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Contents

1	253	1
1.1	253.guide	1
1.2	253.guide/Venezuela	1
1.3	253.guide/Geography (Venezuela)	2
1.4	253.guide/People (Venezuela)	3
1.5	253.guide/Government (Venezuela)	4
1.6	253.guide/Government (Venezuela 2. usage)	5
1.7	253.guide/Economy (Venezuela)	6
1.8	253.guide/Economy (Venezuela 2. usage)	7
1.9	253.guide/Communications (Venezuela)	8
1.10	253.guide/Defense Forces (Venezuela)	8

Chapter 1

253

1.1 253.guide

Texified version of data for Venezuela.

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Venezuela

1.2 253.guide/Venezuela

Venezuela

Geography (Venezuela)
 People (Venezuela)
 Government (Venezuela)
 Government (Venezuela 2. usage)
 Economy (Venezuela)
 Economy (Venezuela 2. usage)
 Communications (Venezuela)
 Defense Forces (Venezuela)

1.3 253.guide/Geography (Venezuela)

Geography (Venezuela)

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Location:

Northern South America, bordering the Caribbean Sea between Colombia and Guyana

Map references:

South America, Standard Time Zones of the World

Area:

total area:

912,050 km²

land area:

882,050 km²

comparative area:

slightly more than twice the size of California

Land boundaries:

total 4,993 km, Brazil 2,200 km, Colombia 2,050 km, Guyana 743 km

Coastline:

2,800 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone:

15 nm

continental shelf: 200 m depth or to depth of exploitation

exclusive economic zone:

200 nm

territorial sea:

12 nm

International disputes:

claims all of Guyana west of the Essequibo river; maritime boundary dispute with Colombia in the Gulf of Venezuela

Climate:

tropical; hot, humid; more moderate in highlands

Terrain:

Andes mountains and Maracaibo lowlands in northwest; central plains (llanos); Guyana highlands in southeast

Natural resources:

petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, gold, bauxite, other minerals, hydropower ↔

diamonds

Land use:

arable land:
 3%
 permanent crops:
 1%
 meadows and pastures:
 20%
 forest and woodland:
 39%
 other:
 37%
 Irrigated land:
 2,640 km2 (1989 est.)
 Environment:
 subject to floods, rockslides, mudslides; periodic droughts; increasing
 industrial pollution in Caracas and Maracaibo
 Note:
 on major sea and air routes linking North and South America

1.4 253.guide/People (Venezuela)

People (Venezuela)

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Population:
 20,117,687 (July 1993 est.)
 Population growth rate:
 2.22% (1993 est.)
 Birth rate:
 26.37 births/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Death rate:
 4.69 deaths/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Net migration rate:
 0.48 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Infant mortality rate:
 28.9 deaths/1,000 live births (1993 est.)
 Life expectancy at birth:
 total population:
 72.69 years
 male:
 69.76 years female:
 75.77 years (1993 est.)
 Total fertility rate:
 3.14 children born/woman (1993 est.)
 Nationality:
 noun:
 Venezuelan(s)
 adjective:
 Venezuelan
 Ethnic divisions:
 mestizo 67%, white 21%, black 10%, Indian 2%
 Religions:
 nominally Roman Catholic 96%, Protestant 2%
 Languages:

Spanish (official), Indian dialects spoken by about 200,000 Amerindians in the remote interior

Literacy:
 age 15 and over can read and write (1990)
 total population:
 88%
 male:
 87%
 female:
 90%

Labor force:
 5.8 million
 by occupation:
 services 56%, industry 28%, agriculture 16% (1985)

1.5 253.guide/Government (Venezuela)

Government (Venezuela)

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Names:
 conventional long form:
 Republic of Venezuela
 conventional short form:
 Venezuela
 local long form:
 Republica de Venezuela
 local short form:
 Venezuela

Digraph:
 VE

Type:
 republic

Capital:
 Caracas

Administrative divisions:
 21 states (estados, singular - estado), 1 territory* (territorio), 1, ←
 federal district**, ←
 (distrito federal), and 1 federal dependence***, (dependencia federal); ←
 Amazonas*, Anzoategui,, ←
 Apure, Aragua, Barinas, ←
 Bolivar, Carabobo, Cojedes, Delta Amacuro, Dependencias Federales***,, ←
 Distrito Federal**,, ←
 Falcon, Guarico, Lara, Merida, Miranda, Monagas, Nueva
 Esparta, Portuguesa, Sucre, Tachira, Trujillo, Yaracuy, Zulia

note: the federal dependence consists of 11 federally controlled island ←
 groups
 with a total of 72 individual islands

