

## HISTORY

Dominican Republic is truly a country rich in culture, history and natural beauty. With an incredible heritage thanks to the mix of cultures, exciting historical events and an interesting visible outcome of these encounters, DR is a unique destination to dive into the history that comprises it.

The island was initially inhabited by Taíno Indians, one of the continent's most peaceful cultures, who lived by hunting, fishing and agriculture. In this period, the Tainos referred to the island by different names: Ayiti (high ground), Babeque (warehouse or large house), Bohío (living place), and comprised the territories known as the countries of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The island was divided into five large chiefdoms: Jaragua, Marién, Maguá, Maguana and Higüey.

Legends of this period include Caonabo, chief ruler of the region of Maguana – Azua, Bahoruco, La Vega, Santiago, among other cities – and main fighter against the Spanish occupation and Cayacoa, ruler of the southeast region – La Altagracia, La Romana, Santo Domingo and other cities in the vicinities. After Caonabo, Cayacoa became one of the most powerful caciques of the island and possessed a legion of Indians under his command; along with Bohechío, the oldest of the Taino chiefs and brother of Princess Anacanona who, after his death, ascended to queen and *cacica* of the southwest region, known at the time as Jaragua.

On December 5, 1492, Christopher Columbus arrived at the island and named it *La Española*, an act which determined the meeting of two cultures and initiated the exchange of customs and beliefs that are still preserved.

Toward the end of the 17th century, the French colonized the western part of the island. In 1795, Spain ceded the eastern part of the island to France to leave the island completely under French power. Then the colony returned to Spanish hands after a group of men led by José Núñez de Cáceres proclaimed Ephemeral Independence in December 1821. However, in January 1822, taking advantage of the military and economic weakness of the eastern part of the island, Haitians invaded the Dominican territory and imposed their rule for 22 years. On February 27, 1844, independence was proclaimed in a struggle led by Juan Pablo Duarte and thus was born the new Dominican Republic.

Despite the cry of independence on March 18, 1861, the republic was annexed back to Spain until after the Restoration War that was led by Gregorio Luperón in 1863. The political turmoil resulted in economic chaos. The arrangement of multiple loans from the US and Europe prompted the Dominican government to hand over the administration and control of its customs to the United States in 1907 and in 1916 came the first American invasion of the country.

After the invasion, several unstable governments followed until the iron dictatorship of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo in 1930, who remained in power for 30 years until being executed in 1961. Following this, a provisional government organized the first free elections that led the eminent politician and writer Juan Bosch to the presidency in 1962. Bosch was overthrown seven months later, resulting in a civil war led by Francisco Alberto Caamaño, and then culminated in the second US invasion in 1965.

In 1966 Joaquín Balaguer was elected and began 12 years of government, which were characterized by political repression. In 1978, the country returned to the polls and Balaguer lost overwhelmingly, which opened the door for the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) with Antonio Guzmán as president, and the Dominican democracy began his path to power. In 1982, the PRD returned to power under the leadership of Salvador Jorge Blanco. But Joaquín Balaguer (PRSC - Social Christian Reformist Party) was renominated and won the elections in 1986, and remained in power until 1996. Dr. Leonel Fernández of the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) won the elections in 1996. Then in 2000, the PRD candidate Hipólito Mejía became president. In 2004, the people returned to the polls to give victory to the PLD and Leonel Fernández, who once again began a new presidential term in 2008.

In 2012, the PLD wins again, but this time with Danilo Medina; and on May 15, 2016, the PLD wins the elections again with Danilo Medina as president (2016-2020).

### **SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL EVENTS**

- 1000 A.C. – Development of Taino culture in the Antilles.
- 1492 – Arrival of Christopher Columbus to the island.
- 1494 – Construction of La Isabela in Puerto Plata, the first European settlement in the New World.
- 1498 – Bartholomew Columbus, brother of Christopher Columbus, founds the city of Santo Domingo, on the eastern bank of the Ozama River.
- 1502 – Nicolás de Ovando, moved and governed the city of Santo Domingo to the western bank of the Ozama River – its current location.
- 1511 – Fray Antonio de Montesinos denounces the mistreatment of the indigenous population in his Advent sermon.
- 1697 – Spain ceded the western part of the island to France by the Treaty of Ryswick and is baptized as Saint Domingue (now Haiti).
- 1777 – The Treaty of Aranjuez, which defined the borders between the Spanish and French colonies, is signed.
- 1795 – Spain gives the whole territory of the island of La Española to France by the Treaty of Basel. In exchange, France agrees to return to Spain all the territory occupied in the Iberian Peninsula.
- 1809 – Spanish sovereignty is restored thanks to the Reconquista led by Creole Juan Sánchez Ramírez. The era known as “España Boba” begins.
- 1821 – José Núñez de Cáceres leads the Ephemeral Independence.

