

By: Audrey, Brie, Meghan and Giovanna



MAP



http://travelquaz.com/map-of-venezuela.html/map-of-venezuela-map-of-africa

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

- Caracas capital, 2.916 million people
- Population 30, 912, 302 people
- Ethnic Groups Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Arab, German, African, Indigenous people
- Religions- Roman Catholic 96%, Protestant 2%, other 2%
- Languages Spanish (official), indigenous dialects

### CARACAS, VENEZUELA

- Sits in Cerro Avila Valley, with mountain ranges
   Inhabited first by Toromaimo Indians, until founded by Spanish in 1567
  - Most murderous and dangerous city in the world







- Federal Republic with 5 branches
  - Executive, judiciary, legislative, electoral and citizen
  - Similar to the US Branches of Government
- Legislative
  - Accept and reject laws. 18 years or older to vote. Voting is not compulsory.
- Executive
  - Plurality = win. Appoints VP. 6 year presidential terms.
- Judicial
  - Headed by the Supreme Tribunal of Justices. STJ is equivalent to our Supreme Court. Venezuela has 32 justices while we have 8.



- Citizen
  - Prosecutor commander, defender of the people, and the comptroller
- Electoral
  - National Electoral Council oversees elections at local, national and regional level
  - 5 total
    - 3 selected by civil society, 1 by law and poli sci faculties, and 1 by citizen power



- Nicolas Maduro (2013)
  - Head of state and government
- United Socialist Party
  - 5.7 million members since 2007









### Arepas

## Cachapas



### TRADITIONS AND FESTIVALS



- Carnival
  - Takes place 40 days before easter
  - Celebrated with dance, music, lavish costumes and parades
  - Many families gather and enjoy the festival together

- Feria Del Sol (Fair of the Sun)
  - International cultural festival in Merida every February
  - Bull Competitions, Cultural expositions, concerts parades, and competition for La Reina Del Sol ( the Queen of the sun)
  - The Plaza de Toros (Plaza of Bulls) was built to provide Merida with a festival of its own and has now become one of the most important fairs in Venezuela





#### Festival de San Juan

- Celebrated to commemorate the death of Saint John
- During this festival Bonfires are lit throughout the country at night to the sound of drums, as a wake for San Juan
- The festivities continue on until the next day when they honor the Birth of St. John the Baptist



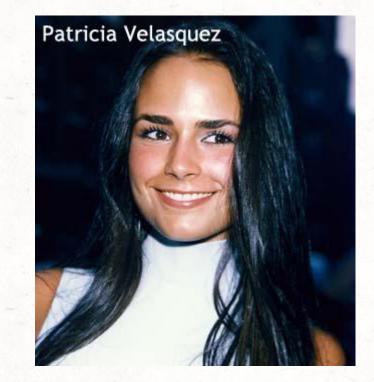
- Dancing Devils of Yare
  - Pagan- Christian celebration in san Francisco de Yare on Corpus Christi Day
  - The "Dancing Devils" wear colorful garments and masks
  - Wednesday the Folkloric festivity is devoted to patron saint Saint Francis of Paola, to the Blessed Sacrament and to Jesus Christ
  - Thursday the devoted disguise as devils and perform dances
  - During this festival Fulias (a native style music ) is played and decimas (native form of poetry) are recited and the people pray until dawn



