






A TIMELINE OF DOMINICAN HISTORY

Ruth Glasser

PERIOD	3000 BC	AD 700s	1400s
POLITICAL		Several discrete Taíno tribes exist on the island, ruled by caciques, or chiefs.	<p>Taíno tribes attempt to confederate, are interrupted by the arrival of the Spanish.</p> <p>1492 Columbus arrives on Quisqueya, names it Hispaniola (Española in Spanish), and builds the fort La Navidad.</p> <p>The Spanish Crown quells rebellions among the early Spanish settlers by granting them land and indigenous people as slaves.</p>
SOCIAL/ECONOMIC		Taínos on the island have evolved into a well-defined society built around fishing, farming, and hunting.	<p>Spanish decide to mine for gold.</p>  
DEMOGRAPHIC	Indigenous groups migrate from South America to the Caribbean, including to the island later known as Quisqueya.		<p>As many as 500,000 Taínos live on the island.</p> <p>Early Spanish settlers arrive, primarily from Andalusia.</p>  <p><small>BARON CASTILLO LIBRARY OF CONGRESS</small></p> <p><i>This image of Alcázar de Colon contrasts the old and new—the 1490s fortress built by Columbus and the sculpted trees of Ciudad Trujillo, as Santo Domingo was renamed during the dictator's regime.</i></p>

SOURCES: Silvio Torres-Saillant and Ramona Hernández, *The Dominican Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998); Jan Knippers Black, *The Dominican Republic: Politics and Development in an Unsovereign State* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986); Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (New Rochelle, NY: Hispaniola Books, 1995); H. Hoetink, *The Dominican People 1850–1900: Notes for a Historical Sociology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); BBC News, “Timeline: Dominican Republic,” http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/country_profiles/1216926.stm

PERIOD

1500s

POLITICAL

1500

First governor of the island is appointed by the Spanish monarchs.

Spanish make Hispaniola the first Spanish colony in the New World, naming it Santo Domingo. The island becomes a base for Spanish colonizing expeditions to other parts of what is now Latin America.



1544 colonial map of Santo Domingo.

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1519-33

Remaining Taínos attack Spanish settlements, leading to a series of wars between the settlers and the indigenous people. Peace is finally made with cacique Enriquillo in 1533.



Etching illustrates colonization showing Spain as angelic figure.

1600s

1605

Colonial authorities burn areas where merchants are involved in smuggling. The burned-out western areas become hideouts for European pirates and other marauders.

SOCIAL/ECONOMIC



1516

Sugarcane cultivation and processing begin to supplant mining. Many Africans are brought in to provide slave labor.

Ranching and timber become important sources of income along with sugar, spawning a class of wealthy merchants.

1577

Smuggling of French and English goods becomes the basis of the economy of the northern and western parts of the island.



DEMOGRAPHIC

Taínos are decimated by European diseases, hunger, and forced labor. Some flee to the mountains.

1502

First slaves arrive in Santo Domingo, to be used mostly as domestic servants. Brought from Spain and Portugal, the first slaves are Hispanicized blacks known as ladinos. After the first slaves arrive, many more are forcibly imported directly from Africa.

1508

Only 60,000 Taínos remain.

1519

Only 30,000 Taínos remain.

1568

There are an estimated 20,000 slaves in Santo Domingo.



1606

Approximately 9,648 slaves remain in Santo Domingo. With decline of sugar production, some slaves are sold elsewhere, while others escape into the interior of the island or die of epidemic diseases.

1700s

1655

English attack on Hispaniola is defeated.

1667

French-led group attacks and pillages the city of Santiago.

1690–95

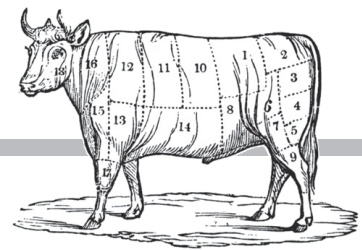
French and Spanish on the island stage attacks and counterattacks.

1697

Peace of Ryswick treaty signed, making peace between the French colony of Saint Domingue, which occupies the western third of the island, and the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo, which occupies the eastern two-thirds.

1777

Treaty of Aranjuez defines a border between the Spanish and French colonies, Santo Domingo and Saint Domingue.



