

**MISSIONS ATLAS PROJECT
AREA OF THE WORLD
COUNTRY
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

Snapshots Section

Country Name: Dominican Republic/La Republica Dominicana, The Dominican/La Dominicana

Country Founded in: 27 February 1844

Population: 9,904,000

Government Type: (national, regional and local): Republic

Geography/location in the world: Eastern part of the island of Hispaniola, shares a border with Haiti to the west, between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean

Number of people groups: 15

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot

Major Religion and % of population: Roman Catholic (68.9%)

All religions and % for each:

Evangelical/Protestant (18.2%)

Non-religious (10.2%)

Judaism (<0.1%)

Islam (<1%)

Santeria/Brujeria/Voodoo (unknown: practiced alongside other religions)

Government interaction with religion:

The Dominican government is cooperative and supportive of the freedom of religion. However, religious institutions are required to register with the government. There are also procedures set

in place in order for these religious groups to obtain government financial aid and, in some cases, tax exoneration.

At the same time, the Dominican government favors the Catholic Church in religious matters by giving them special privileges and support which is minimally given to other religions. Even though there is no state church, the government recognized the Roman Catholic faith as their primary religion in 1954.

In addition, the government allocates funds to the church and supports the Vatican and the laws that it passes. Though not enforced, the Bible is required to be read in public schools.

<http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108523.htm>

<http://www.flags-flags-flags.org.uk/dominican-republic-flag.htm>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/countries.php>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/MapSearch.aspx?country=Dominican+Republic>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dr.html>

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107475.html>

Dominican Republic Country Profile

Basic Facts

Country Name: Dominican Republic/*Republica Dominicana*

Demographics:

According to July 2008 estimates, 9,904,000 people are living in the Dominican Republic with a population growth rate increasing at 1.495% per year. There are 22.65 births per 1,000 people and an average of 2.78 children born to each woman.

The growth is buffered by those who leave the Dominican Republic and those who pass away. For every 1,000 people, 2.4 persons emigrate to live in other countries. There are 5.3 deaths for every 1,000 people and there are 26.93 infant deaths for every 1,000 live births.

More of the infant deaths occur in males, but this can possibly be attributed to the fact that there are slightly more males than females born. This follows that, in general, there are more males in the Dominican than females. However, the male life expectancy at birth is 71.61 years while the female life expectancy at birth is 75.24 years of age.

Life expectancy is calculated in light of a number of factors. For example, there is a high degree of risk that someone would contract an infectious disease. This would impact both the life expectancy and the death rate. Diseases such as hepatitis A, typhoid fever, dengue fever, malaria and leptospirosis are not uncommon to the area.

The only age group that has more women than men includes those who are 65 years or older which makes up 5.8% of the population. Those who are under 14 years of age make up 31.8% of the population and those between the ages of 15 and 64 make up 62.4% of the population. Overall, the median age of a person in the Dominican Republic is 24.7 years with women being slightly older than men.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dr.html>

<http://www.joshuaproject.com>

Language:

The official language of the Dominican Republic is Spanish. Spanish was brought to the island of Hispaniola by Christopher Columbus and the Spanish settlers he brought to claim the island for Spain.

Although it is strongly tied to the Spanish that is spoken in Spain, Dominican Spanish has its own characteristics and charms which make it identifiable from other forms of Spanish. One such characteristic is the tendency for Dominicans to not pronounce the letter “s” in the middle or at the end of a word.

While English is spoken in the Dominican Republic, it is primarily used in the market of tourism. There are other languages that are spoken on the island, but these are mostly from people who have migrated to the Dominican from other countries such as Germany or Japan. Haitian Creole and Italian are also languages spoken in the Dominican.

For more information regarding popular expressions or more on the languages of the Dominican Republic, follow the links:

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_dominicanismos.asp
http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563569_7/Dominican_Republic.html#s31
<http://www.peoplegroups.org/MapSearch.aspx?country=Dominican+Republic>
http://dominicanrepublic.com//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=91&Itemid=115
<http://playcapcana.com/?page=23064>

Society/Culture:

The history of the Dominican Republic has afforded it many cultural influences that shape the culture today. Some of these cultural influences include the Spanish who came and discovered Hispaniola, the Taino who were the indigenous peoples, the French who neighbored the Dominican in Haiti and the Africans who were brought as slaves.

<http://www.kacike.org/FerbelEnglish.html>

Dominicans are generally known as very friendly and smiling people who do not get easily stressed. It is a laid back society which is flexible with time, but at the same time does not let time get too far away from them.

Tourism in the Dominican Republic makes up a sizeable chunk of the economy. The people, the diversified land, party life, and food attract peoples from many nations. In addition, this is a stopover point for many business transactions. The tropical climate, harbors, and beaches add to the reasons for being an excellent tourism site.

In the cities, transportation is readily available by car, taxi, or bus (affectionately known as the *la guagua*). If horns have been honked it is usually a sign of greeting which will be given with a smile and a wave. Sometimes the horn is used to alert a person in a home that the guests have arrived. Mainly, the use of the car horn is in order to signal that one is not driving up to standard.

If you want to leave the cities and go into the country you can go by airplane, bus, or car. There are 34 airports all over the country and over half of them are paved. There are railways that are available and there is always the option of going by boat.

http://dominicanrepublic.com//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=90&Itemid=131
<http://www.godominicanrepublic.com>
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dr.html>

The Dominican Republic is an urban nation with about 61% of its population living in cities. The two major ones are Santo Domingo de Guzman and Santiago de los Caballeros and their populations account for over 3 million persons.

Urban life and city structure in the Dominican is much like their neighboring western nations. There are the poor, middle, and upper class, and the areas of town in which they live reflect their urban societal status.

Business and tourism thrive; shopping centers and clubs are plentiful for those who wish to participate in the city life of the Dominican Republic. It is estimated that 72% of the population of the Dominican will live in cities by the year 2030.

While the majority of the population of the Dominican Republic lives in the cities, there are a good percentage of people who live in rural areas (39%). Due to the fact that most villages or towns were settled by one or two families, relationships in villages and towns are closer knit than in cities.

Rural society is heavily dependent on the agriculture industry. Many of the villages in the country are composed of farms. Land is given to those children who have matured. However, the land has been divided over and over again which makes the borders of land a bit of a dispute at times.

Homes in the rural areas are a little different than those found in the cities. While some would seem to be from a western nation, others can be composed of a single room made of concrete or wood with a thatch or tin roof.

Women are more prone to lead the household in rural society. Even if they do not lead the household, they heavily contribute to the overall earnings for the household.

While farms provide a kind of backbone for rural society, urban aspects have had their effect. Like other western small towns, there is a center for the town which serves as a place for communication, social events, and government.

<http://www.globalpropertyguide.com/Caribbean/Dominican-Republic/Price-History>
http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?IndicatorID=30&Country=DO
http://books.google.com/books?id=npQ6Hd3G4kgC&pg=PA283&lpg=PA283&dq=Dominican+urban+life&source=web&ots=wdqTGn9trm&sig=8HWDCWDJ35m6eAZnMkGnEQDe2iE&hl=en&ei=wBCbScbtAYTUMZyXyfML&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPA282,M1
<http://countrystudies.us/dominican-republic>
<http://studentservicesdr.freesevers.com/Dominican%20Overview%20&%20Historical%20Summary.htm>

The most important aspect to this society is the institution of the family. When possible, the extended and immediate family lives close to each other, or even with each other. It is not unusual to have three generations living in one house.

Within the family different roles are assumed by either gender. The husband is expected to be the provider for the family even though the wife may go out and work if she pleases. However, she

still must fulfill her duties in the home and is considered a bad wife if she is not domestically gifted.

The men are the discipliners in the family. Usually the eldest male in the family is seen as a type of patriarch who is the leader on most decisions. If the eldest male passes away, then his spouse is considered the leader until she passes away.

There is a double standard which is prevalent in this area regarding roles in the family. Traditional roles are commonly followed and men/boys are encouraged to uphold their honor and *machismo* (a chauvinistic maleness). Thus it is not unusual for a male to have more than one relationship with various women and have children with them. The only requirement placed upon him by society in this respect is to support all his children and serve as the leader of his acknowledged family.

On the other hand, the women are expected to be docile and submissive which often means staying at home. If food is not waiting for the man of the house when he returns, it is often seen as her being a bad wife. Wives are expected to be faithful and help the family financially if the need arises.

This culture is strongly affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church and as such there are godparents given to a child during their baptism. The godparents actively participate in the child's life, becoming a second set of parents. These parties are responsible for the child should anything happen to the biological parents.

Godparents are expected to help with the child's education, career and finances. Actually, it is the godparents that sign the witness for the Marriage License instead of the parents!

<http://www.dominicanrepublic.ttbwpub.com/culture/family-life.cfm>
http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/intercultural_issues-en.asp?lvl=8&ISO=do&SubjectID=7
http://books.google.com/books?id=bB2cedC3ruQC&pg=PA88&lpg=PA88&dq=Dominican+courtship+customs&source=bl&ots=Bi6zbyTCIY&sig=cCmO9CINJvWESGnxFpM2s9pD1cA&hl=en&ei=Z5WRSbWLJ4T8NPG37PQL&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=4&ct=result#PPA88,M1

Courting traditions in the Dominican Republic usually begins around the ages of 12-15 and though customs vary from region to region, courtship is always initiated by the male. For example, in the region of Cibao it was customary for the man to throw small pebbles at his love interest when he happened to cross her path. If the woman picked up the pebbles, it was seen as a sign of mutual affection for the man.

In Moca, it was customary for a man to drive a small stake in the front of the home of his love. If the stake was moved closer to the home it signified the woman's interest in her suitor and further steps could be pursued. If the stake had not moved, then it was seen as a sign of indifference or lack of interest on the part of the female.

Parading on horseback in front of an interest's home and serenading her were both very popular ways of showing interest in the nineteenth century. Serenading is still in use today. The older

courtship customs of both Cibao and Moca have recently been put to rest and others have taken their place.

Up until the current generation group-dating was highly valued and when the relationship progressed to one-on-one dating a chaperone was always present. This chaperone was usually an unmarried aunt called *la jamona*. If she was not available to chaperone, other family members such as siblings and cousins would fill this role.

Men no longer need to make the first step towards courtship. Although this is still not seen as completely appropriate, women are able to initiate the courtship as easily as inviting the man to dinner.

http://books.google.com/books?id=bB2cedC3ruQC&pg=PA88&lpg=PA88&dq=Dominican+courtship+customs&source=bl&ots=Bi6zbyTCIY&sig=cCmO9CINJvWESGnxFpM2s9pD1cA&hl=en&ei=Z5WRSbWLJ4T8NPG37PQL&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=4&ct=result#PPA88,M1

Like courtship, marriage is initiated on the part of the male who usually asks the girl's father for her hand and his blessing. There are three types of marriages in the Dominican Republic. Each involves parties and merry making for the new couple in their union.

If the couple decides to marry in a church, then the wedding is carried out in accordance with the traditions of the church. It is the responsibility of the bride's parents to front the costs of the wedding, but in other situations a sponsor may be found. Most of the time, church-weddings occur in the Catholic Church as these marriages are the only church weddings which are acknowledged by the government of the Dominican Republic.

There is no superstition of the groom seeing the bride before the ceremony and most of the wedding pictures are taken before the actual wedding takes place. Also, there are no wedding rehearsals, but bachelor and bachelorette parties are in vogue along with the concept of a bridal shower.

During the ceremony, a small boy carries a small plate with thirteen ten-cent coins which are called the *arras*. This plate is then passed to the priest, who passes it to the groom, who passes it to the bride. The passing of the *arras* stands as a symbol that the two shall provide for one another and share their material possessions.

In addition, these weddings are usually done in a *ceremonia cantada* style which means that there are no instrumental pieces played in the wedding. All songs are sung. In addition, the flower girl and ring bearer wear a set of miniature clothing which is usually a smaller version of the dress of the bride and the attire of the groom.