Independence:
 5 July 1811 (from Spain)

Constitution:
 23 January 1961

Legal system:

based on Napoleonic code; judicial review of legislative acts in Cassation Court only; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

National holiday:

Independence Day, 5 July (1811)

Political parties and leaders:

Social Christian Party (COPEI), Hilarion CARDOZO, president, and Jose CURIEL, secretary general (acting); Democratic Action (AD), Humberto CELLI, president, and Luis ALFARO Uceró, secretary general; Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), Argelia LAYA, president, and Freddy MUNOZ, secretary general; The Radical Cause (La Causa R), Pablo Medina, secretary general

Other political or pressure groups:

FEDECAMARAS, a conservative business group; Venezuelan Confederation of Workers (labor organization dominated by the Democratic Action); VECINOS groups

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Elections:

President:

last held 4 December 1988 (next to be held 5 December 1993); results - Carlos Andres PEREZ (AD) 54.6%, Eduardo FERNANDEZ (COPEI) 41.7%, other ← 3.7%;

note - President Carlos Andres PEREZ suspended pending trial on corruption charges

Senate:

last held 4 December 1988 (next to be held 5 December 1993); results - percent of vote by party NA; seats - (49 total) AD 23, COPEI 22, other 4; note - 3 former presidents (1 from AD, 2 from COPEI) hold lifetime senate seats

1.6 253.guide/Government (Venezuela 2. usage)

Government (Venezuela 2. usage)

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Chamber of Deputies:

last held 4 December 1992 (next to be held 5 December 1993); results - AD 43.7%, COPEI 31.4%, MAS 10.3%, other 14.6%; seats - (201 total) AD 97, ← COPEI

67, MAS 18, other 19

Executive branch:

president, Council of Ministers (cabinet)

Legislative branch:

bicameral Congress of the Republic (Congreso de la Republica) consists of ← an

upper chamber or Senate (Senado) and a lower chamber or Chamber of Deputies (Camara de Diputados)

Judicial branch:

Supreme Court of Justice (Corte Suprema de Justicia)

Leaders:

Chief of State and Head of Government:

Interim President Ramon Jose VELASQUEZ (since 5 June 1993); note - ← President

Carlos Andres PEREZ suspended pending trial on corruption charges

Member of: AG, CARICOM (observer), CDB, CG, ECLAC, FAO, G-3, G-11, G-15, G ←
-19, G-24,

G-77, GATT, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICFTU, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IMO,
INTELSAT, INTERPOL, IOC, IOM, ISO, ITU, LAES, LAIA, LORCS, MINURSO, NAM,
OAS, ONUSAL, OPANAL, OPEC, PCA, RG, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO,
UNIKOM, UNPROFOR, UPU, WCL, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

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Maracaibo

Flag:

three equal horizontal bands of yellow (top), blue, and red with the coat ←
of

arms on the hoist side of the yellow band and an arc of seven white
five-pointed stars centered in the blue band

1.7 253.guide/Economy (Venezuela)

Economy (Venezuela)

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Overview:

Petroleum is the backbone of the economy, accounting for 23% of GDP, 70% of central government revenues, and 82% of export earnings in 1992. President PEREZ introduced an economic readjustment program when he assumed office in February 1989. Lower tariffs and the removal of price controls, a free market exchange rate, and market-linked interest rates threw the economy into confusion, causing an 8% decline in GDP in 1989. However, the economy recovered part way in 1990 and grew by 10.4% in 1991 and 7.3% in 1992, led by the non-petroleum sector.

National product:

GDP - exchange rate conversion - \$57.8 billion (1992 est.)

National product real growth rate:

7.3% (1992 est.)

National product per capita:
 \$2,800 (1992 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices):
 32% (1992 est.)

Unemployment rate:
 8.4% (1992 est.)