1670s

Western areas of the island fill with French-owned plantations using African slave labor, and growing mainly tobacco.

1681

Spaniards on the island start selling meat and livestock to the French in exchange for European goods, and producing tobacco for French use.



Early 1700s

Sugar mills begin to proliferate in Saint Domingue. Cattle ranching declines and French increasingly depend on cattle from Santo Domingo.



Few new slaves are imported into the impoverished colony. Racial mixing gives rise to a demographic majority of mulattoes, which persists to this day.

1680s

Canary Islanders are brought to the island to combat the numerical superiority of the French.

1720s–60s

Santo Domingo continues to import settlers from the Canary Islands.

PERIOD

1700s *continued*

1800s

POLITICAL

1791

Slave revolts in Saint Domingue set in motion the Haitian Revolution.

1795

Spain cedes entire island to France through the Treaty of Basel.

1801–09

First Haiti, then France rules the entire island.

1801

Toussaint Louverture abolishes slavery.

1804

Republic of Haiti is declared an independent nation.

1821

In a period of “ephemeral independence,” the Dominican Republic becomes an independent nation for five weeks.

1822

Haiti takes over the Spanish part of Hispaniola.



SOCIAL/ECONOMIC

1809 onward

Tobacco exports become the economic base of the central Cibao region, while mahogany is the main export in the south and cattle raising continues in the east.

Peasant farmers in all areas cultivate subsistence food and livestock.



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DEMOGRAPHIC

1783

Spanish colony now has more than 80,000 people due to influx of Canary Islanders and immigrants from other parts of the Caribbean.

1789

Spanish colony now has about 180,000 inhabitants.

1809

War reduces population of the Spanish colony to less than 90,000.

1820s–40s

New populations come to Santo Domingo, including freed African Americans from North America and Sephardic Jews from Curaçao.



Allegorical illustration depicts the Spanish colonial relationship during the reign of Isabel II.

1838

Juan Pablo Duarte, Francisco del Rosario Sánchez, and Ramón Matías Mella form the secret society La Trinitaria in Santo Domingo to work for independence from Haiti.

1844

The Dominican Republic proclaims its independence from Haiti and becomes a sovereign nation.

1844–61

“Counterpoint” of caudillos: Pedro Santana and Buenaventura Báez alternately rule the Dominican Republic.

1861

Dominican Republic is annexed to Spain.

1863–65

War of Restoration fought to overthrow Spanish rule.

1865

Dominican Republic becomes independent once again.



Buenaventura Báez

1860s–1900

Dominican Republic is ruled by a number of caudillos, some of whom seek to resolve the country’s chronic debt through annexation or sale of land to the U.S.



Soldiers on Parade, Santo Domingo, ca. 1904.

1870s

A modern sugar industry begins, along with a rise in coffee and cacao production and decline of tobacco and mahogany. Power begins to shift toward Santo Domingo and away from Santiago, the main urban center of the Cibao.

1880s

Cibao begins to cultivate cacao and coffee.

Late 1800s

Refugees come from Cuba, fleeing that island’s independence struggle, and build an oligarchy based on the trading of tobacco from the central Cibao region.

Other Caribbean refugees settle in the Santo Domingo region to cultivate sugar. Santo Domingo emerges as the nation’s commercial, financial, and political center.



Tobacco plant.

1844

Dominican population reaches 126,000; Haitian population is 800,000.

1860s

Spanish immigrants arrive as a result of the Spanish occupation.

1870s

Large numbers of Italians and Syrian and Lebanese Christians begin to arrive, along with some Cubans and Puerto Ricans.

1870s–1900

Haitians, Curaçaoans, and immigrants from the English-speaking Caribbean arrive to work on sugar plantations.



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Juan Pablo Duarte

PERIOD

1900–1950s

POLITICAL

Early 1900s

European governments send warships to Santo Domingo to force repayment of debts.

1905

United States takes over Dominican customs collection to establish U.S. dominance and forestall European influence in the Caribbean region. U.S. is involved in managing a series of unstable governments in the Dominican Republic.



U.S. Marines patrol the Ozama River, Santo Domingo, 1919.

1916–24

U.S. military occupies the Dominican Republic.

1924

Financial crisis and popular rebellion help end the U.S. occupation, but the U.S. maintains strong financial and political control.