### FAMOUS PEOPLE BORN IN VENEZUELA



### **Miguel Cabrera**



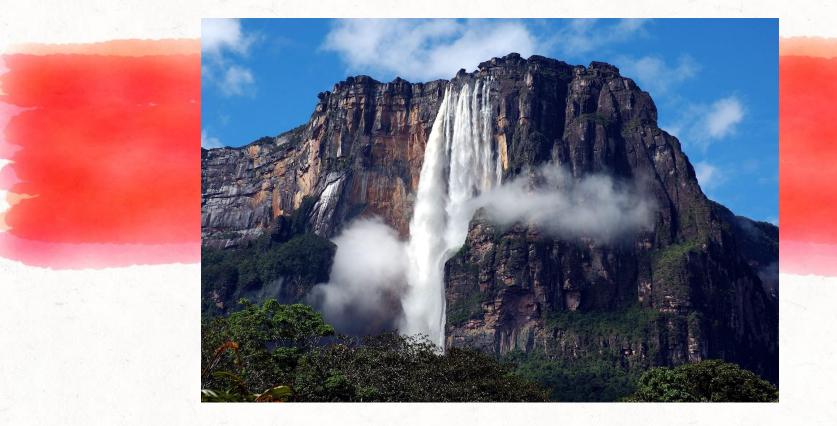


## Hugo Chavez

### Dayana Mendoza

# ATTRACTIONS

### Angel Falls



### Isla Margarita



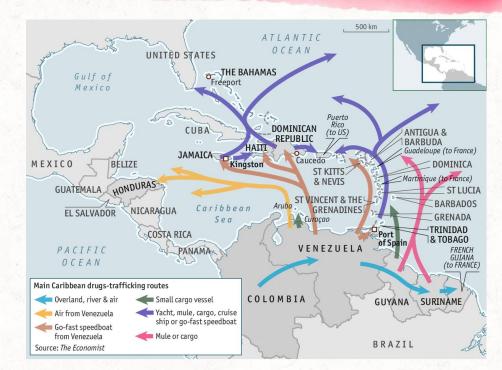
### Medanos de Coro (sand dunes)



### CRIME + CARTELS

### CRIME

- Key transit country for drug shipments leaving Colombia for the United States
   Foreign groups control the drug trade
  - primarily
- Many other problems



http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21602680-old-route-regains-popularity-drugs-gangs-full-circle

### HISTORY

- Contraband alcohol, Colombian emeralds, tobacco : earliest illicit trades
- Dictatorships caused the country to be very unequal
- Suffered an economic crisis which increased crime
- Very corrupt security forces and political leaders who participated in illegal activities
- Attempted to stop drug trafficking, unsuccessful
- Hugo Chávez

### ITALY'S COSA NOSTRA

1980's and 1990's Cuntreta and Caruana Families settled in Caracas Trafficked Cocaine and Heroin from Colombia to Europe with help of Cali Cartel



Pasquale Cuntreta



#### Alfonso Caruana



- Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)
   Largest irregular army in Colombia
   Use border states as
  - refuge



http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/farc

### ELN

Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) en Colombia Left-wing political ideologies Focus on kidnapping, extortion, and attacks on economic infrastructure Recently linked to narcotics trade



http://www.colombia-politics.com/elnjoinpeacetalks/

### CARTEL DE LOS SOLES

Cartel of the Suns
 Corrupt network of security forces
 Supply weapons to the black market



https://resistenciav58.wordpress.com/2015/06/16/veracruz-jefe-del-legislativo-en-venezuela-lider-de-cartel-de-drogas-infografia/



 Fuerzas Patrióticas de Liberación Nacional = The Patriotic Forces for National Liberation
 Venezuela's own guerrilla group



http://www.larepublica.ec/blog/internacional/2011/12/12/venezuela-ejecuta-tres-guerrilleros/

#### MEGA-GANGS

- Megabandas
   New form of organized crimes
- Participate in drug trafficking, kidnapping, extortion, and illicit gold mining De facto law in certain territories across the country as well as on the border



### OTHER GROUPS + PROBLEMS

Sinaloa Cartel
Bolivarian Militia
"Black gold" becoming an issue



https://www.tapatalk.com/topic/1066967-vice/476a46a6c07dbb8d4669c2856b8e6154-inside-the-illicit-venezuela-colombia-gas-smuggling-trade

# CURRENT EVENTS

### CURRENCY CRISIS

-Government decided there would be a 72-hr period starting Dec. 15th where citizens could exchange the 100 bolivar note for coins of same value

-Bills never arrived on time creating panic and looting

-This week President Maduro gave the bills a 5-week extension for usage





- -President Maduro has recently increased the minimum wage by 50% percent
- -does little in the face of 1660% projected increase in the coming year

-The crisis has created a widespread shortage on food and other necessities since Venezuela relies heavily on imports and the money for said imports comes from oil

#### CITATIONS

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