

A brief history of Haiti and the simple reasons for its poverty.



Bahamas

ba

Cap-Haïtien

Gonaïves

Haiti

Saint-Marc

Carrefour

Delmas

Port-au-Prince

Les Cayes

Puerto Plata

Santiago

Moca

San Francisco de Macoris

La Vega

Bonao

San Juan de la Maguana

Santo Domingo

Azua

San Pedro de Macoris

La Romana

Barahona

Bani

Higüey

1492:

- Christopher Columbus lands on what is now known as Hispaniola (the island shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and claims it for the Spanish.
- Before this “discovery” the island had been inhabited by indigenous Taíno (who referred to the land as Ayiti) since the BC era and had a rich history long before Spanish conquest.

1496-1697:

- In 1496, the first Spanish settlement on Hispaniola (and the first European settlement in the western hemisphere) is established in what is now present-day Dominican Republic.
- Five years later, after all but decimating the population of Taíno people, Spain brings 1,600 kidnapped and enslaved African people to the island to work in gold mines and on sugar plantations.

1697

- Spain cedes its territory in western Hispaniola to France. Under French rule, Saint-Domingue is the country’s richest colony in the 18th Century, producing half of all the sugar and coffee bought and sold in Europe and accounting for one-third of the Atlantic slave trade.

1789-1804:

- **1789** - The French Revolution makes people on both sides of the Atlantic speak up for the rights of Black and indigenous people of color in the colony.
- **1791** - France violently represses this activism which leads to the Haitian Revolution from 1791 to 1803.
- **1796** - Toussaint L'Ouverture a former slave, emerged as leader of the former slaves in the north. Toussaint and his army drove out the Spaniards and the British and ended slavery.
- **1802** - The Haitians were overpowered by the unexpected surprise attack by Napoleon. Toussaint L'Ouverture was captured and imprisoned in France where he died.



- **1803** - Because of the vital economic importance of the colony, Napoleon sent in ships and 34,000 troops to end the Black Republic.
- **1803** - Jean Jacques Dessalines, another former slave with an army of self-emancipated slaves, defeated and ousted Napoleon's army winning the 10 year war that was described as the bloodiest in modern history.
- The Revolution destroyed much of Haiti's agricultural resources and infrastructure.
- **1803** - Haiti gained its freedom, independence was declared on January 1st, 1804, and became the only nation in world history that was born out of a successful slave revolt. On January 1st, 1804, San-Domingue ceased to exist and modern Haiti was born.

THE HAITIAN REVOLUTIO



- **1804** - Haiti became the second free country in the Western World after the U.S.A.
- The U.S.A was still a slave nation as was England. While France had freed Haitian slaves during the revolution, France and other European nations still had slaves in Africa and Asia.
- The Western World feared that Haitian slaves gaining their independence would inspire other slave revolts.
- The French refused to recognize Haiti's independence. America, Britain and every other nation state in the western world were in solidarity with France. Haiti was isolated from partnership in world affairs.
- **1838** - Having endured 25 long years of international isolation and threats supported by the U.S.A. and Europe, Haiti agreed to take out a loan from a designated French bank in to pay those reparations to France, to compensate the former slave owners and their heirs for loss of “property.”

- **1825 – 1914** -French King Charles X agrees to formally recognize Haiti as an independent nation, provided that the country pay 150 million francs in reparations to France (approximately \$21 billion in today's currency, according to Forbes). Haiti takes out high-interest loans from American, German, and French banks to cover the cost (approximately 80% of the country's annual national budget and 10 times its annual revenue).
- **1838** - France reduces this debt from 150 million to 90 million francs (ca. \$12.6 billion). The final payment on the double-debt of Haiti's reparations to France and its loans from the United States is made in **1947**, nearly 150 years after independence.
- The French government therefore bled the Haitian nation and rendered it a failed state. It was a merciless exploitation that was designed and guaranteed to collapse the Haitian economy and society. Over a century after the global slave trade was recognized and terminated as the evil it was, Haitians were still paying their ancestors' masters for their freedom. There are about 10 million people in Haiti who share the collective debt of about 900 million dollars.



Haiti's Natural Disasters

- **1564,1701,1751,1770** and **1783** - Earthquakes
- **1842** - earthquake killed 10,000 people.
- **1954** - Hurricane Hazel (shortly after Haiti celebrated 150 years of independence) killed 1,000 and destroyed coffee and cocoa crops at the beginning of harvest season.
- **2004** – (May 23-25) Floods damage parts of the country early in 2004
- **2004** – (September 5) Hurricane Ivan
- **2004** – (September 25) Hurricane Jeanneat least 3,000 and leaves another 250,000 Haitians homeless. Flooding destroys key rice and fruit harvests.
- **2005** – (July) Hurricane Dennis kills 56 and causes an additional \$50 million in damages



The January 12, 2010 earthquake in Haiti had catastrophic consequences as it struck the most populated area in the country. In the weeks following the disaster, sporadic violence, looting, and gang-related gunfire broke out in downtown Port-au-Prince.

- **2008** – (Mid August – September) Tropical Storms Fay and Hanna and Hurricanes Gustav and Ike killed 800, displaced 15,000 and destroyed 25% of the country's economy.
- **2010** – (January) 7.0-magnitude earthquake hits Port-au-Prince. The scale is unprecedented in an urban setting. While international donors pledge \$5.3 billion to help Haiti rebuild, **many fail to meet their commitments.**
- **2010** - Cholera outbreak — the first of its kind on record and regarded by many to be the worst in recent history. Lasts for years. 820,000 cases 820,000 10,000 killed. (2018)



- **2016** - Hurricane Matthew - destroys crops just before harvest time, exacerbates the cholera epidemic, leaves 200,000 families without a home, further damages the country's infrastructure.
- **2019** - COVID-19 lockdowns adds to income loss and food insecurity.
- **2021** – Earthquake, 7.2-magnitude kills 2,200, injures 12,00 and damages or destroys 130,000 homes.



- Haitian civilians, especially the most vulnerable, suffer these consequences the most, especially amid a lack of humanitarian funding. **In 2019, the United Nations reports only meeting 30% of its funding goals for Haiti as many donors fall behind on financial commitments.**