



Footprint Background

South American Handbook

BEN BOX



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Pre-independence history

Earliest settlement

It used to be generally accepted that the earliest settlers in South America were related to people who had crossed the Bering Straits from Asia and drifted through the Americas from about 13,000 years ago (the Clovis model). In recent years, however, a growing number of discoveries from earlier dates in North and South America have raised doubts about this. In South America these include a coastal site in southern Chile called Monte Verde from 14,800 years ago, stone tools from the Serra da Capivara in northeastern Brazil from some 22,000 years ago and paleontological evidence from Uruguay from earlier still. If nothing else, these finds question the theory of a single migration into South America from the north. Other early evidence of human presence has been found at various sites: in the Central Andes (with a radiocarbon date between 12000 and 9000 BC), northern Venezuela (11000 BC), southeast Brazil, south-central Chile and Argentine Patagonia (from at least 10000 BC). After the Pleistocene Ice Age, 8000-7000 BC, rising sea levels and climatic changes introduced new conditions as many mammal species became extinct and coastlands were drowned. A wide range of crops was brought into cultivation and camelids and guinea pigs were domesticated. It seems that people lived nomadically in small groups, mainly hunting and gathering but also cultivating some plants seasonally, until villages with effective agriculture began to appear, it was originally thought, between 2500-1500 BC. The earliest ceramic-making in the western hemisphere was thought to have come from what is now Colombia and Ecuador, around 4000 BC, but fragments of painted pottery were found near Santarém, Brazil, in 1991 with dates of 6000-5000 BC.

On the coast of central Peru settled life developed rapidly. The abundant wealth of marine life produced by the Humboldt Current, especially north of today's Lima, boosted population growth and a shift from nomadic to settled farming in this area. The introduction of sophisticated irrigation systems encouraged higher productivity and population growth, leading to organized group labour which could be devoted to building and making textiles from cotton. Evidence from Caral, Aspero and other sites in the Huaura, Supe, Pativilca and Fortaleza river valleys prove that this process happened much earlier than previously imagined. Caral dates from 2627 BC (other sites have older dates) and is a monumental construction. It flourished for some 500 years and appears to have been a city with primarily a religious, rather than a warlike purpose. The archaeological finds point to Caral and neighbouring sites predating the development of pottery in this region, but artefacts show cultural links with other communities, even as

far as the Amazon. Almost contemporaneous with Caral was Ventarrón, a city in Lambayeque, northern Peru, with a temple containing the oldest murals discovered in the Americas. In the central Andes near Huánuco, also in what is now Peru, more advanced architecture was being built at Kotosh. There is evidence of a pre-ceramic culture here, too, but some of the earliest pottery from the site's later phases was found, showing signs of influence from southern Ecuador and the tropical lowlands. Radiocarbon dates of some Kotosh remains are from 1850 BC and Japanese archaeological excavations there in the 1960s revealed a temple with ornamental niches and friezes.

Andean and Pacific coastal civilizations

Chavín and Sechín

For the next 1000 years or so up to c900 BC, communities grew and spread inland from the north coast and south along the north highlands. Farmers still lived in simple adobe or rough stone houses but built increasingly large and complex ceremonial centres. As farming became more productive and pottery more advanced, commerce grew and states began to develop throughout central and north-central Peru, with the associated signs of social structure and hierarchies.

Around 900 BC a new era was marked by the rise of two important centres; Chavín de Huántar in the central Andes and Sechín Alto, inland from Casma on the north coast, both now in Peru. The chief importance of Chavín de Huántar was not so much in its highly advanced architecture as in the influence of its cult, coupled with the artistic style of its ceramics and other artefacts. The founders of Chavín may have originated in the tropical lowlands, as some of its carved monoliths show representations of monkeys and felines.

