

Republic of Cuba - República de Cuba

Area: 42,426 Sq. Mi. (104th)

Population: 11m (83rd) Ethnic Groups: White 64%, Mixed 27%, Black 9%.

GDP (PPP) \$254b Per Capita: \$22,237

Human Development Index: .783 (70th)

Government: Socialist Republic

Life Expectancy: Male -77; Female - 81.9 Literacy: 99.8% over 15 years

Head of State: President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez (since 2018)

Organizations: UN, WTO, WHO, PAHO, CELAC, ALBA

Religions: Christian- 58%, None- 23%, Folk Religion-17%, Other: 2%

Exports: \$2.6b (Venezuela, Russia, Lebanon) Imports: \$11b (China, Spain, Russia, US)

The native Amerindian population of Cuba began to decline following its development as a Spanish Colony in the late 15th century. Large numbers of African slaves were imported to work the coffee and sugar plantations. Cuba gained its independence from Spain in 1878 after the Spanish American War.

Following three-and-a-half years of US military rule, Cuba became an independent republic in 1902 but under a strong dependence to the United States. After that, the island experienced a string of governments mostly dominated by the military and corrupt politicians. Fidel Castro led a rebel army to victory in 1959. Under his leadership, there was a huge transformation of Cuban society. Cuba achieved social indicators typical of a developed country, especially in health and education. Cuba was involved in a broad range of military and humanitarian activities throughout Latin America, Africa, and Asia, helping those countries to confront colonialism and imperialism, reverse poverty and improve social indicators. In February 2008, Fidel's brother, Raul Castro, became the President of Cuba. His government lasted until April 2018. The current President and First Secretary of the PCC (Communist Party of Cuba) is Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez.

The country faced a severe economic downturn in 1990 following the collapse of the former Soviet Union and an enhancing of the US sanctions. The US and Cuba reopened embassies in their respective countries in July 2015, but many sanctions remain in place. The U.S. maintains a Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay. Tourists are drawn to Cuba's white-sand beaches, coral reefs, and vibrant nightclubs as well as to

the many historic buildings - some of which have been designated as UNESCO Heritage Sites.

Cuba has helped other countries by sending medical brigades to confront the spread of the COVID virus. Cuba also has developed three vaccines. More than 72% of Cubans over two years old have received at least one vaccination.

Fun Facts:

- Cigar factories employed lectors to entertain workers by reading aloud books or newspapers, thus some names of cigars are Romeo y Juliet, Montecristo, etc.
- Most popular sport – Baseball
- On New Year's, Cubans burn dolls to symbolize forgetting bad times and anticipating good