

Latin America: Introduction

Latin America—cultural region; all major languages spoken in the region are derived from Latin (Spanish, Portuguese, French)

--Language can unite or divide people

--Most of South and Central America: Spanish

--Brazil: Portuguese

--Caribbean Islands: mixture of Spanish, French, Dutch, English, native languages

Weather Phenomena:

--Hurricanes—violent windstorms that originate in Atlantic Ocean; affect Caribbean Islands

Physical and Ecological Processes:

--Volcanoes and Earthquakes occur along the Pacific Coast (Ring of Fire)

Human/Environmental Interaction

--Deforestation of the Amazon River Basin (Brazil)

--Pollution: Mexico City is one of the worst polluted areas in the world

Impact of Physical Elements

--Rio Grande: boundary between Texas and Mexico

Countries

Mexico

Capital City: Mexico City

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$9,100

Other: site of Aztec and Maya Empires

Central America

Belize

Capital City: Belmopan

Primary Language(s): English, Spanish

GDP per capita: \$3,200

Other: tourism, drug trade

Guatemala

Capital City: Guatemala City

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$3,700

Other: Mayan city Tikal

El Salvador

Capital City: San Salvador

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$4,000

Other: soccer war with Honduras

Honduras

Capital City: Tegucigalpa

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$2,700

Other: rising gang problem

Nicaragua

Capital City: Managua

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$2,700

Other: legacy of military dictatorship

Costa Rica

Capital City: San Jose

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$6,700

Other: high standard of living, low violence

Panama

Capital City: Panama City

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$6,000

Other: Panama Canal

South America

Colombia

Capital City: Bogota

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$6,200

Other: major drug/crime problem

Venezuela

Capital City: Caracas

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$6,200

Other: OPEC member

Guyana

Capital City: Georgetown

Primary Language(s): English

GDP per capita: \$4,800

Other: former British colony

Suriname

Capital City: Paramaribo

Primary Language(s): Dutch

GDP per capita: \$3,400

Other: former Dutch colony

French Guiana

Capital City: Cayenne

Primary Language(s): French

GDP per capita: \$8,300

Other: former French colony

Ecuador

Capital City: Quito

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$2,900

Other: political instability

Peru

Capital City: Lima

Primary Language(s): Spanish, Quechua

GDP per capita: \$4,550

Other: Incan city Machu Picchu

Bolivia

Capital City: La Paz

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$2,600

Other: instability, drug problem

Brazil

Capital City: Brasilia

Primary Language(s): Portuguese

GDP per capita: \$6,500

Other: overurbanization, deforestation

Paraguay

Capital City: Asuncion

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$4,750

Other: political instability

Argentina

Capital City: Buenos Aires

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$12,900

Other: pampas grasslands

Uruguay

Capital City: Montevideo

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$9,300

Other: area of political freedom

Chile

Capital City: Santiago

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$10,100

Other: legacy of military dictatorships

Caribbean Islands

Cuba

Capital City: Havana

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$1,700

Other: communist; Fidel Castro; Guantanamo Bay

Haiti

Capital City: Port-au-Prince

Primary Language(s): French

GDP per capita: \$1,800

Other: poorest country in W Hemisphere; slave revolt

Jamaica

Capital City: Kingston

Primary Language(s): English

GDP per capita: \$3,700

Other: weak economy and violence has hurt tourism

Dominican Republic

Capital City: Santo Domingo

Primary Language(s): Spanish

GDP per capita: \$5,700

Other: Hispaniola; baseball players

Puerto Rico (U.S. territory)

Capital City: San Juan

Primary Language(s): Spanish, English

GDP per capita: \$17,700

Other: US won it from Spain; voted against statehood