The Chavín cult

This was paralleled by the great advances made in this period in textile production and in some of the earliest examples of metallurgy. The origins of metallurgy have been attributed to some gold, silver and copper ornaments found in graves in Chongoyape, near Chiclayo, which show Chavín-style features. But earlier evidence has been discovered at Kuntur Wasi (some 120 km east of the coast at Pacasmayo) where 4000-year old gold has been found, and in the Andahuaylas region, dating from 1800-900 BC. The religious symbolism of gold and other precious metals and stones is thought to have been an inspiration behind some of the beautiful artefacts found in the central Andean area.

The cultural brilliance of Chavín de Huántar was complemented by its contemporary, Sechín, with which it may have combined forces, Sechín being the military power that spread the cultural word of Chavín. The Chavín hegemony broke up around 500 BC, soon after which the Nazca culture began to bloom in southern Peru. This period, up to about AD 500, was a time of great social and cultural development. Sizable towns of 5000-10,000 inhabitants grew on the south coast, populated by artisans, merchants and government and religious officials.

Paracas-Nazca

Nazca origins are traced back to about the second century BC, to the Paracas Cavernas and Necropolis, on the coast in the national park near Pisco in Peru. The extreme dryness of the desert here has preserved remarkably the textiles and ceramics in the mummies' tombs excavated. The technical quality and stylistic variety in weaving and pottery rank them among the world's best, and many of the finest examples can be seen in the museums of Lima. The famous Nazca Lines are a feature of the region. Straight lines, abstract designs and outlines of animals are scratched in the dark desert surface forming a lighter contrast that can be seen clearly from the air. There are many theories of how and why the lines were made but no definitive explanation has yet been able to establish their place in South American history. There are similarities between the style of some of the line patterns and that of the pottery and textiles of the same period. Alpaca hair found in Nazca textiles, however, indicates that there must have been strong trade links with highland people.

Moche culture

Nazca's contemporaries on the north coast were the militaristic Moche who, from about AD 100-800, built up an empire whose traces stretch from Piura in the north to Huarney, in the south. The Moche built their capital outside present day Trujillo. The huge pyramid temples of the Huaca del Sol and Huaca de la Luna mark the remains of this city. Moche roads and system of way stations are thought to have been an early inspiration for the Inca network. The Moche increased the coastal population with intensive irrigation projects. Skilful engineering works were carried out, such as the La Cumbre canal, still in use today, and the Ascope aqueduct, both on the Chicama River. The Moche's greatest achievement, however, was its artistic genius. Exquisite ornaments in gold, silver and precious stones were made by its craftsmen. Moche pottery progressed through five stylistic periods, most notable for the stunningly lifelike portrait vases. A wide variety of everyday scenes were created in naturalistic ceramics, telling us more about Moche life than is known about other earlier cultures. Spectacular Moche tombs, discovered at Sipán since 1987, have included semi-precious stones brought from Chile and Argentina, and seashells from Ecuador. The Moche were great navigators.

The cause of the collapse of the Moche Empire around AD 600-700 is unknown, but it may have been started by a 30-year drought at the end of the sixth century, followed by one of the periodic El Niño flash floods (identified by meteorologists from ice thickness in the Andes) and finished by the encroaching forces of the Huari Empire. The decline of the Moche signalled a general tipping of the balance of power in Peru from the north coast to the south sierra.

Huari-Tiwanaku

The ascendant Huari-Tiwanaku movement, from AD 600-1000, combined the religious cult of the Tiwanaku site in the Titicaca basin, with the military dynamism of the Huari, based in the central highlands. The two cultures developed independently but they are generally thought to have merged compatibly.

Up until their own demise around AD 1440, the Huari-Tiwanaku had spread their empire and influence across much of south Peru, north Bolivia and Argentina. They made considerable gains in art and technology, building roads, terraces and irrigation canals across the country. The Huari-Tiwanaku ran their empire with efficient labour and administrative systems that were later adopted by the Incas. Labour tribute for state projects practised by the Moche were further developed. But the empire could not contain regional kingdoms who began to fight for land and power. As control broke down, rivalry and coalitions emerged, the system collapsed and the scene was set for the rise of the Incas.