All marriages go through the Civil Court of Judges Chamber in order for the union to be acknowledged. Those that wish to have a church wedding go to the Civil Court the day before the wedding or the morning of the wedding so that all the paperwork is done before the ceremony.

While church weddings are idealized, they are often very expensive in light of the fact that there is always a wedding reception and party after that. Some couples get around the cost of a church

wedding by getting married in court in front of a Civil Court of Judges Chamber and having a reception afterwards.

Lastly, there are marriages which are called common-law marriages. This usually happens in the rural areas, also known as “el campo.” The process is started by the couple co-habiting and living as married for an allotted amount of time so that the community and the state considers you married.

Regardless of the type of wedding that is celebrated, the reception is still an integral part of the marriage traditions of the Dominican Republic. There are no speeches made and the bride and groom are not allowed to leave the party until the last guest leaves. Usually this happens at around 3 am.

Pranks played on the new couple include one which happens on the wedding night after the reception party. If there are members of the party at the location where the couple plans to spend their first night, then the couple must entertain the company until they all leave the house or hotel.

In some areas, the bride is expected to show proof to a group of close friends that she was a virgin at the time of her marriage. This usually happens within nine days of the marriage ceremony in which she is not allowed to leave her house, but friends are allowed to visit her.

<http://dr1.com/living/customs/6.shtml>

http://books.google.com/books?id=bB2cedC3ruQC&pg=PA88&lpg=PA88&dq=Dominican+courtship+customs&source=bl&ots=Bi6zbyTCIY&sig=cCmO9CINJvWESGnxFpM2s9pD1cA&hl=en&ei=Z5WRSbWLJ4T8NPG37PQL&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=4&ct=result#PPA88.M1

<http://toptraveldealz.com/dominicanrepublic/dominican-republic-wedding-traditions.html>

<http://www.dominicanrepublic.ttbwpub.com/culture/family-life.cfm>

Family is the center and foundation of society which is put above all other relationships, even business ones. When seeking employment, who you know is more important than your skill. In addition, more than economic standing, the family lineage defines social status. Family line is mainly based along lines of race.

Unlike other western nations, the words used below are not as racially charged as they may seem. They are even used as terms of endearment at times! HOW they are used is the key in determining insult or affection. So while the Dominican culture is racially aware and loosely divided, they are not derogatory about it and use such words primarily to indicate their heritage or as terms of endearment.

The majority of society is found in the middle class who is comprised of those who are of European, Taino, or African lineage. People in this group can be known as mulattoes or “mulatos” or “morenos.” Those in the middle class are also called “indio claros” if they have fairer skin or “indio obscuro” if they have a darker skin pigmentation.

Those who are of purely European descent call themselves “whites” or “blancos” and make up the upper class in society. The lower class in society is made up of those who are of African descent and are known as blacks or “negros.”

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/dominican-republic-country-profile.html>

<http://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/Dominican-Republic.html>

Clothing is a means by which social status can be shown in the Dominican Republic. Clothing made in the United States is highly valued along with designer labels. It is a matter of pride as to how well one dresses and the quality of the fabric is very important. The type of clothing worn displays a person’s socio-economic status.

Traditionally, women wore long dresses while the men wore pants and a shirt. Colors were very bright and included warm colors like red and yellow. Accessories and jewelry were worn to match these bright colors. Men were accustomed to wearing hats.

In many ways, the traditional style of dress is still in use as women are still encouraged to wear dresses when going out for lunch or dinner. However, this is really dependent on whether you are in the city or not. Traditional bright colors are usually shown in the accessories that someone wears.

On the way to church women were and still are expected to wear long sleeves and modest attire which comes in the form of a long dress. In addition, if you are going to a Catholic Church, women are supposed to have their heads covered which is usually done with a scarf or shawl of some sort. Men are required to take their hats off.

Business attire for men includes well made dark suits that are conservative. Women in the business world wear good quality suits or dresses to work and are expected to wear both make up and jewelry that is conservative.

Overall, the standard dress of the Dominican is very similar to the United States in the summer time. This is due to the fact that the country has different variations of summer for seasons. Light jackets are worn for cool nights, but for the most part, Dominicans dress in sandals, shorts, t-shirts, skirts and dresses.

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/dominican-republic-country-profile.html>

<http://www.dominicanrepublic.ttbwpub.com/culture/index.cfm>

One of the things that Dominicans are most proud of besides their heritage is their hospitality and great pains are taken to make sure that every need has been accommodated for and that a guest lacks for nothing. Guests can be expected to be anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes late and still being considered on time for the festivities.

The foods served and the dishes prepared all represent the mixing of various cultures. For example, *ñame* root, plantains, and the cooking of fish with coconut was an idea brought to the Dominican Republic by African slaves. *Yaniqueuque*, a fried flour cake, was introduced to the

tropical cuisine by Arabs. A form of *paella* from Spain was born when the Taino, or indigenous groups, added a spice called *achiote* along with other meats.

The Taino originally cooked their food using a method called *barbocoa* which used a primitive grill over coals and is where the idea of barbecuing originated. Usually birds, seafood, iguanas, and *hutías* were cooked by this means.

In regards to fruit, the pineapple, papaya, *guanábana*, *sapote*, and *jobo* were all staples of the indigenous diet along with spices like *achiote* and nuts which included peanuts. Roots and other tubers are known to be part of Taino heritage, such as the yucca and corn.

One main dish that incorporates most of the cultural influences present in the Dominican Republic is *sancocho* which has its roots in the Canary Islands. This is a soup which can have up to seven different types of meat in addition to plantains, yucca, corn, *name*, and other indigenous seasonings. It is served today as a country staple and is one of the foods that the Dominican Republic is most known for.

The oldest cultivated food on the island of Hispaniola is known as the guayiga which was used as the bread staple of the Taino. After making dough out of this tuber/root it was allowed to ferment. It was then kneaded after maggots were found in the bread, and cooked on an indigenous cooking griddle called a *burel*.

There are some dishes that are specific to regions such as fried fish or fish cooked with coconut milk. These are mostly found in coastal regions such as Sabana de la Mar, Miches and San Pedro de Macorís.

One of the greatest contributions of the African kitchen to the Dominican Republic is a condiment called *sofrito*. This is made by mashing garlic, cilantro, salt, and onion together, then frying it with bits of tomato or tomato paste.

The one dish that is primarily eaten everyday, regardless of class, is fondly known as “*la Bandera*,” or the “Dominican Flag.” Usually, “*la Bandera*” is eaten at lunch time. This is a meal that incorporates rice, beans, meat, and plantains which are referred to as the four corners of the flag.

Breakfast usually consists of chocolate milk, milk, or coffee with bread. Another option is a dish called *natilla* which is a type of warm pudding made out of cornstarch which can also contain chocolate. This can be chilled and served as a cold dish as well.

If a heavier dish is required for breakfast *mangu* will be made and topped with eggs and sautéed onions. *Mangu* is a plantain that has been boiled, mashed and seasoned with salt and milk among other things.

Dinner is a meal which is lighter than lunch and usually consists of *sancocho*. A type of meat pastry called *pastelitos* is also a common snack that is used for dinner. It usually contains

raisins. Leftovers from the previous meal can also be served for dinner alongside a salad. This is usually followed with a small drink of rum.

<http://www.dominicanrepublic.ttbwpub.com/culture/cuisine.cfm>

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_cultura.asp

<http://www.dominican-republic-travel-guide.com/dominican-republic-foods.htm>

<http://www.dominicancooking.com/section-aboutdominicancooking.html>

Much like the cuisine, music in the Dominican Republic incorporates European, Native, and African elements which have defined the country and its music. The music known as *meringue* first made its appearance in the 1840s. A historical record of this is present because in the 1840s some tried to ban the music for its suggestive lyrics and the dance movements that ensued.

Merengue típico or “typical meringue” music was also known as *perico ripiao* which literally means “ripped parrot.” Some believe this name to come from the brothel from which this music originated. This music was characterized by the use of three main instruments: the *güira*, the *tambora*, and the guitar which included the *tres* or *cuatro*.

The *güira* is an instrument of Taino (native) origin that was originally made from a dried gourd that had holes perforated throughout. A type of wooden fork was then scrapped over the perforations in order to make a rhythm with a buzzing sound. Currently these are made out of metal that has been perforated and a fork is still used to make the sound. Wooden *güiras* and *güiras* made out of gourds are still used.

The *tambora* is a type of drum that is said to have African origins and is made from the skin of a goat pulled tight over a wooden tube at both ends. It is traditional to have one side of the drum be made out of an old male goat skin and the other end to be of the skin of a young female goat which has never given birth.

The guitar was of Spanish origin along with the *tres* and *cuatros* which are both types of guitars. However, the German accordion soon took over the role that the guitar had in *meringue* music at the turn of the 20th century.

One musician that is well known was Nico Lora (1880-1971). His music, as he played the accordion, was well known. He used improvisation, the political atmosphere, and daily life in his songs. His most famous song is “*Caña Brava*” which debuted around World War I.

This type of music was expelled from city life by some that were called moralists. One of these was the president at the time whose name was Ulises Espaillat. *Merengue típico* was kept alive by those who lived in the rural communities and the music and dance resurfaced in the 1910s.

Later, in the 1930s, the dictator Trujillo, would make this the standard for music. In addition, saxophones, trumpets, keyboards, and mambo rhythms were added to this type of *meringue* as the Dominican interacted with other cultures.

Along with the *meringue típico* that Trujillo promoted in the 1930s, he also promoted what is now called *meringue de orquesta*. This involves the music being played by a band which was

much like those in the United States at the time. The first musician to form such a band was Rafael Petiton Guzman.

Through the years artists like Johnny Ventura, Juan Luis Guerra, and Los Hermanos Rosario have helped bring *meringue* into the new millennium despite the influences of other cultures on the Dominican.

Another type of meringue, *meringue de guitarra* or guitar based merengue, is also called *bachata* which was made famous in the Dominican through Juan Luis Guerra and his group 4:40. Originally conceived in the rural areas of the Dominican, this type of music has been heard on the island since the 1960s.

It was Juan Luis Guerra who gave this music, which had a negative connotation among the elite society, a good light through his song "*Bachata Rosa*" released in 1991. For the most part, his music was focused on politics, but after becoming a Christian, songs were more focused on religious themes for which he is now known.

Son, hip-hop called *reggaeton*, and rap have also made their mark on Dominican culture. While *son*, a type of music which is Afro-hispanic, has been around since the 1870s, *reggaeton* has been recently introduced and is more associated with the youth of today than the overall culture at the moment.

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_tipica.asp

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_folklorica.asp

http://dr1.com/articles/music_1.shtml

http://dominicanrepublic.com//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=95&Itemid=114

http://books.google.com/books?id=oLdkCugOAOcC&pg=PA10&lpg=PA10&dq=traditional+Dominican+courtship+customs&source=web&ots=X2jhp8m9mY&sig=dwttlzCMIqW5fjOswtpbUzYCI40&hl=en&ei=RNKRSfaZJInKtQP7r8W-Cw&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=4&ct=result

<http://www.iasorecords.com/merengue.cfm>

<http://www.merengue-ripiao.com/survey.htm>

http://www.christianbook.com/Christian/Books/product?item_no=CD8634&event=1060RNF

<http://books.google.com/books?id=3uD6PKXl3q4C&pg=PA538&dq=Dance+in+the+Dominican+Republic>

Dance, along with music, is a very integral part of society and culture in the Dominican and is one of the reasons for which the Dominican is well known. *Merengue* was so popular in the mid to late 1800s that villages would set up places to dance every weekend! In those days the floors were made of dirt, but lime, water, and good packing of the soil made a shiny, solid surface to dance on.

