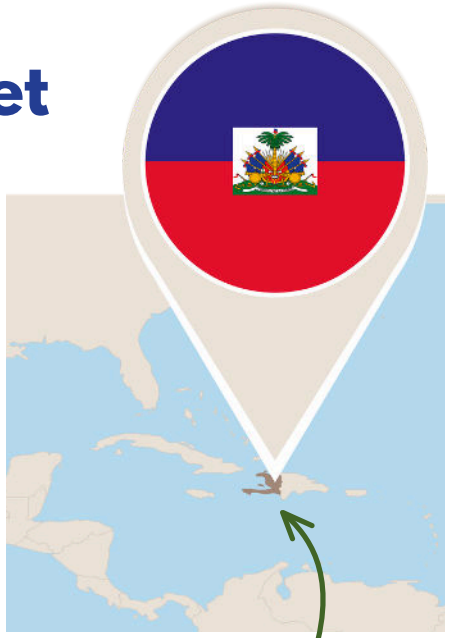
BEYOND BORDERS

Bonjou Ayiti: A Haiti Fact sheet

A nation built on the world's first successful revolution against slavery, whose people continue to shape their own destiny through collective power, creative expression, and shared values.



PEOPLE & CULTURE



Population:
11.7 million people
(2024 est.)

Languages: Haitian Creole (Kreyòl) — spoken by 100% of the population, reflecting identity and unity) and French.

Cultural Expression & Material Heritage: Globally renowned art, literature, music (Kompa, Rara), and culinary traditions.

Faith & Tradition: A spiritual landscape woven with Christianity and Vodou—an indigenous Afro-Haitian spiritual tradition centered on community, ancestral honor, and resistance.





GEOGRAPHY & LAND

- **Location:** In the Caribbean Sea, sharing the western third of the island with the Dominican Republic.
- **Proximity:** Approximately 700 miles (1,100 km) southeast of Miami, Florida.
- **Capital:** Port-au-Prince.
- **Terrain:** Striking mountain ranges, fertile valleys, and coastal plains. Highest peak: Pic la Selle (8,793 ft / 2,680 m).
- **Climate:** Tropical, marked by wet (May-Nov) and dry (Dec-Apr) seasons.

HISTORY & LIBERATION

- **1804 >** Following the 1791 Revolution, enslaved Africans defeated Napoleon's army to establish the world's first independent Black republic and abolish slavery.
- **1804–1957 >** Navigated foreign economic blockades, imperial debt, the **U.S. Occupation (1915–1934)**, and repeated interventions aimed at suppressing national sovereignty.
- **1957–1986 >** Decades of Duvalier dictatorship, followed by grassroots struggles for national sovereignty, human rights, and true self-determination.
- **1986–Present >** Dictatorship gave way to the 1987 Constitution and Jean-Bertrand Aristide's landmark 1990 election. Decades since have seen popular struggles endure political coups, UN missions, and major disasters such as the 2010 earthquake.

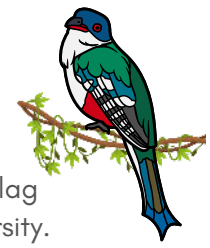


NATIONAL IDENTITY & SYMBOLS

- **The Flag:** Created by Catherine Flon and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the coat of arms displays a Royal Palm, Phrygian Cap, and the motto "Unity makes strength".



- ***Kanson Wouj:*** considered by many as Haiti's national bird, named for its red belly, its plumage mirrors the national flag and celebrates native biodiversity.



- **The Hibiscus:** a bright crimson bloom woven into Haitian identity, art, traditional medicine, and revolutionary heritage.



AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

BEYOND BORDERS

Grand'Anse: Cacao, coffee, breadfruit, yam, and swine.
Sud: Vetiver (essential oil for global perfumery), sugarcane, corn, and swine.
Nippes: Mangoes, coffee, corn, and yams.

Sud-Est: Coffee, artisanal crafts, citrus, and temperate vegetables.

Ouest: Sugarcane, plantains. (La Gonâve)**:** Goats, sorghum, cassava, coastal fishing, and salt.

Centre: Peanuts, cattle, goats, sorghum, corn, sugarcane, and freshwater fish.

Artibonite: Rice, goats , salt, and onions.
Nord-Ouest: Mangoes, peanuts, goats, plantains, coffee, and coastal fish.

Nord: Cacao, coffee, cattle, sugarcane, and citrus.
Nord-Est: Cacao, honey, and peanuts.





DID YOU KNOW?

The Citadel Laferrière is the largest fortress in the Americas and a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Traditional clothing —such as *Karabela* reflect Haiti's agricultural roots, historical pride, and enduring artistic traditions.



ECONOMIC CONTEXT

- Immense colonial wealth generated by enslaved labor was exported to Europe, forcing independent Haiti to build a sovereign nation from scratch without foundational capital.
- France's 150-million-franc demand created a century of debt that redirected crucial public revenue abroad instead of funding local healthcare, education, and infrastructure.
- The 1915–1934 U.S. Occupation restructured national banking, land laws, and mineral rights to favor foreign investors, paralyzing maritime traffic and heavily centralizing wealth and power in Port-au-Prince.
- Lowered tariffs in the late 20th century allowed subsidized foreign imports (like "Miami rice") to flood domestic markets, undercutting farmers and weakening local food production.
- Today, amidst widespread poverty and limited formal employment, exports focus on garment assembly while foreign firms eye mineral reserves, while everyday commerce relies on self-reliant local market networks.

SOLIDARITY & MUTUAL AID IN ACTION

Facing climate vulnerability, political instability, and urban gang violence, Haitian communities navigate immense daily pressures. High insecurity has driven massive internal displacement, while local families face extreme financial strain as they open their homes to receive displaced neighbors and recently deported relatives.

In response, Haitians living abroad work to send over $3.8 billion annually in remittances to loved ones—contributing more than a third of the nation's GDP. At home, this global solidarity is matched by traditional communal labor practices, shared protection, and mutual aid, with local families and communities joining forces to share limited resources, and care for one another.

NOURISHING COMMUNITY



Rooted in West African and Taíno heritage, Haitian cuisine centers on community and freedom. ***Soup Joumou*** (pumpkin soup) is enjoyed every New Year's Day to honor 1804 independence, while everyday meals anchor around staples like rice and beans, bold seasoning, and hearty stews.