

# Puerto Rico

**Puerto Rico** (English /ˌpɔːrtə ˈriːkoʊ/ or /ˌpwɛərtə ˈriːkoʊ/<sup>[a]</sup> Spanish: [ˈpweɾto ˈɾiko]), officially the **Commonwealth of Puerto Rico** (Spanish: *Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico*, pronounced: [esˈtaðo ˈliβɾe asoˈsjaðo ðe ˈpweɾto ˈɾiko], literally the *Free Associated State of Puerto Rico*), is a [United States territory](#) located in the northeastern [Caribbean](#), east of the [Dominican Republic](#), and west of both the [United States Virgin Islands](#) and the [British Virgin Islands](#).

Puerto Rico is an [archipelago](#) that includes the main island of Puerto Rico and a number of smaller islands, the largest of which are [Vieques](#), [Culebra](#), and [Mona](#). The main island of Puerto Rico is, by land area, the smallest of the [Greater Antilles](#). With around 3.5 million people, it ranks third in population among that group of four islands, which include [Cuba](#), [Hispaniola](#) and [Jamaica](#). The capital and largest city is [San Juan](#). Due to its location, Puerto Rico has a tropical climate with warm weather year-round and does not observe [daylight saving time](#). Its official languages are Spanish, which is prevalent, and English.

Originally populated for centuries by the [aboriginal](#) people known as [Taíno](#), the island was claimed by [Christopher Columbus](#) for Spain during his second voyage to the Americas on November 19, 1493. Like Cuba, Puerto Rico remained a Spanish colony until 1898. Despite the [Laws of Burgos](#) of 1512 and other decrees for the protection of Indians, some Taíno peoples were forced into [slavery](#) in the early years of colonization. The population suffered extremely high fatalities from epidemics of European [infectious](#) diseases.<sup>[b][c][d][e][f]</sup>

During the four centuries of Spanish rule, the island's culture and physical landscape were transformed. European knowledge, customs and traditions were introduced, namely [Christianity](#), the [Spanish language](#), and advances of European civilization such as [agriculture](#), [construction](#) in stone, and new technologies such as the [clock](#) and the [printing press](#). Numerous public buildings, forts, churches and public infrastructure built during Spanish rule are still standing to this day, including ports, roads and lighthouses. Regular convoys of the [West Indies Fleet](#) linked the island to Spain, sailing from [Cádiz](#) to the [Spanish West Indies](#) every year. Since the beginning of Puerto Rico's colonization by Spain in 1508, its inhabitants were Spanish citizens, and it remained Spanish territory despite invasion attempts by the French, Dutch, and the British.

On November 25, 1897, Spain granted limited self-government to the island by [royal decree](#) in the Autonomic Charter, including a [bicameral legislature](#).<sup>[15]</sup> But in 1898, Spain ceded its control of the island to United States following the [Spanish–American War](#), under the terms of the [Treaty of Paris](#).

Today, people born in Puerto Rico are [natural-born U.S. citizens](#).<sup>[16]</sup> The territory operates under [a local constitution](#), and Puerto Ricans elect [their own governor](#). However, Puerto Rico lacks voting members in [Congress](#) and is subject to the plenary jurisdiction of the United States under the [Puerto Rico Federal Relations Act of 1950](#). As of 2014, Puerto Rico remains a U.S. territory, although a [2012 referendum](#) showed a majority (54% of the electorate) in favor of a change in status, with full statehood the preferred option.

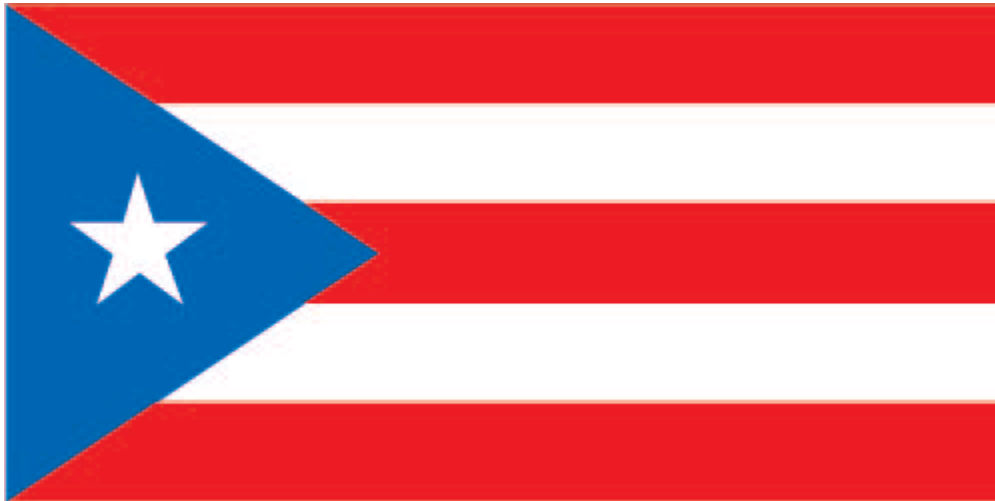
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## Etymology

[Puerto Ricans](#) often call the island *Borinquen* - a derivation of *Borikén*, its [indigenous Taíno](#) name, which means "Land of the Valiant Lord".<sup>[17][18][19]</sup> The terms *boricua* and *borincano* derive from *Borikén* and *Borinquen* respectively, and are commonly used to identify someone of Puerto Rican heritage. The island is also popularly known in Spanish as *la isla del encanto*, meaning "the island of enchantment".<sup>[20]</sup>

Columbus named the island *San Juan Bautista*, in honor of the [Catholic Saint John the Baptist](#), while the capital city was named *Ciudad de Puerto Rico* (English: *Rich Port City*). Eventually traders and other maritime visitors came to refer to the entire island as Puerto Rico, while San Juan became the name used for the main trading/shipping port and the capital city.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Flag



Five equal horizontal bands of red (top and bottom) alternating with white; a blue isosceles triangle based on the hoist side bears a large, white, five-pointed star in the center; the white star symbolizes Puerto Rico; the three sides of the triangle signify the executive, legislative and judicial parts of the government; blue stands for the sky and the coastal waters; red symbolizes the blood shed by warriors, while white represents liberty, victory, and peace

**Note:** design initially influenced by the US flag, but similar to the Cuban flag, with the colors of the bands and triangle reversed

### Sources:

[http://www.ask.com/wiki/Puerto\\_Rico?o=2801&qsrc=999&ad=doubleDown&an=apn&ap=ask.com](http://www.ask.com/wiki/Puerto_Rico?o=2801&qsrc=999&ad=doubleDown&an=apn&ap=ask.com)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/flagsoftheworld.html>