mother . Most women do not think it is necessary to marry to have a family, and about half live in consensual relationships outside marriage.

27. The *quinceañeras* is a rite of passage, symbolizing a girl's transition into womanhood.

TRUE

The *quinceañeras* is a coming-of-age party for girls who have reached age 15, symbolizing her passage into womanhood.

28. Following naming conventions, Hector Jaime Robles Villota would be referred to as Señor Villota.

FALSE

Venezuelans commonly have two surnames. The first is the father's last name, and the second is the mother's last name. When addressing a person by his or her surname, it is proper to use the paternal surname: Señor Robles.



29. Individuals involved in consensual unions do not have the same legal protections as married couples.

FALSE

Recent changes in the law have made the offspring of consensual unions equal to those of legal marriages. These changes have extended marital rights to both parties.

30. Gender roles in the family follow traditional patriarchal values.

TRUE

The patriarchal underpinnings of the country are reflected in family roles. Men are expected to be the breadwinner and protector, while women are responsible for taking care of the home and children.



Spanish-Venezuela Cultural Orientation

Further Reading and Resources

Books

- Baguley, Kitt. *Culture Shock! A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette: Venezuela.* Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2008.
- Corrales, Javier, and Michael Penfold. *Dragon in the Tropics: Hugo Chávez and the Political Economy of Revolution in Venezuela*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2011.
- Maddicks, Russel. *Venezuela—Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide to Customs and Culture*. London, UK: Kuperard, 2012.
- Martinez, Carlos, and Michael Fox, JoJo Farrell. *Venezuela Speaks! Voices from the Grassroots*. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010.
- Salas, Miguel Tinker. *The Enduring Legacy: Oil, Culture, and Society in Venezuela*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Stein, Laura Guzmán. "The Politics of Implementing Women's Rights in Catholic Countries in Latin America." In *Globalization, Gender, and Religion: The Politics of Women's Rights in Catholic and Muslim Contexts*, edited by Jane H. Bayes and Nayereh Tohidi. New York: Palgrave, 2001.



Articles and Websites

Camacho, Carlos. "Venezuela becoming the Capital of Organized Crime, amid Raging Scarcity." Fox News. 12 October 2015,

http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2015/10/12/venezuela-becoming-capital-organized-crime-amid-raging-scarcity/

"Crime in Venezuela: Justice Decayed." Economist. 29 August 2015.

 $\frac{http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21662569-government-wrongly-blames-colombia-its-high-murder-rate-justice-decayed}{}$

Dreir, Hannah. "Venezuela Elections: Nicolas Maduro Loses as 17 Years of Socialist Rule Ends." Independent. 7 December 2015.

 $\frac{http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/venezuela-opposition-win-and-dethrone-nico-las-maduro-after-17-years-of-socialist-rule-a6762946.html$

Froehle, Bryan. "Pentecostals and Evangelicals in Venezuela: Consolidating Gains, Moving in New Directions." In *Power, Politics, and Pentecostals in Latin America*, edited by Edward L. Cleary and Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997.

http://www.domcentral.org/library/cleary_books/pppla/pppla11.pdf

Larrabure, Manuel. "Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution: Legacy and Challenges." Global Research. 20 March 2013.

 $\underline{http://www.global research.ca/hugo-chavez-and-the-bolivarian-revolution-legacy-and-challeng-es/5327609}$

South America. "Typical Venezuelan Food: Venezuela." n.d.,

http://www.southamerica.cl/Venezuela/Food.htm

"Venezuela's Election: A Democratic Counter-revolution." *Economist*. 12 December 2015.

 $\frac{http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21679798-voters-have-rebuked-repressive-regime-now-they-must-have-chance-recall-president?zid=305\&ah=417bd5664dc76da5d98af4f7a640fd8a$



Film and Video

"From Exile to Radicalization in Venezuela—Edgardo Lander on Reality Asserts Itself (1/9)." YouTube Video. Real News Documentary, 24:16. Published on 10 April 2014.

 $\underline{https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6d7SR1GwBg\&list=PLYglmzrarZ3nK3E9bAKiUMGeCDbn5iI4C}$

"The Modern History of Venezuela: The Bolivarian Revolution—Edgardo Lander on RAI (5/9)." You Tube Video. Real News Documentary, 11:10. Published 16 April 2014.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byLyFHVJEQI

