

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

**CAPITAL:** San Juan

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Self-Governing Commonwealth in association with the U.S.A.

**AREA:** 9,014 Sq Km (3,515 Sq Mi)

**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION:** 3,856,500

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**LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY:** Puerto Rico is smallest and most easterly island of the Greater Antilles. It is bound by the Atlantic Ocean to the north and the Caribbean Sea to the south. Around 80% of the island's land area is mountainous and hilly. The central mountain chain or Cordillera Central that runs east to west, divides the country into distinct north and south regions. The country's highest point, Cerro de Punta, lies in the Cordillera Central and the only low lying areas are the narrow coastal plains and some inland valleys. There are over 1,000 small streams including 45 rivers that flow to the sea, although all are shallow and non-navigable. Major Cities (pop. est.); San Juan 426,800, Ponce 159,200, Caguas 92,400, Mayaguez 83,000, Arecibo 49,500 (1990). Land Use; forested 20%, pastures 38%, agricultural-cultivated 14%, other 28% (1992).

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**CLIMATE:** Puerto Rico has a tropical climate at lower elevations and a subtropical at higher elevations. Both temperatures and rainfall are affected by the NE trade winds. Humidity is relatively high in summer and most rainfall occurs between May and December. Average annual precipitation varies from 1,550 mm (161 inches) in the north to 910 mm (36 inches) in the south. Average temperature ranges in San Juan are from 27 degrees Celsius (81 degrees Fahrenheit) in July to 24 degrees Celsius (75 degrees Fahrenheit) in January.

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**PEOPLE:** The principal ethnic majority are Whites who account for 80% of the population and are predominantly of Spanish or mixed Spanish descent. The remainder are Blacks of African descent.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 392 persons per sq km (1,015 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 71.2% urban, 28.8% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 48.4% male, 51.6% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 71.5 years male, 78.4 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 27% under 15, 25% 15 to 29, 21% 30 to 44, 14% 45 to 59, 9% 60 to 74, 4% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 18.3 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 6.9 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 11.4 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 13.0 per 1,000 live births (1991).

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**RELIGIONS:** Mostly Christians with 85% of the population Roman Catholic while 10% are Protestant.

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**LANGUAGES:** The official languages are Spanish, which is spoken by the majority of the population, and English which is also widely understood.

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**EDUCATION:** Aged 25 or over and having attained: incomplete primary 47.8%, incomplete secondary 12.7%, secondary 21.1%, higher 18.4% (1987). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 1,948,151 or 89.1% (1980).

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**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1991:** In 1947 the US Congress amended the Jones Act to permit Puerto Ricans to elect their own Governor and in 1949 Luis Munoz Marin was inaugurated as the first elected Governor of Puerto Rico. In 1952 Puerto Rico was granted a new constitution and became a Commonwealth in association with the USA. In 1967 a plebiscite resulted in the majority of Puerto Ricans favoring a continuation of the Commonwealth versus a statehood or independence. In 1968 Luis A. Ferre was elected Governor and was replaced by Rafael Hernandez Colon after elections in 1972. In 1976 Carlos Romero Barcelo was elected Governor and was reelected in 1980. In 1984 Hernandez was re-elected as Governor and again in 1988. In Mar. 1991 Gov. Hernandez authorized a law which made Spanish the island's only official language, whereas, Spanish and English had been the official languages for 89 years.

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**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the US Dollar (USD) divided into 100 Cents.

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**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$25,317,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$15,257,500,000 (1994). Imports; USD \$16,654,200,000 (1994). Exports; USD \$21,752,600,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$1,736,600,000 (1994). Balance of Trade; USD \$5,098,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 1,203,000 or 32.9% of total population (1994). Unemployed; 16.0% (1994).

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**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partner is the USA.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Copper Ore, Cotton, Fish, Fruit, Hydroelectricity, Limestone, Livestock, Marble, Phosphates, Quartz, Sugar Cane, Tobacco, Vegetables.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Agriculture, Bottling, Clay and Glass Products, Electrical and Electronic Products, Fishing, Metal Products, Mining, Rum and Beer Distilling, Textiles, Tourism.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Chemicals, Computers, Electrical Machinery, Food Products.

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**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; route length 96 km (60 mi) (1988), passenger-km N/A., cargo ton-km N/A. Roads; length 9,351 km (5,810 mi) (1986). Vehicles; cars 1,300,906 (1989), trucks and buses 191,483 (1989). Merchant Marine; N/A. Air Transport; N/A.

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 3 with a total circulation of 506,900 (1993). Radio; receivers 2,480,000 (1994). Television; receivers 830,000 (1994). Telephones; units 1,365,520 (1992).

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**MILITARY:** 3,518 (1992) total active US duty personnel.