Origins of the dance are ambiguous. One tale tells of a general who was lame. The group which was dancing, in order to respect the general, limped while dancing. Another tale tells of the slaves which were brought from Africa and chained at the ankle and had to drag one leg to walk. On the other hand, another tale tells of the dance being used to make fun of higher society.

Much like in a ballroom type dance, the man generally has his hand on the woman's waist and the other is holding her hand. The woman has one hand which is held by the man and the other gently rests on the man's shoulder. The *meringue* dance is characterized by the couple performing a two-step motion with the feet and pronounced motion of the hips.

http://books.google.com/books?id=X6_tuhVUODYC&pg=PA41&dq=Dominican+dance
<http://centralhome.com/ballroomcountry/merengue.htm>
http://dominicanrepublic.com//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=95&Itemid=114
<http://books.google.com/books?id=3uD6PKXl3q4C&pg=PA538&dq=Dance+in+the+Dominican+Republic>
http://books.google.com/books?id=WKISO-Ful6gC&pg=PA18&lpg=PA18&dq=la+tumba+Dominican&source=bl&ots=RjyRoRGLYt&sig=qyeIVxJ2OkIV9K-iTppz-jK8Ns0&hl=en&ei=F8OeSdSoA5jqMLLP7eYL&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=6&ct=result#PPA33,M1

While the Dominican Republic is becoming more urban as the years go by, there are still some superstitions and legends which add a bit of mystery to the culture. Some, like the *brujas*, or witches which were brought over by Europeans, still hold true to most conceptions of witches. Another tale, which is kind of like the boogeyman in the United States is *el Cuco* who takes children who are misbehaving. His sole purpose is to frighten them into behaving.

Others, like the legend of the *ciguapa*, probably come from Taino or native roots as the name comes from a Taino word. The *ciguapa* is a beautiful young woman who captures travelers. She does so by entrancing them with her eyes and promising a beautiful woman at the end of the trail should the man follow. This is difficult to do as her feet are apparently backwards and leave backwards tracks in the forests.

http://www.colonialzone-dr.com/important_stuff-superstitions.html
http://www.colonialzone-dr.com/important_stuff-myths_legends.html
http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_mitos.asp

Though there were rituals performed by the natives when Columbus arrived on the Island of Hispaniola, the Carnival was not introduced until the late 1500s. Tribal traditions were mixed with pre-Lenten celebrations which had the full support of the Catholic Church.

One of the most important carnivals in the Dominican is *La Carnival de la Vega* which is a carnival that occurs throughout the month of February. The weekend on which the festivities begin vary by region. The peak of the festivities occurs on February 27th which is the Dominican Independence Day.

Masks are made out of various materials which can span from paper maché to plastics and feathers. Usually, these masks are made in the image of a demon or devil and people go parading through the streets on a weekend in February.

Other holidays which are celebrated in the Dominican, besides their independence day, are mostly religious in nature. For example, Easter, Lent, Good Friday, and Christmas are commonly celebrated.

A holiday that is celebrated among Dominicans is *los dias de los reyes* which commemorates the three kings of orient which visited Jesus. The celebration begins on the 6th of January and hay and straw are left out by children in exchange for gifts from “the three kings.”

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_carnavales.asp
http://www.el-bohio.com/la_vega/index.html
<http://www.toursdominican.com/la-vega%C2%B4s-carnival-in-dominican-republic.html>
<http://www.colonialzone-dr.com/traditions-carnival.html>

http://about-santo-domingo.com/origins_of_carnaval.htm
http://www.colonialzone-dr.com/important_stuff-traditions-christmas.html
http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_enero2.asp

Because of the diverse landscape of the Dominican, there are a variety of sports and games that are played. Surprisingly, baseball is a Dominican national pastime. In fact, many of the players in the American and Japanese baseball leagues come from the Dominican.

The most played board game in the Dominican Republic would be Dominoes. This is something that can be seen on most street corners and is used as a form of socialization. Also, it is common for people to gamble when playing dominoes.

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_beisbol.asp
http://dominicanrepublic.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=93&Itemid=117
<http://www.colonialzone-dr.com/pastimes-dominoes.html>

The healthcare in the Dominican is unique in that it is supported by both public and private funds. The citizens of the Dominican give according to their means and it is free to all those that need medical attention.

Despite the availability of medical resources there is still a high rate of women who die in childbirth. In addition, at least 4% of the population can be said to be malnourished. However, there has been a lowering of the infant mortality rate.

2.5% of the adult population is living with HIV. This presents a problem as the Dominican has a very potent form of TB which can infect those with lowered immune systems.

There has been improvement since 2001. An increase in the use of prevention services in regards to HIV/AIDS and more effective family planning services have been made available to the public. In addition, the basic level of care in rural areas has increased along with infant survival from resources that are available.

<http://www.usaid.gov/dr/health.htm>
http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_salud.asp

One of the societal issues that face the Dominican is the border that they share with Haiti. Haitians cross the border illegally in order to find work.

In addition, the Dominican serves as a mid-way point between South America and the United States in reference to drug trafficking. This is also a popular stop for those who are shipping drugs from South America to Northern Europe.

The Dominican Republic is ranked fourth in the world for sex trafficking of women, men, and children. Most of these people are uneducated. Marriages are set up under false pretenses in which the husband prostitutes his wife. Another way in which people are tricked is that women are told that they will work in bars as dancers or other entertainment and instead are prostituted.

Interestingly, prostitution is looked down upon in Dominican society, but is seen as acceptable if it is done overseas and the family receives a portion of the earnings. Sometimes family members even encourage the traveling of another family member for this purpose.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dr.html>
<http://www.oas.org/atip/country%20specific/TIP%20DR%20IOM%20REPORT.pdf>
<http://www.catwinternational.org/factbook/DominicanR.php>

Currently, the Education system in the Dominican is being revamped in an attempt to lower the amount of people who are uneducated. By 2002 they had lowered the percentage of uneducated people from 20% to 10%! In addition, the average amount of schooling per person has also doubled from less than 6 years to an expected 12 years.

In all, there are three subdivisions of free public education: pre-primary, primary and secondary. Pre-primary education focuses on those children who are between the ages of 2 and 6. Only the last two years of this subsection is free and each grade level is two years.

Primary school is mandatory and free to those who are between the ages of 6 and 14. This is further divided into two sections: 6-10 and 10-14. Each grade level is one year.

Secondary education is free but is not mandatory and requires that one complete primary schooling. This is for those who are between the ages of 14-18 and is broken down into two subdivisions of two years each. Over half of these who are enrolled in public education will drop out.

There are 28 Universities and over 40 higher education centers in the country. 16.74% of the population attends higher education facilities.

http://books.google.com/books?id=YXaaiT7UZw8C&pg=PA5&lpg=PA5&dq=Dominican+education+system&source=bl&ots=9kZ3q_IcqS&sig=8ECmWZGZOWYoCiKd11eI2ZV4LxM&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPA14,M1
http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_educacion.asp
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dr.html>

Literature has been a form of expression in Hispaniola since its discovery by Christopher Columbus. Unlike many western nations, the short story and the poem have precedence over the novel. These poems and short stories focus on such topics as politics and race.

Angulo Guridi was the first writer of a short story named *El garito* in 1854. The most respected international author in regards to the short story in essay form is Pedro Henriquez Urena, who made a collection of short story series after his exile.

Salomé Ureña, José Joaquín Pérez, and Gastón Fernando Deligne, are the most well known fathers of Dominican poetry. Modern poetry has a tendency to focus on the psychological, the political, and on the Dominican's indigenous past. It was Vigil Díaz who introduced free verse and prose poetry to Dominican society.

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_literatura.asp

http://books.google.com/books?id=ASkib7s1QH8C&pg=PA122&lpg=PA122&dq=Dominican+literature&source=bl&ots=SYLT59RjcH&sig=zdMv2OPVHSKzeJTdNI7gyyahCV4&hl=en&ei=PTSkSemWAZCKnge-46WeBQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=7&ct=result#PPA121,M1
http://books.google.com/books?id=GTr3sO0_EusC&pg=PA49&lpg=PA49&dq=Dominican+literature&source=bl&ots=vqL6vqja-a&sig=r6iOMNxRPqVMCbTnOCxSkPUGnAc&hl=en&ei=ijSkSd-xD5CMngecp-mYBQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=8&ct=result
<http://www.dominicantoday.com/dr/local/2009/2/21/31167/Cuban-Book-Fair-pays-homage-to-Dominican-Juan-Bosch>

Like dancing, music, and food, the art found in the Dominican has its roots in Taino (native), African, and Spanish influence. Native influence is found in the use of various shapes and indigenous materials such as clay, bone, shell, stone, gold, and wicker. Spanish influence is found in the earthenware jars that are still used in kitchens and in ceramics. African influence is found more in the symbols and content that the art depicts.

One famous artist of the Dominican is Guillo Perez who was born in Moca in 1926. A graduate of the Beauty Arts of Santiago de Los Caballeros, he later became a director in Santo Domingo, La Vega, and even in Santiago de Los Caballeros. His paintings are alive with color which is representative of the Dominican nation. Aspects of Taino, Spanish, and African influence can also be seen in his paintings.

http://www.dominican-rep.com/pintores/guillo_perez/index.html
http://images.google.com/images?q=Guillo+Perez&rls=com.microsoft:*&oe=UTF-8&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=X&oi=image_result_group&resnum=4&ct=title
http://dominicanrepublic.com//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=95&Itemid=114
http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_cultura.asp

The first movie made in the Dominican was *La aparición de Nuestra Señora de La Altagracia* in 1923 by Francisco Palau. However, the history of film in general was halted due to dictatorship by Trujillo until the 1960s.

Since this time, themes of politics, contentedness in culture and social status have been a focus. Directors such as Franklyn Domínguez brought the terrors of the Trujillo tyranny to the film forefront in *La Silla* which is a monologue.

Many movies are filmed in the Dominican such as *The Godfather 2*. International films which want a setting in Vietnam or Cuba are actually filmed in the Dominican. The *Dirección Nacional de Cine* (National Directorate of Film) was constructed during Leonel Fernandez's final term as president. The Dominican continues to flourish in the film arena.

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_cultura.asp
http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_filmografia.asp

Government:

The democratic republic government structure in the Dominican Republic is very much like that of the United States in most respects. The present constitution was set in place in 1994 and was reapproved during the last president's term (2000-2004). The government is divided into three sectors: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial.

The executive branch is composed of the president, the vice president, and the cabinet which supports them. They are elected for a term of four years. Until recently, they could not hold consecutive terms. The president, the vice president, and their cabinet are chosen based on popular vote.

The president is the head-of-state and chief-in-commander of the armed forces of the country. As such, he chooses the members of the cabinet who will give aid and counsel regarding domestic and foreign affairs. Currently, the president of the Dominican Republic is President Leonel Fernandez Reyna and the Vice President is Rafael Alburquerque de Castro.

Those who are married or are persons over the age of 18 are required to vote. This last election was the first election which allowed persons living outside the Dominican to vote in a general election.

The legislative branch is made up of a bicameral house system which includes a Senate and a House of Representatives also known as the Chamber of Deputies. Senators are held to a four year term. Since there are 29 provinces in addition to the National District, which is the capital city of Santo Domingo, there are 30 seats available in the Senate.

The House of Representatives, also known as the Chamber of Deputies, functions like the House of Representatives in the United States. The overall number of available seats is dependent upon the size of the population as a whole. The number of people in each province determines how many seats that province will hold for the next four years. Each seat can be said to represent 50,000 people. Currently, there are 145 seats in the Chamber of Deputies

Interestingly, the Judicial System in the Dominican mirrors the French Judicial system. The backbone of the Judicial System is the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is made up of nine judges, all of whom are required to have a law degree. These members then appoint judges for the lower courts.

Currently there are 26 provincial courts, 72 municipal district courts and 3 courts of appeals. There are also military courts in place for those in the military and for those charged with “extrajudicial killings.”