Chachapoyas and Chimú cultures

After the decline of the Huari Empire, the unity that had been imposed on the Andes was broken. A new stage of autonomous regional or local political organizations began. Among the cultures corresponding to this period were the Chachapoyas in northern highlands and the Chimú. The Chachapoyas people were not so much an empire as a loose-knit 'confederation of ethnic groups with no recognized capital' (Morgan Davis 'Chachapoyas: The Cloud People', Ontario, 1988). But the culture did develop into an advanced society with great skill in road and monument building. Their fortress at Kuélap was known as the most impregnable in the Peruvian Andes. The Chimú culture had two centres. To the north was Lambayeque, near Chiclayo, while to the south, in the Moche valley near present-day Trujillo, was the great adobe walled city of Chan Chán. Covering 20 sq km, this was the largest prehispanic Peruvian city. Chimú has been classified as a despotic state that based its power on wars of conquest. Rigid social stratification existed and power rested in the hands of the great lord *Siquic* and the lord *Alaec*. These lords were followed in social scale by a group of urban couriers who enjoyed a certain degree of economic power. At the bottom were the peasants and slaves. In 1450, the Chimú kingdom was conquered by the Inca Túpac Yupanqui, the son and heir of the Inca ruler Pachacútec.

Cultures of the northern Andes

What is today Ecuador was a densely populated region with a variety of peoples. One of the most important of these was the **Valdivia culture** (3500-1500 BC) on the coast, from which remains of buildings and earthenware figures have been found. A rich mosaic of cultures developed in the period 500 BC to AD 500, after which integration of groups occurred. In the mid-15th century, the relentless expansion of the Inca empire reached Ecuador. The **Cañaris** resisted until 1470 and the **Quitú/Caras** were defeated in 1492. Further north, most of the peoples who occupied Colombia were primitive hunters or nomad agriculturists, but one part of the country, the high basins of the Eastern Cordillera, was densely occupied by **Chibcha** people who had become sedentary farmers. Their staple foods were maize and the potato, and they had no domestic animal save the dog; the use they could make of the land was therefore limited. Other cultures present in Colombia in the pre-Columbian era were the **Tayrona**, **Quimbaya**, **Sinú** and **Calima**. Exhibits of theirs and the Chibcha's (Muisca's) goldwork can be seen at the Gold Museum in Bogotá and other cities.

Southern Andes

Although there was some influence in southern Bolivia, northern Chile and northern Argentina from cultures such as Tiwanaku, most of the southern Andes was an area of autonomous peoples, probably living in fortified settlements by the time the Incas arrived in the mid-15th century. The conquerors from Peru moved south to the Río Maule in Chile where they encountered the fierce **Mapuches** (Araucanians) who halted their advance.

Archaeological evidence from the Amazon basin and Brazil is more scanty than from the Andes or Pacific because the materials used for house building, clothing and decoration were perishable and did not survive the warm, humid conditions of the jungle. Ceramics have been found on Marajó island at the mouth of the Amazon while on the coast much evidence comes from huge shell mounds, called *sambaquis*. Theories about structured societies and their large populations are being revised as aerial photography and forest clearance in the Upper Amazon and Xingu regions of Brazil reveal huge interconnected earthworks, canals, roads and other indicators of city-building. Moreover, falling river levels have uncovered rock carvings estimated between 3000 and 7000 years old near Manaus. The Incas made few inroads into the Amazon so it was the arrival of the Portuguese in 1500 which initiated the greatest change on the Atlantic side of the continent.

The Inca Dynasty

The origins of the Inca Dynasty are shrouded in mythology and shaky evidence. The best known story reported by the Spanish chroniclers talks about Manco Cápac and his sister rising out of Lake Titicaca, created by the sun as divine founders of a chosen race. This was in approximately AD 1200. Over the next 300 years the small tribe grew to supremacy as leaders of the largest empire ever known in the Americas, divided into the four quarters of Tawantinsuyo, all radiating out from Cuzco: Chinchaysuyo, north and northwest; Cuntisuyo, south and west; Collasuyo, south and east; Antisuyo, east.

