

Puerto rico



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Puerto Rico In spite of being a prosperous island, Puerto Rico has had much political instability along the years. It has been favored with a good economy during the last decades, but political debates about its commonwealth status in relation to the United States have kept the controversy alive. In this essay we will take a look at the history, the economy, the geography, and the culture of Puerto Rico in order to have a better understanding of its people.

Puerto Rico is the third largest island of the Greater Antilles, consisting of the main island of Puerto Rico and various smaller islands. San Juan (Wikipedia, 2006) is the capital city, and it is located on the north coast. Along the years, manufacturing has replaced agriculture as the main industry. A significant component of the economy is tourism. Spanish and English are the official languages. A small minority use English as a primary language, but the large majority living in metropolitan areas are bilingual. Most of Puerto Ricans are Roman Catholics. As of 2002, the literacy rate of the population was 94. 1%. According to the Wikipedia (2006), " Puerto Rican athletes have won 6 medals (1 silver, 5 bronze) in Olympic competition, the first one in 1948 by boxer Juan Evangelista Venegas. Although boxing, basketball, and baseball are popular, traditionally baseball has been the most popular sport."

During the Pre-Colombian Era (Wikipedia, 2006), Puerto Rico was first inhabited by the Arcaico, the Igneri, the Carib and the Tano Indians. As time passed, the Tanos became the dominant inhabitants of the island around 1000 AD. They maintained this dominant presence until the arrival of the Spaniards in 1493. The Tanos were Arawak Indians, and they called the island " Borikn". Some people say that it was discovered by Martn Alonzo Pinzn in 1492 when he separated from Christopher Columbus in order to explore on his own. Columbus came to the island on November 19, 1493,

during his second voyage to the Antilles. Juan Ponce de Len became its first governor. African slaves were introduced to replace the decreasing population of Tano Indians. Along the years, Puerto Rico remained as a possession of Spain. In 1868 there was a relevant uprising against Spain, being Luis Muoz Rivera responsible for procuring to Puerto Rico some degree of autonomy.

After the Spanish-American War (Wikipedia, 2006) that began on July 25, 1898, Puerto Rico became a colony of the United States. The U. S. Congress granted the U. S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans so they could fight in World War I. Later on, Pedro Albizu Campos led a nationalist movement for overthrowing the Americans. Muoz Rivera opted for Puerto Rico to become a commonwealth as an eventual step for getting the independence. He became the first democratically elected governor in 1948. Since then there has been a great deal of migration from Puerto Rico to the United States looking for better economic opportunities. In 1952, Puerto Rico adopted its own constitution. Up to the present, Puerto Rico has held various plebiscites to define its political status. This debate has been going on during the last 50 years. U. S. President George W. Bush " suggested that a Federally sanctioned plebiscite provided by Congress should take place in Puerto Rico during 2006 to decide the island's political future." (Wikipedia, 2006).

In conclusion, Puerto Ricans have the privilege of enjoying a prosperous economy in an island with many opportunities. Its cultural life is also an element in its richness. The political debate about its present commonwealth status will have another chance to be dealt with in a future referendum.

Puerto Ricans will decide this issue in a democratic way, and in the long run their decision will be the best solution to this political controversy.

## References

Wikipedia. " Puerto Rico". (21 February, 2006). Retrieved 22 February, 2006, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto\\_Rico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto_Rico)