- 1822 – Haitian troops, under the leadership of Jean Pierre Boyer, march east and annexed La Española side to Haiti.
- 1838 – Secret Society ‘La Trinitaria’, led by Juan Pablo Duarte is founded. ‘La Trinitaria,’ along with the Dominican people, decided to overthrow Boyer and create an independent nation.
- 1844 – ‘La Trinitaria’ accomplished its mission and declares independence from Haiti.
- 1844 – The Constitutional Assembly is organized to draft the first constitution of the Republic, promulgated on November 6. On November 14, Pedro Santana is elected as the first constitutional president.
- 1861-1865 – Santana annexes the country to Spain. In 1863, the Restoration War of Independence begins with Gregorio Luperón as its leader.
- 1883-1899 – Government and dictatorship of Ulises Heureaux. The sugar industry is developed, which also causes the creation of small manufacturing companies.
- 1916-1924 – Financial weakening leads to a military intervention in the country by the United States in order to recover the international debt.
- 1930 – Rafael Leónidas Trujillo assumes the presidency and makes a dictatorial government.
- 1960 – Trujillo dictatorship murders the Mirabal sisters: Patria, Minerva and Maria Teresa for their opposition to the regime.
- 1961 – Execution of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo.
- 1962 – Juan Bosch wins the first free elections in the country and takes office on February 27, 1963.
- 1963 – Juan Bosch is overthrown as president.
- 1965 – The Civil Revolution to restore the government begins; the second invasion by US troops.
- 1966-1978 – Joaquín Balaguer governs as president of the Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC).
- 1978-1986 – The Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) takes power, chaired by Antonio Guzmán and Salvador Jorge Blanco.
- 1986-1996 – Joaquín Balaguer governs as president (Social Christian Reformist Party - PRSC).
- 1996-2000 – Leonel Fernández governs as president of the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD).
- 2000-2004 – Hipólito Mejía governs as president (Dominican Revolutionary Party – PRD).

- 2004-2012 –Leonel Fernández governs as president (Dominican Liberation Party – PLD).
- 2012-2020 –Danilo Medina governs as president (Dominican Liberation Party – PLD).

### **MAIN PATRIOTIC SYMBOLS**

**THE FLAG**, designed by Juan Pablo Duarte and made by Concepción Bona and María Trinidad Sánchez during the time of independence, is the symbol that identifies the Dominican Republic as a free and sovereign country. It was raised for the first time on February 27, 1844.

The Dominican constitution states that the national flag should include ultramarine and vermilion blue colors in four alternate quarters so that blue is at the top of the mast, separated by a white cross with a width that is equivalent to half the height of each room, and in the center of the cross is the coat of arms of the republic. The colors of the national flag have a particular meaning: red represents the blood shed by the liberators; blue expresses the ideals of progress and freedom, and protection of God to the Dominican Nation; and the cross is the symbol of the struggle of the liberators as their legacy of a free country.

**THE SHIELD**, created during the era of the proclamation of national independence, is the only one in the world with the Holy Bible in the center. From the beginning, the shield has undergone many changes since in Dominican history can find more than 14 different shields. In 1913, Casimiro Nemesio de Moya designed the current official shield.

Article 32 of the Dominican Constitution states that the shield have the same colors as the national flag and arranged in the same way, with the Gospel of St. John in the open center in 8:32 where it says "the truth will set you free" with a cross on top, both with of a team of two lances and four national flags without shield, a trophy placed on each side; it must have a laurel branch on the left and one to the right palm; and be crowned by an ultramarine blue ribbon bearing the motto: "God, Fatherland and Freedom". At the base there is another tape in vermilion with the words "Dominican Republic."

**THE ANTHEM** is an important symbol in Dominican history. It was written by Emilio Prud'Homme, with music by José Reyes. It was first sung in 1897 and officially since 1934. This is the translation of the Dominican Republic national anthem:

*I.*

*Brave men of Quisqueya Let us sing with strong feeling, and let us show the world Our invincible, glorious banner.*

*Hail! The people who, strong and intrepid, launched into war to their death, under a warlike menace of death, you broke your chains of slavery.*

*No country deserves to be free If it is an indolent and servile slave; If the call does not grow within, Tempered by a virile heroism.*

*But the brave and indomitable Quisqueya Will always hold its head up high; For if it were a thousand times enslaved It would a thousand times regain freedom.*

II.

*If it were to be exposed to ruse and deceit to the contempt of a true imposer, The fields of Carreras, Beller are where traces of glory are found.*

*Where on the summit of the heroic bastion, The word of the free became flesh,  
Where the genius of Sánchez and Duarte Taught to be free or to die.*

*And if an unattended leader the splendor, of these glorious events could ignore, of the war that was seen in Capotillo, Wave the flag of fire.*

*And the fire that lets the proud lion Of Castilla become stupefied, Removes him from the glorious beaches Where the crossed banner waves.*

III.

*Compatriots, let us proudly Show our face, from today prouder than ever; That Quisqueya may be destroyed but a slave again, never.*

*It is a sanctuary of love that every heart In the fatherland feels alive; And it is its invincible shield, the right; And it is its motto: be free or die.*

*Freedom that still arises serenely Victory in her triumphal chariot. And the clarion of war still echoes Proclaiming its immortal glory.*

*Freedom! That the echoes should shake Whilst filled with noble anxiety Our fields of glory repeat Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!*

*- Emilio Prud'Homme*

**FOUNDING FATHERS**, Juan Pablo Duarte, Francisco del Rosario Sanchez and Ramón Matías Mella were considered to be the first to organize the fight for independence in 1844.

**THE CONSTITUTION** was officially recognized on November 6, 1844 but has undergone several changes over the years.