1929

New treaty between Haiti and the Dominican Republic resolves border questions.

SOCIAL/ECONOMIC



Cacao.

1910

Sugar and cacao now account for four-fifths of country's foreign earnings.

1919

Most Dominican commerce, including sugar industry, now tied to U.S. interests. Post-WW I rise in sugar prices allows for importation of goods urbanization, and health, education, and construction projects linking the country through new highways.

1920s

Flourishing agriculture, commerce, and industry permit more public works projects.

1929

Worldwide economic depression leads to collapse of export-based economy.



LAND-ANNE HERBIM

DEMOGRAPHIC

Thousands of Puerto Ricans and other immigrants continue to arrive in the Dominican Republic, especially the eastern region around San Pedro de Macorís and La Romana.



Residents of San Pedro de Macorís, 1940.

1920s

Increasing numbers of Haitians come to the Dominican Republic to cut sugarcane.



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1960s

1930

General Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina seizes power in a rigged election. He is a graduate of the National Guard, a police force created by the U.S. Marines during the occupation.

1937

Trujillo orchestrates massacre of approximately 15,000 Haitians in the Dominican Republic. The slaughter eliminates Haitians from border areas and allows Trujillo to establish new frontier military zones.

1952

Agreements are formalized between the Haitian and Dominican governments to bring Haitian cane cutters across the border for six-month periods.

1960

Three of the Mirabal sisters, prominent opponents of the Trujillo regime, are murdered by the dictator's henchmen.

1961

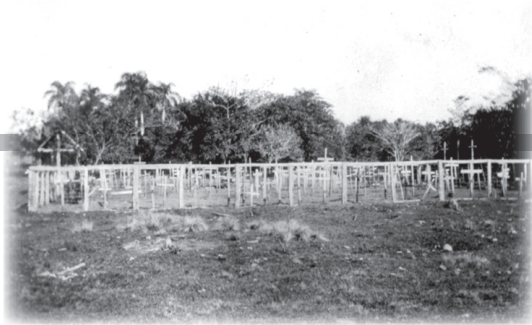
Trujillo is assassinated.



Maria Teresa, Patria, and Minerva Mirabal.



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Country cemetery, Dominican Republic ca. 1904.

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1930s–1960s

Three-quarters or more of the population is poor and lacks access to land, adequate food, and clean water.

1960s

U.S. companies begin to invest heavily in local agriculture, mining, and industry.



DAN BRANDENBURG

1930s–60s

Trujillo takes over industrial, agricultural, and mining operations, and fosters industrialization.

New elites form through involvement in government, military, light industry, banking, and tourism.



COLLECTION OF SONIA ROSARIO

1930s

Landless peasants start to move into Dominican cities.

1960s

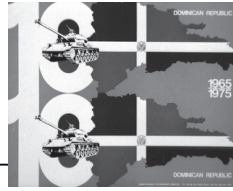
Massive exodus begins, as people move from rural areas to cities within the Dominican Republic and from the island to cities abroad, especially New York and San Juan.



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COLLECTION OF SONIA ROSARIO



PERIOD

1960s *continued*

1970s

POLITICAL

1963

Liberal Juan Bosch is democratically elected, governs for seven months, then is overthrown by conservatives and goes into exile.

1965

Armed insurrection erupts against the illegal regime, as liberal wing of the armed forces demands return to legality and the constitution. Civil war ensues between “constitutionalists” and conservatives. U.S. Marines invade Dominican Republic in support of conservatives and defeat the constitutionalists.

1966–78

Joaquín Balaguer, Trujillo’s right-hand man, becomes president, supported by the U.S.

1978

Antonio Guzmán of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) wins the presidency in the first democratic election in modern Dominican history. The country enjoys freedom of speech and political stability.

SOCIAL/ECONOMIC



Juan Bosch.

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1966

Dominican Republic becomes dependent on foreign—especially U.S.—aid, leading to inflation and public austerity programs.



1970s

Sugar falls from 48 percent to 35 percent of exports, while coffee, cacao, and tobacco exports increase. Mining and tourism also become important industries.



