

# VENEZUELA



## Country Dialling Code (Tel/Fax): ++58

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**Capital:** Caracas **Time:** GMT - 4

**Background:** Venezuela was one of the three countries that emerged from the collapse of Gran Colombia in 1830 (the others being Colombia and Ecuador). For most of the first half of the 20th century, Venezuela was ruled by generally benevolent military strongmen, who promoted the oil industry and allowed for some social reforms. Democratically elected governments have held sway since 1959. Current concerns include: drug-related conflicts along the Colombian border, increasing internal drug consumption, overdependence on the petroleum industry with its price fluctuations, and irresponsible mining operations which are endangering the rain forest and indigenous peoples.

**Location:** Northern South America, bordering the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, between Colombia and Guyana

**Map References:** South America, Central America and the Caribbean

**Area:** total: 912,050 sq km, land: 882,050 sq km, water: 30,000 sq km

**Climate:** tropical; hot, humid; more moderate in highlands

**Terrain:** Andes Mountains and Maracaibo Lowlands in northwest; central plains (llanos); Guiana Highlands in southeast

**Natural Resources:** petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, gold, bauxite, other minerals, hydropower, diamonds

**Population:** 23,542,649 (July 2000 est.)

**Nationality:** noun: Venezuelan(s), adjective: Venezuelan

**Ethnic Groups:** Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Arab, German, African, indigenous people

**Religions:** nominally Roman Catholic 96%, Protestant 2%

**Languages:** Spanish (official), numerous indigenous dialects

**Economy:** Venezuelan officials estimate the economy contracted 7.2% in 1999. A steep downturn in international oil prices during the first half of the year fueled the recession, and spurred the CHAVEZ administration to abide by OPEC-led production cuts in an effort to raise world oil prices. The petroleum sector dominates the economy, accounting for roughly a third of GDP, around 80% of export earnings, and more than half of government operating revenues. Higher oil prices during the second half 1999 took pressure off the budget and currency; the bolivar is widely believed to be overvalued by as much as 50%. Despite higher oil prices, the economy remains in the doldrums, possibly due to investor uncertainty over President CHAVEZ's reform agenda. Implementing legislation for the new constitution will not be passed until the second half of 2000, after a new legislature is elected. With the president's economic cabinet attempting to reconcile a wide range of views, the country's economic reform program has largely stalled. The government is seeking international assistance to finance reconstruction after massive flooding and landslides in December 1999 caused an estimated \$15 billion to \$20 billion in damage.

**Industries:** petroleum, iron ore mining, construction materials, food processing, textiles, steel, aluminum, motor vehicle assembly

**Currency:** 1 bolivar (Bs) = 100 centimos

**Railways:** total: 584 km (248 km privately owned), standard gauge: 584 km 1.435-m gauge

**Highways:** total: 96,155 km, paved: 32,308 km, unpaved: 63,847 km (1997 est.)

**Waterways:** 7,100 km; Rio Orinoco and Lago de Maracaibo accept oceangoing vessels

**Ports and Harbors:** Amuay, Bajo Grande, El Tablazo, La Guaira, La Salina, Maracaibo, Matanzas, Palua, Puerto Cabello, Puerto la Cruz, Puerto Ordaz, Puerto Sucre, Punta Cardon

**Airports:** 366 (1999 est.) Airports - with paved runways: total: 122, over 3,047 m: 5, 2,438 to 3,047 m: 10, 1,524 to 2,437 m: 32, 914 to 1,523 m: 58, under 914 m: 17 (1999 est.) Airports - with unpaved runways: total: 244, 1,524 to 2,437 m: 10, 914 to 1,523 m: 93, under 914 m: 141 (1999 est.)

**Heliports:** 1 (1999 est.)

**Visa:** required by all except the following nationals of: EU countries (except Greece who do require visas), Australia, Canada, USA and Japan.

**Duty Free:** 200 cigarettes and 25 cigars; 2 litres of alcoholic beverages; 4 small bottles of perfume; new goods up to a value of US\$1000.