At its peak, just before the Spanish Conquest, the Inca Empire stretched from the Río Maule in central Chile, north to the present Ecuador–Colombia border, contained most of Ecuador, Peru, west Bolivia, north Chile and northwest Argentina. The area was roughly equivalent to France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Italy and Switzerland combined, 980,000 sq km. For a brief description of **Inca Society**, see under Cuzco (page 1420 in your handbook). The first Inca ruler, Manco Cápac, moved to the fertile Cuzco region, and established Cuzco as his capital. Successive generations of rulers were fully occupied with local conquests of rivals, such as the Colla and Lupaca to the south, and the Chanca to the northwest. At the end of Inca Viracocha's reign the hated Chanca were finally defeated, largely thanks to the heroism of one of his sons, Pachacútec (Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui), who was subsequently crowned as the new ruler.

From the start of Pachacútec's own reign in 1438, imperial expansion grew in earnest. With the help of his son and heir, Topa Inca, territory was conquered from the Titicaca basin south into Chile, and all the north and central coast down to

the Lurin Valley. In 1460-1471, the Incas also laid siege to the Chimú. Typical of the Inca method of government, some of the Chimú skills were assimilated into their own political and administrative system, and some Chimú nobles were even given positions in Cuzco.

Perhaps the pivotal event in Inca history came in 1527 with the death of the ruler, Huayna Cápac. Civil war broke out in the confusion over his rightful successor. One of his legitimate sons, Huáscar, ruled the southern part of the empire from Cuzco. Atahualpa, Huáscar's half-brother, governed Quito, the capital of Chinchaysuyo. In 1532, soon after Atahualpa had won the civil war, Francisco Pizarro arrived in Tumbes with 167 *conquistadores*, a third of them on horseback. Atahualpa's army was marching south, probably for the first time, when he clashed with Pizarro at Cajamarca. **Francisco Pizarro's** only chance against the formidable imperial army he encountered at Cajamarca was a bold stroke. He drew Atahualpa into an ambush, slaughtered his guards and many of his troops, promised him liberty if a certain room were filled with treasure, and finally killed him on the pretext that an Inca army was on its way to free him. Pushing on to Cuzco, he was at first hailed as the executioner of a traitor: Atahualpa had ordered the death of Huáscar in 1533, while himself captive of Pizarro, and his victorious generals were bringing the defeated Huáscar to see his half-brother. Panic followed when the *conquistadores* set about sacking the city, and they fought off with difficulty an attempt by Manco Inca to recapture Cuzco in 1536.

The Spanish Conquest

Pizarro's arrival in Peru had been preceded by Columbus' landfall on the Paria Peninsula (Venezuela) on 5 August 1498 and Spanish reconnaissance of the Pacific coast in 1522. Permanent Spanish settlement was established at Santa Marta (Colombia) in 1525 and Cartagena was founded in 1533. Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada conquered the Chibcha kingdom and founded Bogotá in 1538. Pizarro's lieutenant, Sebastián de Belalcázar, was sent north through Ecuador; he captured Quito with Diego de Almagro in 1534. Gonzalo Pizarro, Francisco's brother, took over control of Quito in 1538 and, during his exploration of the Amazon lowlands, he sent Francisco de Orellana to prospect downriver. Orellana did not return, but drifted down the Amazon, finally reaching the river's mouth in 1542, the first European to cross the continent in this way. Belalcázar pushed north, founding Pasto, Cali and Popayán (Colombia) in 1536, arriving in Bogotá in 1538. Meanwhile, wishing to secure his communications with Spain, Pizarro founded Lima, near the ocean, as his capital in 1535. The same year Diego de Almagro set out to conquer Chile. Unsuccessful, he returned to Peru, quarrelled with Pizarro, and in 1538 fought a pitched battle with Pizarro's men at the Salt Pits, near Cuzco. He was defeated and put to death. Pizarro, who had not been at the battle, was assassinated in his palace in Lima by Almagro's son three years later. In 1541, Pedro de Valdivia founded Santiago de Chile after a renewed attempt to conquer Chile. Like the Incas before them, the Spaniards were unable to master the Mapuches; Valdivia was killed in 1553 and a defensive barrier along the Río Biobío had to be built in order to protect the colony.