The other branches have influence over the judicial branch and require that public trials are guaranteed. In addition all citizens have the right to an attorney, even at the government’s expense. The death penalty was eliminated in 1924.

Another interesting aspect of the Dominican government is a council which is called the National Judicial Council. This council is composed of 7 members who include the president, the Supreme Court president, another Supreme Court justice, and members from both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The council appoints judges to the courts, but must do so apart from the political processes.

http://dominicanrepublic.com//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=169&Itemid=120

<http://www.thedominicanrepublic.net/government.htm>

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35639.htm>

<http://www.dominicanrepublicindex.com/dominican-government.php>
http://www.dominicanrepublicpage.com/Government_Information.html
<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Americas/Dominican-Republic-JUDICIAL-SYSTEM.html>

Economy:

Due to the global recession, as with most countries at the moment, the Dominican economy is facing financial hardship. This economy can be said to be significantly dependent on the United States. Considerable gains were reported before mid-2008.

The Dominican Peso is the official currency of the Dominican Republic, but the US dollar is accepted anywhere. Presently, the exchange rate is 35.701 Dominican Pesos to \$1 US. This is due to inflation which is up to a rate of 12.2%.

Peso paper notes come in 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, 1000, and 2000 peso amounts. Dominican Pesos are further divided into centavo pieces which come in 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50 centavo amounts.

The Dominican Republic has the power to purchase \$83.33 billion and the economy has a growth rate of 5.5% per year. The budget allows for \$9.069 billion to be spent and the country brings in about \$7.947 billion a year.

There is a public debt of 39.1% of the annual Gross Domestic Product with an external debt of \$11.7 billion. The domestic credit line available to the Dominican is \$15.92 billion and the current account balance is -\$4.23 billion

4.119 million people make up the labor force in the Dominican Republic and a person will typically make \$8,800 a year. It is important to note that 10% of the poorest people of the nation only make 1.4% of the total revenue of the country. On the other hand 10% of the population which is its wealthiest enjoy 41.1% of the total income that the country makes. This reflects the widening gap between the rich and poor of the Dominican Republic.

Of the labor force, 11.3% are involved in the agricultural sector, 23.5% are involved in the industry sector, and 63.1% are active in the services sector. There is currently an unemployment rate of 15.4% in the Dominican.

Agriculturally, the Dominican produces sugar cane, cocoa, coffee, rice, and beans. The Dominican is the second largest producer of sugar in the Caribbean.

Industries, such as the tourism industry, provide major boosts for the Dominican economy and are one of the most important contributors to this economy. Other industries reflect the agricultural sector through sugar processing, textiles, and tobacco. In addition there are also mining industries.

Exports are mainly sent to the US (66.4%) and include ferronickel, sugar, gold, tobacco, meat, cocoa, and coffee. These items are shipped to places like Belgium (3.7%) and Finland (3.2%). In all, \$7.17 billion of goods are exported from the Dominican annually.

The US also provides the Dominican with many imported goods such as food, fabrics, petroleum, and medicines. These items are also shipped from Venezuela (8.1%), Mexico (5.9%), and Columbia (4.7%). In all, \$16.02 billion in goods are shipped to the Dominican.

In terms of the energy economy, the Dominican produces more electricity than it consumes by over 2 billion units. Oil and natural gas, on the other hand, must be imported. This is because little oil is produced in the Dominican and no natural gas is produced.

<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Americas/Dominican-Republic-AGRICULTURE.html>
<http://www.gocurrency.com/v2/dorate.php?inV=1&from=USD&to=DOP&Calculate=Convert>
<http://www.welcome-dominican-republic.com/Dominican-Republic-Currency.html>
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dr.html>

Literacy:

The literacy rate is defined by those who are over the age of 15 who can read and write. Presently 88.4% of the population is said to be literate so the literacy rate of adults is 11.6% of the population.

Differences between the genders in relation to literacy are not large, but females are slightly more literate than males. However, there are needs for the children who come from the immigrant workers from Haiti as their illiteracy level is high. Some volunteer services have risen up to the challenge of meeting these needs of these children.

Though the official language of the Dominican Republic is Spanish, there is a heavy emphasis being placed on students learning English as a second language. This is a major goal for the Education system. 17 public schools are currently developing bilingual programs to meet this goal.

The Dominican government sets aside 3.6% of their gross domestic product in order to meet the needs of the education of its people. Dominicans are expected to receive at least 12 years of education regardless of gender.

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_educacion.asp
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dr.html>
<http://www.volunteersolutions.org/vcswc/org/24306588.html>

Land/Geography:

The country of the Dominican Republic is found on the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola which is located in the Caribbean. It borders Haiti and is flanked by the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean.

Roughly double the size of the U.S. state of New Hampshire, the Dominican has a total area of 48,730 square kilometers. At its widest point, the Dominican measures about 265 kilometers/164.66 miles and at its greatest length it measures 380 kilometers/236.12 miles. This country shares a 360 kilometer/223.69 mile border with Haiti which is to the west.

The Dominican Republic has 1,288 kilometers/800.33 miles of coastline. This coastline is highly irregular and allows for many natural harbors and caves. The most well known is the Samaná Bay which is in the northeast and the Ocoa Bay which is in the south. The coastline also provides the Dominican with ample beaches and shorefronts for tourism purposes.

The Dominican boasts holding the highest mountain range in the Caribbean which is the *Cordillera Central*, also known as the Cibao Mountains. *Pico Duarte* is its highest peak which rises to 10,164 feet above sea level. Mountains actually cover about 80% of the country! Natural resources which can be mined from these mountains include nickel, bauxite, gold, and silver.

These mountain ranges give way to fertile valleys which are sparsely populated. The Cibao Valley is known to be the most fertile area in the country. After this valley, the coastal plains on the southeastern end of the country provide more fertile lands. 22.49% of the land in the Dominican is arable and 2,750 square kilometers/1708.77 square miles has been irrigated. As such, most of the population lives in these areas.

There are three major rivers in the Dominican: the *Yaque del Norte* River, the *Yuna* River, and the *Camu* river. The longest one of these is the *Yaque del Norte* River which is 201.7 kilometers/125 miles long and its source is in the Cordillera Central.

Lago Enriquillo, a large saltwater lake, is actually the Dominican's lowest altitude point at 44 meters/144.36 feet below sea level. It is located in the southwestern part of the Dominican and is also the lowest point in the West Indies.

Dependent on the altitude and how close to water one is, the temperature may vary from 74 degrees Fahrenheit to 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Usually the summer is the wettest part of the year and is also the time of year hurricanes are prevalent. This can cause major damage including flooding. Again, depending on where one is, 60-80 inches of rain may fall annually.

The rain allows for tropical forests to cover a good portion (28.4%) of the island. The types of trees which are native to the island are considered luxurious to Western nations. These types of wood would include rosewood, mahogany, oak, and cypress. The Creole Pine is the most common type of tree in the Dominican. Orchids are a common type of flower.

Amphibians and reptiles are not rare and neither are they common. Snakes, iguanas, toads, frogs, and lizards are all found in this country with the inclusion of the American Crocodile. The Rhinoceros Iguana is an endangered species of iguana which is found in the Dominican. The male Iguana has three horns and has a large pouch in their throat.

Interestingly, the humpback whales find the northern seas around the Dominican to be a good breeding ground in the winter. The whales serve as a form of tourism for those who wish to see the whales.

Another attraction to the Dominican is the sea bank and fringing coral reefs. There are four types of turtles which can be found in the waters surrounding the Dominican.

In reference to land mammals, there are only two known indigenous species: the *solenodon* and the *hutia* which are both nocturnal. The *solenodon* is a type of rodent which eats insects and the *hutia* is another small rodent which makes its home in trees and caves.

The Dominican is known for its variety in bird life. Birds such as the Hispaniolan parrot and the Hispaniolan trogon are attractions for those who like bird-watching. What is most interesting is there are still unexplored parts of the forest where more rare birds may be found!

Some environmental issues include water shortages in rural areas, soil erosion into the sea which damages the coral reefs, and deforestation. In light of this, the Dominican government has made commitments to Biodiversity and has signed the Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol. They have been enlisted in helping Ozone Layer Protection and Marine Life Conservation.

Other attempts to help in keeping up with these commitments include sanctioning 16 national parks and protecting 9 natural monuments in the country. In addition, over 65 areas of land are protected which include land and marine environments.

http://www.hispaniola.com/dominican_republic/info/nature_flora-and-fauna.php
http://rainforests.mongabay.com/deforestation/2000/Dominican_Republic.htm
http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?IndicatorID=79&Country=DO
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dr.html>
http://dominicanrepublic.com//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=131&Itemid=105

History

The society and culture of the Dominican Republic is upheld by its rich background. Influenced by three continents, the Dominican represents a history that is as complex as the countries that held influence over the Dominican.

Like most nations in the west, which was once termed the New World, Native Americans were the first peoples to claim the land. The first peoples on the island of Hispaniola were immigrants from the current location of Venezuela. These people were called the *Siboneyes*, a culture that dependent upon the shores of the island for survival.

After the *Siboneyes*, the *Igneris* made their way to the island. These people fostered the art of pottery. Arawak Indians came after and named their land *Hayti* meaning “mountainous land.” It is estimated that around 3000 BC, the Taino culture was introduced to the island and called the land *Quisqueya* which translates to mean “Mother Earth.”

This people called themselves *Taino*, because in their language, *Taino* means “good” or “noble.” In addition to being an organized people, they were known to be very friendly people. They lived in circular homes, traveled by river and sea, and slept in cotton hammocks.

Generally, these are the peoples who introduced agriculture into the Dominican ancient society. Food was grown by first making a huge mound of earth mixed with leaves. This helped the irrigation system and provided a low maintenance way of growing food. Depending where one lived on the island determined the amount of protein a person had in their diet.

Tainos were known as a peaceful people but they had weapons of defense made due to another Amerindian group called the *Caribs*. The Caribs were cannibals living on the northeast part of the island who raided *Taino* villages. The Tainos, being a highly peaceful people, allowed them the opportunity to partake in more activities along the lines of religion and craft.

When Christopher Columbus landed in 1492, there was an estimated 3 million Taino people who were organized into five kingdoms or *caciques*. Each kingdom was taken over, mercilessly, until less than 600 Taino Amerindians were left in 1531.

For more on the Taino people, their kingdoms and culture please follow the links below:

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/Portal/english/cpo_primeros.asp

<http://www.tainogallery.com/history>

http://books.google.com/books?id=SDSIfQ5LWkEC&dq=Dominican+Republic+History&printsec=frontcover&source=in&hl=en&ei=VKamSe3qHZCNngf62_z0Dw&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=13&ct=result#PPA27.M1

On December 5, 1492, Christopher Columbus landed on the island of the *Taino* people and named it Hispaniola. After staying there about a month with the friendly native peoples, Columbus made his way back to Spain in order to bring a good report.

While on the way to the Americas, Columbus lost a ship on the 24th of December in 1492 and had to leave a group of 39 men behind on Hispaniola in a settlement named *Navidad* which means “Christmas.” When Columbus returned to *Navidad* a couple of years later, he found it razed to the ground. Apparently the crewmen had taken to defiling the native women, forcing labor, and taking native property by force.

So, Columbus set his brother, Bartholomew, as governor over the land. In 1496 Bartholomew Columbus found gold in the south and founded the capital city of *Santo Domingo*. This was the first permanent settlement in the Western Hemisphere by the Europeans.

Co-explorers soon got jealous of the Columbus brothers positions and sent such a bad report back to Spain that the Queen had Bartholomew and Christopher brought back to Spain in chains. The brothers were later released upon the findings that the rumors and reports were false.

The next governor of Hispaniola was Nicolas Ovando. He succeeded in ridding the *Taino caciques* of their leadership by killing all the chiefs including their Amerindian Queen, Anacoana. Though there were many uprisings on the part of the *Taino*, those who were left, died slowly of disease and from being made the slaves of their new Spanish rulers.