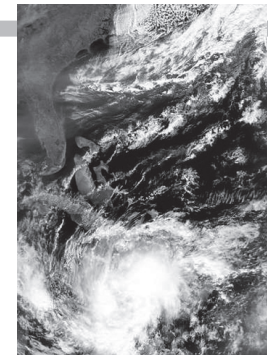
MATTHEW DULLA

DEMOGRAPHIC



U.S. troops advance on a sniper in Santo Domingo in June, 1965.

DOUGLAS JONES PHOTOGRAPHER LOOK MOUNTAIN LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



REGINA CATELLI RANGE OF HURRICANE OVER THE CARIBBEAN. PROVIDED BY THE JAMES SPENCER MANSFORD SOCIETY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

1979

Two hurricanes leave more than 200,000 homeless and cause \$1 billion of damage.

1980s

1980s

Urban poor riot over government-imposed price increases; industrial and agricultural unions strike to protest deteriorating work conditions and inadequate pay. Most protests are violently crushed by the government.



1986–96

Balaguer is president again.



1980s

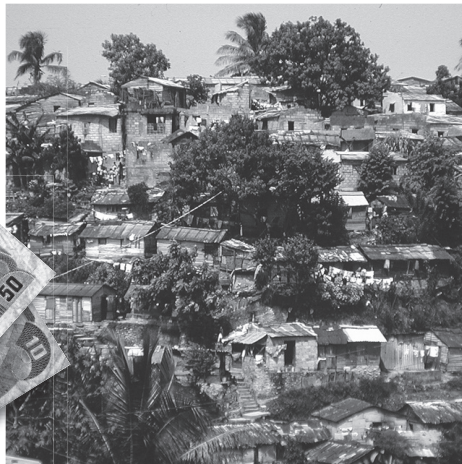
Several industrial free trade zones are constructed, where foreign companies employ local workers in low-wage assembly jobs.

1985

Unemployment exceeds 30 percent.

1989

Almost six in ten Dominican households live below the poverty line.



Shanties in Santa Domingo.

1985

800,000 Dominicans are estimated to have migrated to the United States and Puerto Rico. Remittances from overseas migrants increase purchasing power for families in the Dominican Republic.

1990s



1991

Guillermo Linares elected as first Dominican representative to the New York City Council.

1994

Dominican constitution amended to allow for dual citizenship.

1996

Adriano Espaillat wins seat in New York State Assembly. Leonel Fernández of the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) elected president of the Dominican Republic. Thousands of Dominican citizens living in New York and other U.S. cities fly home to Santo Domingo to vote.



Mid-1990s

Economic boom, with average growth rates of approximately 6 percent per year. Growth is concentrated in the tourism, telecommunications, and assembly sectors. However, poverty and inequality remain high.



Columbus statue and cathedral, 1893.

PERIOD

1990s *cont'd*

2000s

POLITICAL

1997

New law gives Dominican citizens—even those who also hold U.S. citizenship—the right to vote in Dominican presidential elections from polling places abroad. (However, polling places in New York and other locations are not set up until 2004.)

2000

Dominican Revolutionary Party returns to power with Hipólito Mejía as president.



JOCELYN SANTANA

2004

Leonel Fernández defeats incumbent Hipólito Mejía to again win the presidency. Dominican residents of the United States, Spain and several other countries are for the first time able to vote in a Dominican election from polling places in their adopted countries.



SOCIAL/ECONOMIC



LINDA ANNE REBHUN

Young boys work as shoe shiners in the popular Santo Domingo shopping district, El Conde.

2002–03

U.S. recession undercuts demand for the Dominican Republic's key products. Together with government borrowing, this slows growth rates and accelerates inflation.

2003

The country's second largest private bank, Baninter, collapses amid rumors of corruption and malfeasance. The resultant government bailout intensifies the economic crisis and leads to the scandal.



JENNIFER KRONMAN



DEMOGRAPHIC

1998

Hurricane Georges causes widespread devastation.



BEAU MCGUIRE

2000

U.S. census reports more than three-quarters of a million Dominicans living in the United States and Puerto Rico; other researchers estimate the true number at over 1 million.

September 2001

The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center result in deaths and many job losses among Dominicans in New York City. Local Dominican organizations assist the victims.

November 2001

American Airlines flight 587 bound for Santo Domingo crashes in Queens, NY, killing all 255 people on board. Three days of national mourning are declared in the Dominican Republic.