BACKGROUND

The Jesuits

Between 1609, when they built their first *reducción* or mission in the region of Guairá in present day Brazil, and 1767, when they were expelled from Spanish America, the Jesuits founded about 50 missions around the upper reaches of the Ríos Paraná, Paraguay and Uruguay. In 1627, the northern missions around Guairá were attacked by slave-hunting *bandeirantes* from São Paulo, forcing them to flee southwards. Some 10,000 converts, led by their priests, floated 700 rafts down the Río Parapanema into the Paraná, only to find their route blocked by the Guairá Falls. Pushing on for eight days through dense forest, they built new boats below the falls and continued their journey to reestablish their missions 725 km from their original homes. Efficiently organized and strictly laid out, the missions prospered, growing indigenous and European crops and herding cattle. Their success and economic power attracted many enemies, from the Spanish crown to local landowners. When, in 1750, Spain and Portugal settled their South American border dispute, seven missions were placed under Portuguese control. This the Jesuits resisted with arms, fuelling further the suspicion of the order's excessive power. Under highest secrecy, King Carlos III sent instructions to South America in 1767 to expel the Jesuits. Two thousand were shipped to Italy, their property was auctioned and their schools and colleges were taken over by the Franciscans and Dominicans. By the early 19th century, many of the missions had fallen into disrepair.

Since 1516 European seafarers had visited the Río de la Plata, first Juan de Solís, then Sebastian Cabot and his rival Diego García in 1527. An expedition led by Pedro de Mendoza founded Buenos Aires in 1536, but it was abandoned in 1541. Mendoza sent Juan de Ayolas up the Río Paraná to reach Peru from the east. It is not known for certain what happened to Ayolas, but his lieutenant Domingo Martínez de Irala founded Asunción on the Paraguay in 1537. This was the base from which the Spaniards relaunched their conquest of the Río de la Plata and Buenos Aires was refounded in 1580.

Treasure hunt

As Spanish colonization built itself around new cities, the *conquistadores* set about finding the wealth which had lured them to South America in the first place. The great prize came in 1545 when the hill of silver at Potosí (Bolivia) was discovered. Other mining centres grew up and the trade routes to supply them and carry out the riches were established. The Spanish crown soon imposed political and administrative jurisdiction over its new empire, replacing the power of the *conquistadores* with that of governors and bureaucrats. The Viceroyalty of Peru became the major outlet for the wealth of the Americas, but each succeeding representative of the Kingdom of Spain was faced with the twofold threat of

BACKGROUND

The bandeirantes

Reviled by some for their appalling treatment of the indigenous population, revered by others for their determination and willingness to withstand severe hardship in the pursuit of goals, the *bandeirantes* are an indispensable element in the formation of Brazil.

The Portuguese knew that South America held great riches; their Spanish rivals were shipping vast quantities back to Europe from Peru. Legends proliferated of mountains of precious stones, golden lakes and other marvels, also of terrifying places, all in the mysterious interior. Regardless of the number of expeditions sent into the Sertão which returned empty-handed, or failed to return at all, there was always the promise of silver, emeralds or other jewels to lure the adventurous beyond the coast.

The one thing that Brazil had in abundance was the indigenous population. Throughout the colony there was a demand for slaves to work the plantations and farms, especially in the early 17th century when Portugal temporarily lost its African possession of Angola.