By 1512, the Spanish government was willing to acknowledge the human state of the Amerindian and put in place the Burgos Laws. These laws prohibited the native population from being imprisoned and gave them rights to nutrition and work leave for those who were pregnant.

The *Tainos* that were left fled to the mountains of *Bahoruco*, which is very close to the border of what is now Haiti, with their new leader named Enriquillo. Then in the mid-1500s the first truce between the Europeans and the Natives took place. They were given their own town and pardoned for all raids that they had subjected the Spanish to.

http://books.google.com/books?id=RNbTj6flu0oC&pg=PA95&sig=z44U7gopqHIIB1UYox65FsPEz_s&dq=dominican+republic+history+%22August+4,+1496%22+%22On+August+4,+1496,+the+first+stone+was+laid+in+the+building+of+the+oldest+city+in+the+New+World.+%22
http://www.google.com/archivesearch?q=Slavery+in+the+Dominican+Republic&scoring=t&um=1&sa=N&sugg=d&as_ldate=1800&as_hdate=1849&nav=hist7
http://www.questia.com/library/encyclopedia/santo_domingo_city_dominican_republic.jsp
http://books.google.com/books?id=WggsvFcZ7EQC&pg=PA234&sig=3Z2Daop_yQnEwysVcEFO2ewtJCY&dq=dominican+republic+history+%221639%22+%22In+1639,+the+first+Canadian+hospital+was+built+in+Quebec.+%22+%22The+explorer+Hernando+Cortez+founded+the+first+hospital+in+Mexico+City.+%22
http://www.dominicanaonline.org/Portal/english/cpo_descubrimiento.asp

By mid-1500, slavery was commonplace in the island of Hispaniola and included more than the *Taino* population. African slaves were officially introduced for the purposes of agricultural and domestic economy in 1505, sanctioned by King Ferdinand of Spain.

More than 75,000 African slaves were said to populate the Dominican by the end of the 16th century. By meeting in secret they were able to maintain their culture, its values, and its traditions to the point they have made a large impact on the culture today!

Despite the unethical economic stimulus which Spain received through slave labors, they lost control of the western third of the island to pirates. The Spanish seceded this land to the French in 1697. The western third of the island is now known as Haiti, the eastern third known as San Domingo.

While this land was seen as a new country and a new colony apart from Spain, Haiti would have great influence on the island nation of the Dominican. In 1789 Haiti would begin a revolution alongside the French Revolution which sparked a slave rebellion in 1790. In 1795, the Treaty of Bassel was signed which gave the French control of the western **two**-thirds of the island of Hispaniola.

In 1801, a Haitian African general named Toussaint D'Ouverture invaded the Dominican and proclaimed himself dictator. Though Spain regained control for a time, the Dominican claimed to be independent in 1821 and rebelled against Spain with leadership from Jose Nunez. However, Haiti once again invaded and claimed the entire island of Hispaniola for more than 20 years through a president of Haiti, Jean Pierre Boyer in 1822.

While Boyer united the island of Hispaniola, abolished slavery, and freed it from French rule by way of a payment of 150,000 francs, this forced him to tax the people heavily. The people, unwilling to be taxed, deposed him in 1843 with the help of the Dominican people.

The fight for independence from Haiti had been brewing since 1838 when three Dominican men by the names of Juan Pablo Duarte, Ramon Matias Mella, and Francisco del Rosario Sanchez, formed a group called *La Trinitaria*. Of these three men, Juan Pablo Duarte is seen as the "Father of the Dominican Republic."

Finally, on February 27, 1844 the Dominican Republic gained its independence from Haiti and has retained that independence, except for one short time period. Due to the fact that the Haitian

leadership emphasized their African Heritage, the new country sought to differentiate itself by placing the emphasis on their Hispanic Heritage.

http://books.google.com/books?id=JC52a_Yr3skC&pg=PA28&sig=1PYj0PuKK4Nd2XuEUuuDWHCG1Cc&dq=slavery+in+the+dominican+republic+%221505%22+%22It+appears,+however,+that+in+1505,+King+Ferdinand+all+owed+the+entrance+of+some+seventeen+Africans,+who+arrived+as+slaves+into+the+Dominican+Republic.+%22
<http://dr1.com/articles/vooodoo.shtml>
<http://books.google.com/books?id=cU3tio6nXe4C&pg=PA9&sig=4ahps69UF7bKddZxG24KU10-gow&dq=slavery+in+the+dominican+republic+%221821%22+%22The+colony+of+Santo+Domingo+proclaimed+itself+to+be+the+independent+Dominican+Republic+in+1821,+but+Haiti+invaded+soon+after+and+began+a+unification+of+the+island+that+lasted+more+than+two+decades.+%22>
http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL_ID=18180&URL_DO=DO_PRINTPAGE&URL_SECTION=201.html
<http://www.historycentral.com/dates/1790ad.html>
<http://www.nndb.com/people/111/000102802>
http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563462/boyer_jean-pierre.html
<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ab43>
<http://www.thedominicanrepublic.net/historyandculture.htm>
<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3401700077.html>

After Independence those in *La Tinitaria* were thrown out of power after six months. The early years of the Dominican Republic are riddled with power struggles between military and wealthy families who wished to control the new nation. This period was generally known as the War of Restoration.

It got so bad in 186, General Pedro Santana, the president at the time, even offered the country back to Spain which led it back into Spanish rule for a few years. In 1865, due to rebellion, Spain released all claims to the island and recognized the Dominican Republic as its own entity.

The country suffered financially from divided leadership until 1882 when General Ulysses Heureux took power through dictatorship. This was a tumultuous time as the country juggled between the two extremes of economic success and dire need. These crises were helped by loans that were obtained from the United States. General Ulysses was assassinated in 1889 and was followed by numerous short-lived successors.

In 1916, the United States invaded the Dominican Republic under the reasons of protecting it from countries like Germany during WWI. While the people of the Dominican did not govern themselves for the next eight years, this occupation brought stability to the region. It also provided the Dominican with a new military structure and a stable army. Rafael Leonidas Trujillo was placed as the head of the army.

After the first free elections were held in 1924, the United States left the Dominican. Trujillo then wasted no time in gaining power and became the dictator of the Dominican in 1930. He was known by the people to be a cruel ruler and even changed the name of the capital city of Santo Domingo to Ciudad Trujillo (Trujillo City) by 1936.

This time was also a time of crisis as one of the most destructive hurricanes in the 20th century, Hurricane San Zenon, hit the Dominican Republic. It almost wiped out the city of Santo Domingo. It is the 5th most deadly Atlantic Hurricane on record.

Trujillo made it a point to define the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In 1937 he killed all those who were Haitian on the Dominican side of the border. Most of this happened in a border city called *Dajabon*. The river near it was re-named Massacre River.

The United States supported Trujillo for a time because he gave favorable business propositions to those who wanted to invest in the Dominican. He even made arrangements with the United States to pay the debt which was owed to them. However, Trujillo started to take over domestic and American businesses which upset relations between the two countries.

There were those who stood up during Trujillo's reign of power which included the Mirabal sisters, wives of revolutionaries that were imprisoned and killed on Trujillo's orders. Also known as *Las Mariposas* or the "Butterflies," Patria, Minerva, Maria Teresa, and Belgica worked with their husbands towards change, even while the men were imprisoned.

All but Belgica were killed in 1960 while on their way to visit their husbands in prison. Today, November 25 is still celebrated as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women in honor of these women who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the Dominican people.

On May 30, 1961 Trujillo was assassinated after helping to scheme an assassination attempt on the President of Venezuela. However, this did not restore peace and instead started a civil war within the Dominican. Those who assassinated Trujillo were all killed by Trujillo's son who was then sent into exile. Today, May 30th is celebrated as a holiday in the Dominican.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/dominican-republic-1916.htm>
http://books.google.com/books?id=CZwMZ7wE9KoC&pg=PA180&sig=T08qJEY5cyP9ws0_zPY-3UP78tw&dq=dominican+republic+history+%22February+28,+1844%22+%22After+suffering+some+setbacks,+on+February+28,+1844,+the+Trinitarios+staged+a+successful+insurrection+and+proclaimed+the+birth+of+the+Dominican+Republic.+%22
http://www.jlhs.nhusd.k12.ca.us/classes/social_science/Latin_America/Dominican_Republic.html
<http://www.learn-spanish-help.com/history-of-dominican-republic.html>
http://dr1.com/articles/hurricanes_2.shtml

Vice President Beleguer led the country for a year and a half after Trujillo's assassination. After him, Juan Bosch, a writer of the Dominican Revolutionary Party, led the country, and instilled a socialist program. The United States did not like this and, under the cause of attempting to stop the spread of Communism from Cuba to the Dominican Republic, invaded once again in 1965.

Though many believe the election to be rigged, Beleguer was elected president again in 1966. He retained the Presidency until 1978 when Dr. Antonio Guzman of the Dominican Revolutionary Party was elected. Guzman later committed suicide right before the end of his term and was replaced by Dr. Salvador Jorge Blanco. Blanco was accused and convicted of embezzlement and corruption.

This led the people of the Dominican to again vote for Beleguer as President of the Dominican in 1986. He kept the office until 1996 when he helped Dr. Leonel Fernandez of the Dominican Liberation Party to office. Rumors of corruption soon filled Dominicans ears and in 2000 they voted Fernandez out of office and elected Hipólito Mejía of the Dominican Revolutionary Party.

2003 found the Dominican Republic in the midst of a global recession and the Baninter Bank, which was the third largest private bank in the Dominican, went bankrupt. Shortly after, two other major banks went bankrupt and inflation between the peso and the U.S. dollar skyrocketed.

Once again, the Dominican people elected Fernandez in the 2004 elections to help during the economic crisis. He is currently in this position as he had been re-elected in the May 2008 elections.

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/Portal/english/cpo_bio_personajes.asp

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_historia.asp

http://www.hispaniola.com/dominican_republic/info/history.php

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35639.htm>

http://www.google.com/archivesearch?q=Dominican+Republic+history&as_ldate=1500&as_hdate=1549&scoring=t&um=1&nav_num=100

Christian History

Along with the discovery of the Dominican Republic by Christopher Columbus in 1492 came the introduction of the Catholic Church. The first mass was held on January 6, 1494 for the Feast of the Epiphany. It was held at the port-town of La Isabela which would meet a quick end.

The natives of the land were later conquered and put to work on the plantations of the Spaniards as slaves. They were given a Christian education with the introduction of the Borges Laws and were, for the most part, converted if only in name. However, the slaves still maintained some amount of syncretism with their old customs.

Under Pope Leo X, the first see was built in San Domingo (Santo Domingo) in 1513 and thus made this region the first and oldest bishopric in the Western World. Alessandro Geraldini was placed as its first Bishop in 1514 and the first cathedral of the New World was begun during his time as Bishop. The cathedral was finished in 1540 and the remains of the Columbus family can be found there.

The Catholic Church continued to prosper in the Dominican until 1803 when the seeds of independence were sown. In the 1820s Protestants from the United States started to immigrate to the Dominican. The three primary groups were the Seventh Day Adventists, the Evangelicals, and the Assemblies of God churches.

Political stresses in the early 1820s with the occupation of the Haitian nation would give the Catholic Church incentive to involve itself politically in the history of the Dominican. Under the Haitian occupation, the church lost much of its power as the Haitians took the Church's assets away. They saw the Church as a supporter of slavery.

In retaliation the Church would set up political support by way of helping to plot against the Haitian government in order to obtain independence. At one point, Bishop Pedro Valera and Bishop Jimenez were forced to leave the island and travel to Cuba due to political tensions in the 1830s.

Because the Catholic Church was heavily involved in helping the Dominican to obtain its freedom from Haiti, it was able to have great influence when the Dominican finally did gain its independence in 1844. Three of the five men who helped to establish the constitution were priests! These men made sure that Catholicism would be the official religion of the Dominican Republic.

