



Central America and Caribbean :: Curacao (part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Introduction :: Curacao

Background:

Originally settled by Arawak Indians, Curacao was seized by the Dutch in 1634 along with the neighboring island of Bonaire. Once the center of the Caribbean slave trade, Curacao was hard hit economically by the abolition of slavery in 1863. Its prosperity (and that of neighboring Aruba) was restored in the early 20th century with the construction of the Isla Refineria to service the newly discovered Venezuelan oil fields. In 1954, Curacao and several other Dutch Caribbean possessions were reorganized as the Netherlands Antilles, part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In referenda in 2005 and 2009, the citizens of Curacao voted to become a self-governing country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The change in status became effective in October 2010 with the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles.

Geography :: Curacao

Location:

Caribbean, an island in the Caribbean Sea - 55 km off the coast of Venezuela

Geographic coordinates:

12 10 N, 69 00 W

Map references:

Central America and the Caribbean

Area:

total: 444 sq km

country comparison to the world: 200

land: 444 sq km

water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative:

more than twice the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

364 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive fishing zone: 12 nm

Climate:

tropical marine climate, ameliorated by northeast trade winds, results in mild temperatures; semiarid with average rainfall of 600 mm/year

Terrain:

generally low, hilly terrain

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Caribbean Sea 0 m

highest point: Mt. Christoffel, 372m

Natural resources:

calcium phosphates, aloes, sorghum, peanuts, vegetables, tropical fruit

Land use:

arable land: 10%

permanent crops: 0%

other: 90% (2011)

Irrigated land:

NA

Total renewable water resources:

NA

Natural hazards:

Curacao is south of the Caribbean hurricane belt and is rarely threatened

Environment - current issues:

NA

Geography - note:

Curacao is a part of the Windward Islands (southern) group

People and Society :: Curacao

Nationality:

noun: Curacaoan

adjective: Curacaoan; Dutch

Ethnic groups:

Afro-Caribbean majority; Dutch, French, Latin American, East Asian, South Asian, Jewish minorities

Languages:

Papiamentu (a Spanish-Portuguese-Dutch-English dialect) 81.2%, Dutch (official) 8%, Spanish 4%, English 2.9%, other 3.9% (2001 census)

Religions:

Roman Catholic 72.8%, Pentecostal 6.6%, Protestant 3.2%, Adventist 3%, Jehovah's Witness 2%, Evangelical 1.9%, other 3.8%, none 6%, unspecified 0.6% (2011 est.)

Population:

146,836 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 189

Age structure:

0-14 years: 20.6% (male 15,342/female 14,645)

15-24 years: 15.4% (male 11,599/female 10,790)

25-54 years: 38.5% (male 26,869/female 29,348)

55-64 years: 12.6% (male 8,059/female 10,259)

65 years and over: 13% (male 7,833/female 11,090) (2013 est.)

Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 50.1 %

youth dependency ratio: 29 %

elderly dependency ratio: 21 %

potential support ratio: 4.8 (2013)

Median age:

total: 36.2 years

male: 32.7 years

female: 39.9 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

NA

Birth rate:

NA

Death rate:

8 deaths/1,000 population (2009)

country comparison to the world: 101

Net migration rate:

1.27 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2008)

country comparison to the world: 56

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.15 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.05 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1.08 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 0.92 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.79 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.71 male(s)/female

total population: 0.92 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total: NA

males: 72.4 years

females: 80.1 years (2009)

Total fertility rate:

2.09 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 111

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

NA

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

NA

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

NA

Government:: Curacao

Country name:

Dutch long form: Land Curacao

Dutch short form: Curacao

Papiamentu long form: Pais Korsou

Papiamentu short form: Korsou

former: Netherlands Antilles; Curacao and Dependencies

Dependency status:

constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands; full autonomy in internal affairs granted in 2010; Dutch Government responsible for defense and foreign affairs

Government type:

parliamentary

Capital:

name: Willemstad

geographic coordinates: 12 06 N, 68 55 W

time difference: UTC-4 (1 hour ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

none (part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Independence:

none (part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands)

National holiday:

Queen's Day (Birthday of Queen-Mother JULIANA and accession to the throne of her oldest daughter BEATRIX), 30 April (1909 and 1980)

Constitution:

previous 1947, 1955; latest adopted 5 September 2010, entered into force 10 October 2010 (regulates governance of Curacao but is subordinate to the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands); note - in October 2010, with the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles, Curacao became a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands (2013)

Legal system:

based on Dutch civil law system with some English common law influence

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: King WILLEM-ALEXANDER of the Netherlands (since 30 April 2013); represented by Governor Lucille A. GEORGE-WOUT (since 4 November 2013)

head of government: Prime Minister Ivar ASJES (since 7 June 2013)

cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the governor

(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#).)

elections: the monarch is hereditary; governor general appointed by the monarch; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party is usually elected prime minister by the parliament; next election is scheduled for 2016

Legislative branch:

unicameral Estates of Curacao (21 seats; members elected by popular vote for four year terms)

elections: last held 19 October 2012 (next to be held in 2016)

election results: percent of vote by party - PS 22.6%, MFK 21.2%, PAR 19.7%, PAIS 17.7%, MAN 9.5%, PNP 5.9%, other 3.4%; seats by party - PS 5, MFK 5, PAR 4, PAIS 4, MAN 2, PNP 1

Judicial branch:

highest court(s):

Political parties and leaders:

Frente Obrero Liberashon (Workers' Liberation Front) or FOL [Anthony GODETT]

