

Puerto Rico



Location:
Just east of the Dominican Republic
in the Caribbean region, with the
Caribbean Sea to the south and the
Atlantic Ocean to the north.

Area:
8,959 square
km

Capital:
San Juan

Population:
3,897,960

Currency:
U.S. Dollar

Puerto Rico is a commonwealth of the United States, which means its people are American citizens. Interestingly, more Puerto Ricans now live in the mainland U.S. than live on the island.

This section will focus on Puerto Ricans who live on the island.

Puerto Ricans have a culture created by the many different types of people who have lived there over the past 600 years. Before Christopher Columbus visited the island in 1493, native peoples called Tainos lived there, fishing and farming. When Juan Ponce de León arrived to colonize the island for Spain in 1508, the Spaniards enslaved the Tainos.

Most of them eventually died of disease or from battles with the Spanish. However, many children who were half Spanish and half Taino had been born, and the mixing of people in Puerto Rico had begun. When the Spanish no longer had enough Tainos to work as slaves, they brought African slaves to the island. African people and their traditions soon were mixed into the diverse culture of the island. Today, many Puerto Ricans share both the ancestry and the cultures of the different groups of people who came to the island.

Although Puerto Rico's history of slavery and oppression is both sad and violent, most people on the island today exist in harmony and appreciate the various influences that make their culture unique and exciting.

Puerto Rico is known for music, dance and art that combine elements of African, Taino and European cultures, and for tourism that continues to draw people from around the world.

A modern dilemma for Puerto Ricans is whether or not they want remain a commonwealth of the United States, become a state, or become a country completely independent from the U.S. As a commonwealth, Puerto Ricans who live on the island elect their own governor, but they are not able to vote for president or elect senators to represent them in the U.S. government. Their representation in Congress is limited to a single, non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives called the resident commissioner. If Puerto Rico were a state, it would have two senators and about six representatives. However, on the plus side, island-dwelling Puerto Ricans only have to pay local income taxes – not federal. The debate about what to do is ongoing.

Famous Puerto Ricans

Singer Ricky Martin, baseball Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente, actor Rita Moreno, artist Rafael Tufino, author Rosario Ferré and former U.S. Surgeon General Antonio Coello Novello. Jazz and mambo legend Tito Puente and singer/actor Jennifer Lopez are of Puerto Rican descent.



Tito Puente



¿Lo sabías?

Did you know?

Puerto Rico's El Yunque National Park is the only park under the U.S. Forest Service that contains a rain forest. More than 100 billion gallons of rain fall in El Yunque each year.



¡Mira!

Chances are that if you went for a walk in the Puerto Rican rain forest, you'd hear the distinctive, high-pitched, pretty song of a little frog called the coqui. In fact, the cute amphibians' call sounds a lot like its name chirped repeatedly. Imagine you are taking a walk in the Puerto Rican rain forest. What sounds might you hear along with the coquis, what temperature might it be, what might it look like and what might it smell like? Then read a story in today's newspaper set in an interesting place. Use various resources to learn more about the place and imagine what it might be there. Brainstorm adjectives and phrases that spring to mind as you think about the place. Use your brainstorm as a jumping off point for a poem or a rap.

Learning Standards/Skills: Writing fluently for multiple purposes to produce compositions, such as personal narratives, persuasive essays and poetry.

Look!

Spain



Spain is the country whose language and history are the reason we refer to 22 nations of the world as Hispanic. Spain today is a country full of old castles that sit high atop dry hills, beautiful cathedrals, gleaming cities and a modern population. It is home to a wide range of art and architecture, bullfights and passionate Flamenco music.

It once was one of the most powerful nations in the world. At the height of its power in the 1400s and 1500s, Spain began to send ships out to search for a trade route to the Indies – an old name for Asia. Finding and controlling a trade route would make Spain very wealthy.

Christopher Columbus, who was searching on behalf of Spain's king and queen, instead found the Americas. Not knowing he hadn't really found the Indies, he called the people living in the Americas Indians.

Although Columbus hadn't found the trade route he was looking for, he did find hugely valuable land, some of which was rich with gold and silver. The Spanish did not think of the Indians of the Americas as people who should be allowed to keep or own

the land they lived on. The Spanish eventually controlled a lot of land as colonies, especially in the Caribbean and South America, and that is the land known today as Latin America.

Spain had become a world power with the marriage of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragón in 1469. Up until that point, Spain as a region had been controlled in turn by the Romans, the Visigoths, and finally the Muslims, who were known in Spain as Moors.

In 1482, Ferdinand and Isabella's armies drove the Moors out of Granada, their southern stronghold, and Spain was united as a Catholic country. The Moors' Alhambra palace still stands in Granada, and is one of the world's most beautiful palaces.

Ferdinand and Isabel were the sponsors of the famously horrible Spanish Inquisition, in which people who were not Catholic were killed, tortured or made to leave the country.

The Spanish-American War of 1898 and an unstable political situation in Spain in the early 1900s gave Spain's Latin American colonies an opportunity to free themselves, which nearly all of them did.

Famous Spaniards

Writer Miguel de Cervantes (author of literary masterpiece "Don Quixote"), artist Pablo Picasso, artist Joan Miró, artist Salvador Dalí, actor Penélope Cruz, actor Antonio Banderas, movie director Pedro Almodovar, NBA star Pau Gasol and singers Enrique and Julio Iglesias.



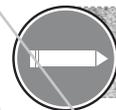
Penélope Cruz



¿Lo sabías?

Did You Know?

Many businesses in Spain close for siesta from around 1:30 to 4 p.m. in the afternoon. They then stay open in the evenings until around 8 p.m.



Mira!

In 1882, architect Antoni Gaudí began working on the Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família, a cathedral in Barcelona. More than 120 years later, it's still not done. Though it survived the Spanish Civil War, construction on the church was held up for various reasons. Despite its unfinished state, it remains one of the most famous, amazing and elaborate buildings in the world, and an important symbol of the city (like the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia or the Hollywood sign in Los Angeles). Find an interesting article in today's newspaper about an interesting city or country with Hispanic roots. Learn more about the place through the article, reference materials and this supplement. Pick out a symbol for the place and explain your choice in a paragraph.

Learning Standards/Skills: Acquiring information from books, maps, newspapers, data sets and other sources; organizing and presenting the information; interpreting the meaning and significance of the information.

Look!