For the next century, Catholicism and Protestantism would suffer because of the political strife of the area. Due to the amount of guerilla wars which were fought, the Catholic Church lost much control and came to the point where the government owned all of its assets.

This did not stop other Protestant denominations, such as the Methodists, from going into the war torn country in the 1870s, or the Episcopalians from coming in the 1890s. Protestant churches continued to grow more in rural areas and started to become affiliated with other denominations in the United States.

The situation was helped with an invasion from the United States Marines in 1916. With the invasion of the United States came more Protestants which allowed for more religious diversity in the Dominican.

At this time, Pentecostalism was introduced to the country in 1917. The influence of the denomination was small, but work began in earnest in 1920 when the communities moved from the area of *Samaná* and more inland.

There are many churches which are now a part of the Evangelical Dominican Church, having foundations since 1916. This organization is a type of council which was founded by United States evangelical members from the Methodist Church, the Evangelistic Church from Puerto Rico, the Presbyterian Church, and the Moravian Church located in the United States.

After the United States left, Trujillo became dictator in 1930 and again installed the Catholic Church as the main religion of the Dominican people. He also signed a document called the Concordant in 1954 which basically stated that the government would rule under the Canonical Law as Catholicism was the country's religion. In addition this would support constant communication with the Vatican.

With this agreement Trujillo demanded the respect and obedience of the Church in return for the privileges he extended. Later, the Catholic Church publicly requested Trujillo to stop the violence that was inflicted on the people in 1960. Trujillo then started a campaign of political harassment against the church. After his term in power the nation would be swept into civil war.

During the civil war which took place in the 1960s, which provoked yet another invasion from the United States, the Protestant churches continued to grow. In fact, the time period of the 1960s-1970s was the period of largest growth for the Protestant churches. Most of this growth was in rural settings.

While the government does allow the freedom of religion, its primary religion is still that of the Catholic Church. While there are Protestant, Pentecostal, and Evangelical churches in the

Dominican Republic, there are only a few who belong to the Caribbean Council of Churches which was founded in 1973.

In 1981 a new denomination was cultivated in the Dominican Republic called *Iglesia Cristiana Reformada de la Republica Dominicana*. This translates to mean the Christian Reformed Church of the Dominican Republic. This church ministers primarily to the Haitian immigrants who come to the Dominican to work.

<http://www.ccc-caribe.org/eng/memchurches.htm>

<http://www.libreopinion.com/members/ied/ied.htm>

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_concordato.asp

http://books.google.com/books?id=Si8axR7yC7wC&pg=PA633&sig=GCLnEfiWxMdEguzFI4RbJfxt_gI&dq=dominican+republic+history+%22+January+1494%22+%22The+first+Christian+worship+in+the+New+World+took+place+on+6+January+1494,+when+Christopher+Columbus+had+his+chaplain+sing+a+solemn+mass+on+the+feast+of+the+Epiphany+at+La+Isabela,+the+ill-

[fated+colony+that+the+explorer+founded+on+the+north+coast+of+Hispanola+\(present-day+Haiti+and+Dominican+Republic\).+%22](http://books.google.com/books?id=Bo54JXGNiwEC&dq=Dominican+Republic+Christian+History&printsec=frontcover&source=in&hl=en&ei=UOWuSeK9IcyJngee8eW2Bg&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=13&ct=result#PPA18,M1)

http://books.google.com/books?id=Bo54JXGNiwEC&dq=Dominican+Republic+Christian+History&printsec=frontcover&source=in&hl=en&ei=UOWuSeK9IcyJngee8eW2Bg&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=13&ct=result#PPA18,M1

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05110a.htm>

<http://www.dominicanepiscopalchurch.org/DrWEBenglish/Our%20History.htm>

<http://countrystudies.us/dominican-republic/33.htm>

<http://books.google.com/books?id=bB2cedC3ruQC&pg=PA69&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic#PPA53,M1>

<http://books.google.com/books?id=IPbPTOi0Rk4C&pg=PA79&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic>

<http://books.google.com/books?id=Jv-fAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA958&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic&lr=#PPA958,M1>

[http://books.google.com/books?id=z-](http://books.google.com/books?id=z-ZBHzHzm7gC&pg=PA159&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic&lr=#PPA160,M1)

[ZBHzHzm7gC&pg=PA159&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic&lr=#PPA160,M1](http://books.google.com/books?id=z-ZBHzHzm7gC&pg=PA159&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic&lr=#PPA160,M1)

[http://books.google.com/books?id=7P5-QWUB-](http://books.google.com/books?id=7P5-QWUB-KoC&pg=PA87&dq=Protestant+Dominican+Republic&lr=#PPA87,M1)

[KoC&pg=PA87&dq=Protestant+Dominican+Republic&lr=#PPA87,M1](http://books.google.com/books?id=7P5-QWUB-KoC&pg=PA87&dq=Protestant+Dominican+Republic&lr=#PPA87,M1)

http://books.google.com/books?id=HEBeNigNwKkC&pg=PA203&lpg=PA203&dq=Protestant+Dominican+Republic&source=bl&ots=zdkdPQhwAb&sig=Ou9qZ3dyPDNbUcWqxILIRgoXlkA&hl=en&ei=5kaxSaTKLo3CMu3qneME&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=7&ct=result#PPA204,M1

http://www.crcna.org/pages/crwm_glance_dominrepub.cfm

Religion

Non Christian

Jewish

Introduced to the Dominican Republic before 1826, Jews from Europe came to escape religious persecution from the Spaniards. Currently there are *at least 250 members* of the Jewish faith in the Dominican Republic. Most live in the Santo Domingo area, although there is a small community in Sousa.

There are two synagogues in the area, one in Santo Domingo, the other in Sousa. There is a Sunday school in place in Santo Domingo where 15-20 students attend. A bi-monthly magazine

called *Shalom* is distributed and a local chapter of the International Council of Jewish Women is located in the Dominican Republic.

<http://www.haruth.com/jw/JewsDominicanRepublic.html>
http://www.amyisrael.co.il/na/central_america/dominc.htm

Islam

Islam was introduced to the Dominican Republic with the introduction of slavery in 1502 as some of those who were slaves were of the Islamic faith. The group from the Wolof nation mounted the first slavery insurrection in the Dominican Republic in 1522.

Currently 0.02% of the population of the Dominican Republic is known to be Muslim which accounts for *about 3,000 people*. The Islamic Circle of the Dominican Republic and the Islamic Center of the Dominican Republic are both organizations which are helping to spread the Islamic faith in the Dominican. There are a few mosques which are open for daily prayers and serve as a support for the Islamic community.

<http://dr1.com/articles/islam.shtml>
<http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enwiki/2029453>

Buddhism

Buddhism was brought to the Dominican by Japanese immigrants who came in the 1960s. Two men, Kurato Kimura and Jun'ichi Nishio started the first Buddhist activities in the Dominican. There are currently *1,500 members* who follow the Buddhist faith which accounts for 0.01% of the population. Buddhism reports a growth of + 3.8 % annually.

Buddhists are able to worship and congregate in the Dominican. The Soka Gakkia International group supports youth events every year on January 26 to plant trees. A Zen center is located in Santo Domingo and the president of Soka Gakkai International visited the country in 1987.

http://www.buddhanet.info/wbd/search.php?keyword=&search=Begin+Search&country_id=9&province_id=0
http://www.sgi.org/dominican_rep.html

Baha'i

In 1937 a man named Bill Deforge donated some Baha'i literature to the library at San Pedro de Macoris which is located about an hour outside of Santo Domingo. Baha'i missionaries like Margaret Lents helped to spread the movement in the Dominican Republic. The first convert was Maria Teresa Irrizari who then was the first Baha'i in Puerto Rico.

By 1945 there was a Spiritual Assembly established. Each time a missionary would leave the country due to outside factors such as World War II, the Baha'i community would fade then regroup when missionary leaders returned.

The group stabilized in the 1950s with the obtaining of a building in Ciudad Nueva which was named Centro Baha'i in 1953. Currently, 0.07% of the population is affiliated with the Baha'i

faith which *accounts for 5,947 people*. There are two main centers at the moment: one in Ciudad Nueva and the other in Santiago.

http://www.hispaniola.com/dominican_republic/destinations/south_san-pedro-de-macoris.php

<http://bci.org/dominicanrep>

<http://bci.org/dominicanrep/index.php?mod=3>

Jehovah's Witness

The Jehovah's Witness were a part of the Dominican landscape before Trujillo came to power. In 1957 he actually banned this church from operating. After he was deposed Jehovah's Witness were once again allowed to practice.

Currently, the Jehovah's Witness have a large headquarters in the national district and boast 382 congregations with over 1,550 baptisms in 2008. 0.50% of the population of the Dominican Republic is Jehovah's Witness *which accounts for over 22,000 people*.

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/24488.htm>

http://watchtower.org/e/statistics/worldwide_report.htm

<http://www.exjw.org.uk/rfranz.html>

http://books.google.com/books?id=FOBVPeShs1YC&pg=PA359&dq=Jehovah%27s+witness+Dominican+Republic&lr=&as_brr=3#PPA359,M1

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was introduced to the Dominican Republic in the summer of 1978. Two families, which comprised six members, from the United States began a mission there.

Though the families began in Santo Domingo, by 1990 there were over 25,000 members added to their number around the country. Construction on a temple was started in 1993 and was completed in 2000. *This church now has 106,243 members, 194 congregations, and three missions currently active.*

<http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/dominican-republic>

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/24488.htm>

http://www.lds.org/ldsorg/v/index.jsp?vnextoid=f318118dd536c010VgnVCM1000004d82620aRCD&locale=0&sourceId=3c068254a4ddb010VgnVCM1000004d82620a_&hideNav=1

Spiritism (Vudou and Santeria)

Vudou was introduced to the island of Hispaniola with the introduction of the slave trade in the early 1500s. However, the slave masters advocated Catholicism and were afraid of the African religions which their slaves were practicing. In the late 1600s, the Catholic Church outlawed the religion and Vudou became a syncretic religion where Vudou gods were given Catholic saints' names.

In the Dominican Republic, Vudou is also known as "Las 21 Diviciones." Ceremonies are usually held outside, under a roof, and around a pole. It is difficult to say how many Dominicans

practice Vudou, because the majority of those who do practice it are affiliated with the Catholic Church and see it as an integral part of their faith.

Like Vudou, Santeria was introduced to the Dominican Republic through the Atlantic slave trade in the 1500s. However, this specific type of religion comes more from the area of Africa known as Yoruba.

It, too, is a syncretic religion, composed of a mix of African rituals, spirits, rites, and worship along with Catholic traditions and saints. As a result, the number of adherents to this religion is hard to determine since this is practiced alongside Catholicism.

Overall, there is an estimated 2.18% of the population who openly practice either Vudou or Santeria. *This is about 185,198 people.*

<http://dr1.com/articles/voodoo.shtml>

http://hemi.nyu.edu/archive/studentwork/nation/KarenJ/public_html/Materials/Text/Text%20Documents/FinalPaper.html

http://books.google.com/books?id=owlTz2nxNEC&pg=PA350&dq=Dominican+Spiritists&as_brr=3#PPA350,M1

http://books.google.com/books?id=VqJ_W9fLs6wC&pg=PA134&dq=Dominican+Santeria&as_brr=3

<http://www.santeriareligion101.com>

<http://www.4truth.net/site/c.hiKXLbPNLrF/b.2948093/k.CDBE/Santeria.htm>

Non-religious

While the Dominican Republic has a long history with the Catholic Church, 2.47% of the current population consider themselves to be non-religious. There are estimates that roughly 7% of the total population does not believe in a God. The Han Chinese, present in the Dominican Republic, align themselves with the non-religious beliefs. Overall, *209,835 persons consider themselves non-religious.* This group is increasing 4.0% annually.