Movimentu Futuro Korsou or MFK [Gerrit SCHOTTE]

Movishon Antia Nobo or MAN [Eunice EISDEN]

Partido Antia Restruktura or PAR [Emily DE JONGH-ELHAGE]

Partido pa Adelanto I Inovashon Soshal or PAIS [Alex ROSARIA]

Partido Nashonal di Pueblo or PNP [Humphrey DAVELAAR]

Pueblo Soberano or PS [Helmin WIELS]

Diplomatic representation in the US:

none (represented by the Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Consul General James R. Moore (since June 2013); note - also accredited to Aruba and Sint Martin

consulate(s) general: J. B. Gorsiraweg #1, Willemstad, Curacao

mailing address: P. O. Box 158, Willemstad, Curacao

telephone: [599] (9) 4613066

FAX: [599] (9) 4616489

Flag description:

on a blue field a horizontal yellow band somewhat below the center divides the flag into proportions of 5:1:2; two five-pointed white stars - the smaller above and to the left of the larger - appear in the canton; the blue of the upper and lower sections symbolizes the sky and sea respectively; yellow represents the sun; the stars symbolize Curacao and its uninhabited smaller sister island of Klein Curacao; the five star points signify the five continents from which Curacao's people derive

National anthem:

name: Himno di Korsou (Anthem of Curacao)

lyrics/music: Guillermo ROSARIO, Mae HENRIQUEZ, Enrique MULLER, Betty DORAN/Frater Candidus NOWENS, Errol "El Toro" COLINA

note: adapted 1978; the lyrics, originally written in 1899, were rewritten in 1978 to make them less colonial in nature

Economy :: Curacao

Economy - overview:

Tourism, petroleum refining, offshore finance, and trade and transport are the mainstays of this small economy, which is closely tied to the outside world. Although GDP grew slightly during the past decade, the island enjoys a high per capita income and a well-developed infrastructure compared with other countries in the region. Curacao has an excellent natural harbor that can accommodate large oil tankers. Venezuelan state oil company PdVSA, under a contract in effect until 2019, leases the single refinery on the island from the government, employing some 1,500 people; most of the oil for the refinery is imported from Venezuela; most of the refined products are exported to the US. Almost all consumer and capital goods are imported, with the US, Brazil, Italy, and Mexico being the major suppliers. The government is attempting to diversify its industry and trade and has signed an Association Agreement with the EU to expand business there. Most of Curacao's GDP results from services. Curacao has limited natural resources, poor soils, and inadequate water supplies, and budgetary problems complicate reform of the health and education systems. In 2013 the government implemented changes to the sales tax and reformed the public pension and health care systems, including increasing the sales tax from 5% to as high as 9% on some products, raising the age for public pension withdrawals to 65, and requiring citizens to pay higher premiums.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$2.838 billion (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 184

\$2.606 billion (2007 est.)

\$2.452 billion (2006 est.)

note: data are in 2008 US dollars

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$5.08 billion (2008 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

0% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 196

3.5% (2008)

2.2% (2007)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$15,000 (2004 est.)

country comparison to the world: 91

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 0.7%

industry: 15.5%

services: 83.8% (2012 est.)

Agriculture - products:

aloe, sorghum, peanuts, vegetables, tropical fruit

Industries:

tourism, petroleum refining, petroleum transshipment facilities, light manufacturing

Industrial production growth rate:

NA%

Labor force:

62,040 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 186

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 1.2%

industry: 16.9%

services: 81.8% (2008 est.)

Unemployment rate:

9.8% (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 105

10.3% (2008 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

10.8% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 207

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-0.9% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 61

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

2.3% (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 84

1.3% (2010 est.)

Exports:

\$1.5 billion (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 148

\$1.4 billion (2010 est.)

Exports - commodities:

petroleum products

Imports:

\$2.5 billion (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 155

\$2.648 billion (2009 est.)

Imports - commodities:

crude petroleum, food, manufactures

Exchange rates:

Netherlands Antillean guilders (ANG) per US dollar -

1.79 (2011)

1.79 (2011 est.)

1.79 (2010 est.)

1.79 (2009)

1.79 (2008)

note: the Netherland Antillean guilder was replaced by the newly created Caribbean guilder in 2013

Energy :: Curacao

Electricity - production:

1.167 billion kWh (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 143

Electricity - consumption:

968 million kWh (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 151

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 114

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 123

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2011 es)

country comparison to the world: 114

Refined petroleum products - production:

531.1 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 112

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

72,000 bbl/day (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 90

Refined petroleum products - exports:

211,100 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 30

Refined petroleum products - imports:

291,700 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 23

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 111

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 127

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 75

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 170

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2011 es)

country comparison to the world: 121

Communications :: Curacao

Telephone system:

international: country code - 599

Broadcast media:

government-run Telecuracao operates a TV station and a radio station; several privately-owned radio stations

Internet country code:

.cw

Internet hosts:

NA

Internet users:

NA

Transportation :: Curacao

Roadways:

total: 550 km

country comparison to the world: 192

Ports and terminals:

major seaport(s): Willemstad

oil/gas terminal(s): Bullen Baai (Curacao Terminal)

bulk cargo port(s): Fuik Bay (phosphate rock)

Military :: Curacao

Military branches:

no regular military forces; the Dutch Government controls foreign and defense policy (2012)

Military service age and obligation:

no conscription (2010)

Military - note:

defense is the responsibility of the Kingdom of the Netherlands