Budget:
 revenues \$13.2 billion; expenditures \$13.1 billion, including capital expenditures of \$NA (1992)

Exports:
 \$14.0 billion (f.o.b., 1992 est.)
 commodities:
 petroleum 82%, bauxite and aluminum, iron ore, agricultural products, basic manufactures
 partners:
 US 50.7%, Europe 13.7%, Japan 4.0% (1989)

Imports:
 \$12.4 billion (f.o.b., 1992 est.)
 commodities:
 foodstuffs, chemicals, manufactures, machinery and transport equipment
 partners:
 US 44%, FRG 8.0%, Japan 4%, Italy 7%, Canada 2% (1989)

External debt:
 \$27.1 billion (1992)

Industrial production:
 growth rate 11.9% (1992 est.); accounts for 25% of GDP, including petroleum

Electricity:
 21,130,000 kW capacity; 58,541 million kWh produced, 2,830 kWh per capita (1992)

Industries:
 petroleum, iron-ore mining, construction materials, food processing, textiles, steel, aluminum, motor vehicle assembly

Agriculture:
 accounts for 6% of GDP and 16% of labor force; products - corn, sorghum, sugarcane, rice, bananas, vegetables, coffee, beef, pork, milk, eggs, fish; not self-sufficient in food other than meat

Illicit drugs:
 illicit producer of cannabis and coca leaf for the international drug trade on a small scale; however, large quantities of cocaine transit the country from Colombia; important money-laundering hub

Economic aid:
 US commitments, including Ex-Im (FY70-86), \$488 million; Communist ← countries (1970-89), \$10 million

Currency:
 1 bolivar (Bs) = 100 centimos

1.8 253.guide/Economy (Venezuela 2. usage)

Economy (Venezuela 2. usage)

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Exchange rates:

bolivares (Bs) per US\$1 - 80.18 (January 1993), 68.38 (1992), 56.82 (1991),
 46.90 (1990), 34.68 (1989), 14.50 (fixed rate 1987-88)
 Fiscal year:
 calendar year

1.9 253.guide/Communications (Venezuela)

Communications (Venezuela)

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Railroads:

542 km total; 363 km 1.435-meter standard gauge all single track, ←
 government
 owned; 179 km 1.435-meter gauge, privately owned

Highways:

77,785 km total; 22,780 km paved, 24,720 km gravel, 14,450 km earth roads,
 and 15,835 km unimproved earth

Inland waterways:

7,100 km; Rio Orinoco and Lago de Maracaibo accept oceangoing vessels

Pipelines:

crude oil 6,370 km; petroleum products 480 km; natural gas 4,010 km

Ports:

Amuay Bay, Bajo Grande, El Tablazo, La Guaira, Puerto Cabello, Puerto Ordaz

Merchant marine:

56 ships (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 837,375 GRT/1,344,795 DWT; includes 1
 short-sea passenger, 1 passenger cargo, 19 cargo, 2 container, 4
 roll-on/roll-off, 18 oil tanker, 1 chemical tanker, 2 liquefied gas, 6 bulk ↔

1 vehicle carrier, 1 combination bulk

Airports:

total:

360

usable:

331

with permanent-surface runways:

133

with runways over 3,659 m:

0

with runways 2,440-3,659 m:

15

with runways 1,220-2,439 m:

87

Telecommunications:

modern and expanding; 1,440,000 telephones; broadcast stations - 181 AM, no
 FM, 59 TV, 26 shortwave; 3 submarine coaxial cables; satellite ground
 stations - 1 Atlantic Ocean INTELSAT and 3 domestic

1.10 253.guide/Defense Forces (Venezuela)

Defense Forces (Venezuela)

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Branches:

National Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Nacionales, FAN) includes - Ground Forces or Army (Fuerzas Terrestres or Ejercito), Naval Forces (Fuerzas Navales or Armada), Air Forces (Fuerzas Aereas or Aviacion), Armed Forces of Cooperation or National Guard (Fuerzas Armadas de Cooperation or Guardia Nacional) ←

Manpower availability:

males age 15-49 5,192,107; fit for military service 3,769,441; reach military age (18) annually 221,043 (1993 est.)

Defense expenditures:

exchange rate conversion - \$1.95 billion, 4% of GDP (1991)