[http://books.google.com/books?id=tAeFipOVx4MC&pg=PA54&lpg=PA54&dq=Non-religious+Dominican+Republic&source=bl&ots=KgscKdt-](http://books.google.com/books?id=tAeFipOVx4MC&pg=PA54&lpg=PA54&dq=Non-religious+Dominican+Republic&source=bl&ots=KgscKdt-1Z&sig=vgbUJidXx87WSwhFD64SVEHyuac&hl=en&ei=NXO6ScqYOISaMuCapaAI&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=10&ct=result)

[1Z&sig=vgbUJidXx87WSwhFD64SVEHyuac&hl=en&ei=NXO6ScqYOISaMuCapaAI&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=10&ct=result](http://books.google.com/books?id=tAeFipOVx4MC&pg=PA54&lpg=PA54&dq=Non-religious+Dominican+Republic&source=bl&ots=KgscKdt-1Z&sig=vgbUJidXx87WSwhFD64SVEHyuac&hl=en&ei=NXO6ScqYOISaMuCapaAI&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=10&ct=result)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/religions.php?ror3=7&sf=ctry&so=desc>

Catholic/Orthodox

As stated previously, Catholicism made its entry into Dominican culture in 1492 by Christopher Columbus and the first mass took place on January 6, 1494. Furthermore, this religion was made the religion of the state in 1843.

As of right now it is estimated that about 95.15% of the population in the Dominican is Catholic which accounts for over 8 million affiliates and almost 4 million people as solid members. There are 300 congregations. It must be noted that there are those who profess Catholicism who also participate in other religions as well.

[http://books.google.com/books?id=Jv-](http://books.google.com/books?id=Jv-fAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA958&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic&lr=#PPA958,M1)

[fAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA958&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic&lr=#PPA958,M1](http://books.google.com/books?id=Jv-fAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA958&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic&lr=#PPA958,M1)

[http://books.google.com/books?id=Si8axR7yC7wC&pg=PA633&sig=GCLnEflWxMdEguzFI4RbJfxt_gI&dq=dominican+republic+history+%226+January+1494%22+%22The+first+Christian+worship+in+the+New+World+took+place+on+6+January+1494,+when+Christopher+Columbus+had+his+chaplain+sing+a+solemn+mass+on+the+feast+of+the+Epiphany+at+La+Isabela,+the+ill-fated+colony+that+the+explorer+founded+on+the+north+coast+of+Hispanola+\(present-day+Haiti+and+Dominican+Republic\).+%22](http://books.google.com/books?id=Si8axR7yC7wC&pg=PA633&sig=GCLnEflWxMdEguzFI4RbJfxt_gI&dq=dominican+republic+history+%226+January+1494%22+%22The+first+Christian+worship+in+the+New+World+took+place+on+6+January+1494,+when+Christopher+Columbus+had+his+chaplain+sing+a+solemn+mass+on+the+feast+of+the+Epiphany+at+La+Isabela,+the+ill-fated+colony+that+the+explorer+founded+on+the+north+coast+of+Hispanola+(present-day+Haiti+and+Dominican+Republic).+%22)

Christian/Evangelical

Methodists

Methodists were introduced to the Dominican Republic during the time of the Haitian occupation in 1822. By 1870, the Afro-American Methodist families which had immigrated had become successful farmers.

There are still areas of Samaná where English is commonly spoken and Methodism is still the religion practiced. Currently, there are 115 congregations and 12,000 affiliates of the Methodist Church of *which 6,000 are members which accounts for 0.04% of the population.*

http://books.google.com/books?id=bB2cedC3ruQC&pg=PA69&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic#PPA53_M1

Baptists

In 1834 English-speaking Baptists from the Turk islands started ministering in Puerto Plata. The first Baptist church was established in 1843 with freed African slaves from the United States. Since this time, the Baptists have continued to form and promote missions to the area. The latest Baptist church to plant itself in the area is the Bible Baptist Fellowship International in 1996.

Currently the Dominican Baptist Churches are part of a convention called “*Convencion Bautista Dominicana*” which has 22 churches as members. This body formed in 1968 and counts 1,417 people as members of this specific convention. However, there are eight different denominations of Baptists in the country and together the Baptist membership totals *about 5,000 which accounts for 0.033% of the population.*

<http://www.bwanet.org/default.aspx?pid=437>
<http://www.bwa-baptist-heritage.org/hst-carb.htm>

Evangelical Dominican Church

The Evangelical Dominican Church is actually the product merging the Methodist, the Presbyterian, and the Moravian Churches that sent missions to the Dominican Republic with the help of Puerto Rican Evangelists. Moravians had been in the Dominican since 1907 and the Methodists had been there since the 1820s. However, the first service of the Evangelical Dominican Church was not actually conducted until 1921.

Although this church is influenced by three denominations, efforts were taken to be as non-denominational as possible when coming up with the laws of this new church. The first building was dedicated in 1922.

Since then the church has grown to over *55 congregations, 6,803 members, and 75 temples*. This accounts for 0.043% of the population. In addition there are almost 20,000 affiliates of this denomination and there is a seminary and six health centers that the church owns.

<http://www.libreopinion.com/members/ied/ied.htm> (Spanish)

http://www.moravian.org/find_us/other_moravians.phtml

http://moravians.net/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=193&Itemid=31

Christian Reformed Church

The Christian Reformed Church was introduced to the Dominican Republic by Puerto Rican missionaries in the 1970s. The denomination was not formalized until 1981 when the first resident missionaries were established.

These missionaries ministered to the poorest of the nation and as such about 90% of their congregations are made up of Haitians. A main focus is on education. As of right now there are over 200 small congregations and *membership almost hits 3,000* (0.02% of the population) with 10,000 affiliates.

http://www.crcna.org/pages/crwm_glance_dominrepub.cfm

Pentecostals

Pentecostalism was introduced to the Dominican by Puerto Rican missionaries in 1917. Their efforts were then taken over by the Assemblies of God and the Church of God of Prophecy in 1941.

These are the two largest Pentecostal denominations in the Dominican Republic. The Church of *God of Prophecy boasts over 23,000 members*. The *Assemblies of God boasts of more than 42,000 members with 751 congregations* throughout the Dominican. Those in the Pentecostal church account for more than .43% of the population.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=IPbPTOi0Rk4C&pg=PA79&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic>

http://church-of-christ.org/churches/Dominican_Republic/Dominican_Republic.htm

Christian Brethren

The Christian Brethren denomination was introduced in 1979 by Puerto Rican Christian Brethren members after hurricane David hit the Dominican and there was need for aid. Originally started in the Viajama community with the help of others in the United States, this denomination has also spread.

Most of the churches of this denomination have a daughter church and evangelism is a major emphasis. Currently *there are over 1,600 members and 21 congregations* scattered throughout the country.

http://www.brethren.org/site/PageServer?pagename=go_places_serve_dominicanrepublic

Seventh-Day Adventists

Seventh-Day Adventists made its debut in the Dominican in 1907 with the arrival of Jamaican evangelists. However, the first church was not formally organized until 1917. By 1962 there were over 6,000 members.

Currently, the Seventh-Day Adventists make up one of the largest protestant denominations in the Dominican with over 407 congregations and over 111,455 members which is a little over 1% of the population. In addition there are at least 170,000 affiliates.

<http://news.adventist.org/2008/03/dominican-republic-church-targets-commuters-with-moer-scree-as.html>
http://books.google.com/books?id=fYFLksIywcC&pg=PA83&dq=Seventh+Day+Adventists+in+the+Dominican&lr=&as_brr=3

Other denominations

Other Protestant denominations in the country have more than 1,200 congregations numbering about 140,000 members. It is important to keep in mind that some churches hold a double affiliation with two denominations.

Overall there are 72 Protestant denominations. Of this population 7.6% are evangelical, 11.8% are charismatic, and 3.2% are Pentecostal.

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_religion.asp
<http://www.operationworld.org/country/domr/owtext.html>
<http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/caribe/drp/drp-chron.pdf>

People Groups

16312

Arab/Lebanese (3,400)

The Arabs, who are also known as the Lebanese, came to the Dominican Republic in the 1860s. They came a decade after immigration laws were passed which allowed other nations to immigrate to the Dominican. However, the Arabs maintained their ties to the Middle East.

The Arabs introduced Islam (both Shiite and Sunni) to the Dominican Republic which is still their primary religion. While there are Christians who are of Arab descent, less than 2% are known to be evangelical.

The primary language is a dialect of Arabic known as North Levantine. The Scriptures and ethnic worship music are available to them in their native language though the *Jesus* film is not. The *Jesus* film is available to them in the country's official languages.

http://books.google.com/books?id=MZUMnoy5FzcC&pg=PA150&dq=Arabs+in+the+Dominican&lr=&as_brr=3
http://books.google.com/books?id=MkBlfCf8I-YC&pg=PA15&dq=Arabs+in+the+Dominican&lr=&as_brr=3#PPA15,M1

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British (1200)

In the early 1800s, many European nations had an influence on the Dominican Republic through trade and England was one of these nations. Their involvement happened more in the late 1800s, and there is record of a British mine in operation as early as 1888.

British are also known as White, Eurasian, and Scottish. Their primary religion is Christianity, although it is not known how many are evangelical.

The primary language is English and an abundance of ministerial resources are available to the British. This would include the Scriptures, the *Jesus* film, worship music, and audio Scriptures.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=TRAU0cS3410C&pg=RA1-PA49&dq=Dominican+Republic+British#PRA1-PA49,M1>

16320

Deaf (43,314)

The Deaf community is composed of various races living in the Dominican Republic, so members of this people group also belong to people groups. Deaf persons living in the Dominican use a dialect of sign language called Dominican Sign Language, but it is very similar to American Sign Language.

The similarities of sign can be attributed to the fact that sign language was introduced to the Dominican through missionaries from Puerto Rico. Though there was a rudimentary system in place which varied from home to home, it was the missionaries who taught the Deaf how to better communicate in the 1970s.

Of the Deaf population about 7.6% are evangelical Christian, although there has been no church planting specifically for the Deaf community. Ministerial resources are available for this people group, but use of the Dominican Sign Language is necessary in order to translate materials and to interact with this people.

<http://www.theinterpretersfriend.com/indj/dcoew/dr.html> (Spanish)

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=DO

http://books.google.com/books?id=bqJxAcmA9yEC&pg=PA110&lpg=PA110&dq=Dominican+Republic+Deaf&source=bl&ots=DKqTi2JcEf&sig=b8vcQZj2KYYiLMHeWwtCC8gswso&hl=en&ei=4pK-SYfQLoqYMpT6oaAI&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=6&ct=result

16313

Dominican (9,276,000)

Afro-Dominican (918,000), Mixed Dominican (6,786,000), White Dominican (1,572,000)

The Dominican people, dependent on ancestry, are the descendants of those who originally inhabited the Island of Hispaniola. The people divide themselves into three groups, though all speak Spanish and have developed and integrated into one culture.

Those who are Afro-Dominican are descendants of the African slaves that were brought to work on plantations. They have a darker skin tone. Those who are White-Dominicans are fair-skinned and share a European ancestry. Those who are Mixed-Dominicans have various skin tones and a shared ancestry between African slaves, Europeans, and other indigenous peoples. There are cultural and socio-economic differences between each of these classifications. Regardless, they are all Dominicans.

Of the Afro-Dominican and Mixed Dominican population, 7.6% are evangelical Christian. Most Mixed Dominicans are adherents to the Catholic Church. 10.59% of the White-Dominican population is evangelical Christian.

Ministerial resources like the Bible and the *Jesus* film are available in this population's native language which also is the nation's official language. There is worship music available along with audio scriptures and Christian radio broadcasts in Spanish.

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/dominican-republic-country-profile.html>

<http://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/Dominican-Republic.html>

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_inmigracion.asp

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French (1,900)

France has been an influence in the Dominican Republic long before the Spanish seceded the western third of the island to the French in 1697. Their primary language is French, but those who live in the Dominican Republic also speak the official language of Spanish.

