**Venezuela**

General Information

* Capital city is Caracas
* Population is 27,223,228
* Growth rate of 1.5%
* Birth Rate 20.3/1000
* Infant mortality rate 21.0/1000
* Life expectancy 73.7
* Official language is Spanish
* Top export is Crude oil
* Another export is Liquefied petroleum gases
* Currency is the Bolivar
* Most of the population is made up of whites, Africans, and Indians.
* 90% are Roman Catholic

Geography Information

* A third larger than Texas or twice the size of California
* Bordered by Columbia, Guyana, Bolivia
* Occupies most of the northern coast of South America on the Caribbean sea
* Hot, Tropical with more moderate highlands

Brief History

* Indigenous group is the Anu
* Won independence in 1821
* Colonized When Columbus explored Venezuela on his third voyage in 1498

Government/ Current political situation

* Federal republic
* President is Hugo Chavez
* Hugo Chavez is running for reelection currently and unlike everyone else his competition this year is not dropping out

Culture information

* Food
  + Three main meals. A large breakfast, A large dinner around noontime and a light supper in the evening
  + On of there foods is called *Arepas* which are usually thick disks made of precooked cornmeal, either fried or baked
  + Another is *pabellón criollo,* which consists of black beans, fried sweet plantains, white rice, and semi-shredded meat ( *carne mechada* ), all topped with a fried egg.
* Top Five popular sports in Venezuela
  + Baseball
  + Basketball
  + Soccer
  + Golf
  + Motorsport
* Most Important Holidays In Venezuela
  + Carnival
  + Epiphany
  + Saint Joseph’s Day
  + Holy Week
  + Labor Day
  + Independence Day
  + Army’s Day
  + Navy’s Day
  + Day of Indigenous Resistance
  + Flag Day
  + All Saints Day
* Tourist Attractions Includes
  + Scuba Diving
  + The Highest Falls In The World
  + Unique Lighting Show