**Health:** a yellow fever vaccination is not required as a condition entry to Venezuela but vaccination is advised for all travellers. Malaria risk exists throughout the year in rural areas. Mains water is normally chlorinated, and whilst relatively safe may cause mild abdominal upsets.

## HOTELS•MOTELS•INNS

### CARACAS

**ALTAMIRA SUITES,** Caracas, Teléfonos:+58 (212) 2093474 | 2093475 | 2093104, fax:+58 (212) 2848604, [reserva@alsuites.com](mailto:reserva@alsuites.com), <http://www.alsuites.com>

**CONTINENTAL HOTEL,** Av. San Juan Bosco, Altamira. Caracas. Venezuela. Teléfonos: Master (58 212) 261.06.44, Fax: (58 212) 261.01.31, e-mail: [info@hotel-continental.org.ve](mailto:info@hotel-continental.org.ve), <http://www.hotel-continental.org.ve>

**EMBASSY SUITES CARACAS,** Av. Francisco de Miranda en Av. El Campo Alegre, Caracas, Venezuela .Tel: 58-212-700-4200, Fax: 58-212-267-3761, <http://embassysuites1.hilton.com>

**EUROBUILDING HOTEL & SUITES,** Calle La Guairita, Hotel Eurobuilding Mezzanina. Chuao.Caracas- Venezuela. Central Caracas: (58)(212) 902.11.11 Fax: (58)(212) 902.21.89, [reservas@eurobuilding.com.ve](mailto:reservas@eurobuilding.com.ve), <http://www.eurobuilding.com.ve>

**GRAN MELIA CARACAS,** Ave. Casanova, URB. Bellomonte Caracas VENEZUELA 1050, Tel: (58) 212 7628111 ,Fax: (58) 212 7623737 Hotel Paseo de Las Mercedes

**HOTEL AVILA,** George Washington Ave, Caracas, Venezuela, PO BOX 629, Phones:58 212 555 3000/3438, Fax: 58 212 552 3021, <http://www.hotelavila.com>

**HOTEL IN A RESIDENTIAL AREA,** Avenida Principal de Las Mercedes, Caracas, Aragua, tel:(0058212)9931244/9936644, Fax: +58 212 993 0341, <http://www.hotelpaseolasmercedes.com>[gran.melia.caracas@solmelia.com](mailto:gran.melia.caracas@solmelia.com), <http://www.solmelia.com>

**HOTEL LA FLORESTA,** Avenida Ávila. Sur Altamira.Caracas - Venezuela, Tel: +58 212 263 1955, Apartado postal número 68209, <http://www.hotellafloresta.com>

**JW MARRIOTT HOTEL,** Av. Venezuela con Calle Mohedano, El Rosal , Caracas, 1060 Venezuela, Phone: 58 212 957 2222, Fax: 58 212 957 1111, <http://www.marriott.com>

**TAMANACO INTERCONTINENTAL,** TAMANACO CARACAS ,FINAL AV. PRINCIPAL DE LAS MERCEDES, CARACAS, 1060-A , VENEZUELA, Front Desk: +58-212-9097111, Fax: +58-212-9097116, <http://www.ichotelsgroup.com>



## AIRLINES/HELICOPTERS/AIRPORTS

**LINEAS AEROPOSTAL VENEZOLANA,** Region: South America, Address: Polar Oeste 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor Plaza Caracas, Tel: 0058 2 708 62 11, Fax: 0058 2 782 63 23, Web site: [www.aeropostal.com](http://www.aeropostal.com), Main Base: Caracas

**MAIQUETIA - SIMON BOLIVAR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT,** Edo Vargas, Maiquetia, 1161, Tel: +58 (0)212 303 1329, +58 (0)212 303 1330, Fax: +58 (0)212 355 1224, Email: [info@aerpuerto-maiquetia.com.ve](mailto:info@aerpuerto-maiquetia.com.ve), Website: [www.aerpuerto-maiquetia.com.ve](http://www.aerpuerto-maiquetia.com.ve)

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