While there are French Christians in the Dominican it is unknown how many are evangelical, but it is estimated that greater than 5% of the French population are evangelical Christian. Sources show that there is a church movement occurring in reference to this people group and there is at least one agency on site which is reaching out to the French living in the Dominican.

Resources like the Scriptures and the *Jesus* film are available to this people group in their primary language along with other resources which include audio-visual resources.

http://books.google.com/books?id=X6_tuhVUODYC&pg=PA29&dq=Dominican+Republic+French&as_brr=3

http://books.google.com/books?id=SDSIfQ5LWkEC&pg=PA4&dq=Dominican+Republic+French&as_brr=3#PPA4,M1

22278

German (800)

Most Germans living in the Dominican live in the northern part of the country near Puerto Plata. Some of these were of Jewish ancestry whose families fled Germany during World War II and decided to stay. It is estimated that almost 25,000 persons in the Dominican have German ancestry.

While there are German Christians in the Dominican it is unknown how many are evangelical. Estimates range from 2-5% and there is a widespread and well disciplined church available to them.

In addition, a variety of Christian resources are available to this people group. These include the Bible, the *Jesus* film and audio-recordings of the Scriptures in their primary language of German.

<http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enwiki/48699>

<http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Laenderinformationen/01-Laender/DominikanischeRepublik.html>

<http://ambermuseum.com/bentz.html>

16321

Haitian (396,000)

Haitians have been an influence in the Dominican since it became its own country in the mid-1600s. In fact, in the 1820s Haiti controlled the Dominican for a time and border disputes were halted with a massacre which was ordered by Trujillo in the mid 1900s.

Currently, the Haitian people migrate to the Dominican for the purpose of finding work and many who are present in the Dominican are illegal immigrants.

Most Haitians are Roman Catholic. About 22.20% are evangelical Christian. There are churches reaching out to this people group that are well disciplined.

Ministry tools are available to this people in their primary language which is Haitian Creole French. These resources would include the Bible, the *Jesus* film, and other Christian literature such as tracts.

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_inmigracion.asp

http://books.google.com/books?id=owITz2nxNEC&pg=PA156&dq=Haitians+In+Dominican+Republic&lr=&as_brr=3

http://books.google.com/books?id=kesL--n3YN4C&pg=PA147&dq=Haitians+In+Dominican+Republic&lr=&as_brr=3

http://books.google.com/books?id=kesL--n3YN4C&pg=PA147&dq=Haitians+In+Dominican+Republic&lr=&as_brr=3

16322

Han Chinese/Cantonese (10,000)

The Han Chinese have been immigrating the Dominican Republic since 1947 when restrictions of Chinese immigration were lifted. By the 1980s most immigrants were coming from China.

The Han Chinese is also known as the Cantonese and the Yuh people. Their primary language is Yue and the Cantonese dialect of Chinese, both independent languages.

The primary religion of the Han Chinese is Buddhism. There are evangelical Christians which compose 0.36% of the Han Chinese population.

Ministerial tools available for this people group include the Bible, the *Jesus* film in their primary languages, along with other resources which are both audio and visual in nature.

http://books.google.com/books?id=X6_tuhVUODYC&pg=PA37&dq=Chinese+in+Dominican+Republic&lr=&as_brr=3
http://books.google.com/books?id=VV9khhBOrlUC&pg=PA176&dq=Chinese+in+Dominican+Republic&lr=&as_brr=3

16323

Han Chinese/Mandarin (2,300)

Like the Han Chinese who speak Yue and Cantonese, the Han Chinese whose primary language is Mandarin also started immigrating to the Dominican in the mid 1900s. This people group does not practice any set religion. It is thought 3.5% of the Mandarin population in the Dominican is evangelical Christian. Another portion practices Buddhism.

Ministry resources are available to this people group in Mandarin and include the Scriptures, the *Jesus* film, radio broadcastings, and Gospel recordings.

http://books.google.com/books?id=X6_tuhVUODYC&pg=PA37&dq=Chinese+in+Dominican+Republic&lr=&as_brr=3
http://books.google.com/books?id=VV9khhBOrlUC&pg=PA176&dq=Chinese+in+Dominican+Republic&lr=&as_brr=3

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Jamaicans (29,000)

The Jamaicans who live in the Dominican Republic come from the island of Jamaica which is another Caribbean Island.

It is estimated that over 10% of the Jamaican population in the Dominican is evangelical Christian.

Their primary language is Jamaican Creole English and there are ministerial tools available to this people group in this language. These would include the *Jesus* film and a global recording of the Scriptures. While a hard copy of the Bible is not available in this language they are able to obtain Scriptures in the country's official languages.

22276

Japanese (1,900)

The Japanese came to the Dominican Republic in 1957 when Trujillo invited them to farm the areas near the Haitian border. The immigration peaked at 1,300 people within 4 years. The Japanese soon became prosperous.

The Japanese were the first people to introduce Buddhism to the Dominican Republic and it is their primary religion. It is estimated that less than 2% of the population is evangelical Christian. This group is largely unreached in the Dominican.

A variety of resources are available to this people group in their primary language of Japanese. These include the Scriptures and the *Jesus* film. There is worship music available for use in their primary language.

http://www.sgi.org/dominican_rep.html

<http://books.google.com/books?id=FWGKtWvRkpQC&pg=PA69&dq=Hinduism+in+the+Dominican+Republic&lr>

<http://books.google.com/books?id=0FegfIcY358C&pg=PA211&dq=Japanese+in+the+Dominican+Republic&lr=#PPA212.M1>

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Jewish (100)

During World War II, Trujillo opened up the country to those Jews who wished to leave Europe. He offered to take in 10,000, but only a little over 700 actually entered the country, most of whom were German Jews. These settled in the Sousa area, although some stayed in the capital city of Santo Domingo.

The vast majority of Jews who stayed in the Dominican continued to practice Judaism. It is unknown how many are Christian or evangelical. There are temples and small communities in both Sousa and Santo Domingo where this people group congregates for worship and cultural festivities.

Their primary language is the Standard German and there are many ministerial tools available to them. These include the Bible, the *Jesus* film, and Gospel recordings.

<http://www.haruth.com/jw/JewsDominicanRepublic.html>

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/sosua.html>

<http://books.google.com/books?id=bB2cedC3ruQC&pg=PA69&dq=Church+History+Dominican+Republic#PPA53.M1>

<http://www.professionaltravelguide.com/Destinations/Puerto-Plata-Dominican-Republic/See-and-Do/Itineraries>

22409

Korean (500)

The Koreans who live in the Dominican have emigrated from Korea or are descendants of those who came from Korea. While the majority of Koreans are Roman Catholic an estimated 25% are evangelical Christian. The churches that reach out to Koreans are well disciplined and missions oriented.

Their primary language is Korean and many Christian resources are available to this people group. These would include the Bible, the *Jesus* film, and other recordings which present the Gospel and its message.

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Spaniard (88,000)

People from Spain have been an integral part of Dominican Republic history and society since Christopher Columbus found the Dominican in 1492. The Dominican has a long history with Spain and its people. Some continue to immigrate to the Dominican while others are descendants from those that emigrated from Spain long ago. Many Spaniards came to the Dominican in the 1950s.

Most of the Spaniards in the Dominican are Roman Catholic, although 0.50% are known to be evangelical Christian. There is a church movement in progress which is reaching out to this people group.

Their primary language is Spanish and as such there is a wealth of ministry resources available to them. Among these resources are the Bible, the *Jesus* film, and worship music in their primary language.

http://www.hispaniola.com/dominican_republic/info/history.php

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West Indian Mulatto (9,700)

Those from other Caribbean islands such as Cuba and the Canary Islands have immigrated to the Dominican Republic since the 1800s in order to work in the sugar cane fields. Currently, those from other islands still come to the Dominican for work and to establish businesses.

Their primary religion is Christianity and it is estimated that over 5% are evangelical Christian. Church movements are currently taking place, reaching out to this people group, and formal agencies are helping as well.

English is the primary language of the West Indian Mulatto which allows them many resources to further the ministry. For example, in addition to the Scriptures and the *Jesus* film, music and other Christian recordings are available to them.

http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portal/english/cpo_inmigracion.asp

<http://books.google.com/books?id=OzLEK0ydbBAC&pg=PA480&dq=Chinese+in+Dominican+Republic&lr=&asbrr=3#PPA492,MI>

For general information regarding people groups:

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/MapSearch.aspx?country=Dominican+Republic>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/countries.php>

<http://countrystudies.us/dominican-republic/24.htm>

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to aid believers in the Dominican Republic to evangelize and start churches in the many areas of the country that have yet to receive a witness. Right now there are a reported 70-80 missionaries in the Dominican and with over 4,000 villages that still have not heard the good news. Pray for those who are already there and who need emotional, spiritual, and financial support in their ministry to the Dominican. There is much work to be done.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to aid the poor and needy in the Dominican Republic. This is a poor nation with even poorer immigrants coming to the Dominican from Haiti. The Dominican agricultural economy is primarily made up of the sugar industry. Many workers are needed and as a result, there is a large Haitian

population who cross over to the Dominican for work which is available. Other under class groups also suffers difficulties in the country.

3. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to aid local believers in reaching the almost 400,000 Haitians in the Dominican Republic (some reports estimate as many as one million Haitians in the Dominican Republic). Haitians face severe discrimination in the Dominican Republic and need help. Some 20% of these people claim to be Christian.
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to help local believers develop teachings on and commitment to basic biblical morality. Sinful living is rampant in the country. A major concern for this country is the sex trafficking. Raising awareness and setting up centers at churches for those who have been abused would be beneficial. Also, teaching the community that this is not a moral practice for the sake of economy would be valuable.

In addition, church leaders need to be trained in counseling those who have been a part of this industry so that true repentance, healing, and restoration can occur. Providing a Christian and safe environment to heal and grow, along with teaching them another trade, would be useful.

5. Evangelical Christians and churches should consider the needs of the Chinese and Arab peoples living in Dominican Republic. Churches targeted directly for these peoples could be effective in evangelism and church growth.
6. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to aid local believers in training leaders for the churches. The possibilities of small group and house church methods being effective certainly exist.
7. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop methods for training local believers to share the Good News with the many Roman Catholics in this country.
8. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop methods to share the Good News with those who follow various spiritist approaches such as *Spiritism (Vudou and Santeria)*. Various occult practices bring harm to the people.
9. Evangelical Christians and churches should take particular note of the over 200,000 persons who are non-religious in the Dominican Republic. Of special concern is the fact that this group is increasing at + 4.0 % annually (compared to + 1.6 % for Christians).

<http://www.operationworld.org/country/domr/owtext.html>

Pictures

http://dominicanrepublic.com//index.php?option=com_expose&Itemid=119
http://www.traveljournals.net/pictures/dominican_republic/
http://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotos-g147288-w2-Dominican_Republic.html
http://www.trekearth.com/gallery/Central_America/Dominican_Republic/
http://www.pbase.com/world/dominican_republic
<http://www.dominicanimpressions.com/>

Links

<http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108523.htm>
<http://www.flags-flags-flags.org.uk/dominican-republic-flag.htm>
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/countries.php>
<http://www.peoplegroups.org/MapSearch.aspx?country=Dominican+Republic>
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/dr.html>
<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107475.html>
<http://dominicanrepublic.com/index.php>
http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761563569_7/Dominican_Republic.html#s31
<http://www.escapeartist.com/dr2/dr2b.html>
<http://www.amiama.com/biografia.htm>
<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/dominican-republic-country-profile.html>
<http://www.country-studies.com>
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http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/intercultural_issues-en.asp?lvl=8&ISO=do&SubjectID=7
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http://encarta.msn.com/sidebar_631524670/customs_of_dominican_republic.html
http://www.bu.edu/bhlp/pages/country_index/caribbean/dominican_republic/dominican_republic_overview.htm