The men who settled in São Paulo proved themselves expert enslavers. Without official sanction, and certainly not blessed by the Jesuits, these adventurers formed themselves into expeditions which would set out often for years at a time, to capture slaves for the internal market. The indigenous Guaraní who had been organized into *reducciones* by the Jesuits around the Río Paraguay were the top prize and there developed an intense rivalry between the *bandeirantes* and the Jesuits. The priests regarded the Paulistas as murderous and inhumane; the slavers felt they had some justification in attacking the missions because they were in Spanish territory and, in the 17th century, the entire western boundary of Brazil was in dispute.

This was one side of the coin. The other was that the *bandeirantes* were incredibly resourceful, trekking for thousands of kilometres, withstanding great hardships, travelling light, inspired not just by the desire to get rich, but also by a fierce patriotism. To uncover the Sertão's riches, they demystified it, trekking into Minas Gerais, Goiás and Mato Grosso looking for precious metals. Through their efforts, the Minas Gerais gold rush began. In the *bandeirantes'* footsteps came settlers and cattle herders who took over the lands emptied of people. Although the indigenous population were exploited as labour and became a source of income for the Paulistas, they also intermarried with the Europeans, hastening the miscegenation process that became so evident throughout Brazil.

subduing the Inca successor state of Vilcabamba, north of Cuzco, and unifying the fierce Spanish factions. Francisco de Toledo (appointed 1568) solved both problems during his 14 years in office: Vilcabamba was crushed in 1572 and the last reigning Inca, Túpac Amaru, put to death. For the next 200 years the viceroys

closely followed Toledo's system, if not his methods. The Major Government – the viceroy, the *audiencia* (high court), and *corregidores* (administrators) – ruled through the Minor Government – indigenous chiefs put in charge of large groups of natives: a rough approximation to the original Inca system.

Towards independence

The *indígenas* of Peru rose in 1780, under the leadership of an Inca noble who called himself Túpac Amaru II. He and many of his lieutenants were captured and put to death under torture at Cuzco. Another indigenous leader in revolt suffered the same fate in 1814, but this last flare-up had the sympathy of many of the locally born Spanish, who resented their status: inferior to the Spaniards born in Spain, the refusal to give them any but the lowest offices, the high taxation imposed by the home government, and the severe restrictions upon trade with any country but Spain. This was a complaint common to all parts of the Spanish empire and it fostered a twin-pronged independence movement. Given impetus by Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1808, Simón Bolívar, El Libertador, led a revolution in the north and José de San Martín, with his Army of the Andes, led an uprising through Argentina and Chile. Both converged on Peru.

Bolívar, born in Venezuela in 1783, was involved in the early struggle to free the region from Spanish rule. In 1811 Venezuela declared itself an independent republic, only to be defeated by Spain in 1812. Bolívar led a new revolt in 1813, which was crushed in 1815. He went into exile in Jamaica and Haiti, to return in 1816 with a new army which, in a bold move, he led over the Andes from Venezuela to liberate Nueva Granada (as Colombia was called) at the Battle of Boyacá in 1819. He proclaimed a new republic, Gran Colombia, taking in Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador. Venezuela was freed at the Battle of Carabobo in 1821.

San Martín's Argentine troops, convoyed from Chile under the protection of the English admiral, Lord Cochrane, landed in southern Peru on 7 September 1820. San Martín proclaimed Peruvian independence at Lima on 28 July 1821, though most of the country was still in the hands of the viceroy, José de La Serna. Bolívar sent Antonio José de Sucre to Ecuador where, on 24 May 1822, he gained a victory over La Serna at Pichincha. San Martín, after a meeting with Bolívar at Guayaquil, left for Argentina and a self-imposed exile in France, while Bolívar and Sucre completed the conquest of Peru by defeating La Serna at the battle of Junín (6 August 1824) and the decisive battle of Ayacucho (9 December 1824). For over a year there was a last stand in the Real Felipe fortress at Callao by the Spanish troops under General Rodil before they capitulated on 22 January 1826. Bolívar was invited to stay in Peru, but in 1826 he left for Colombia where he tried to hold Gran Colombia together as a single state. He failed as internal divisions and political ambitions pulled the three new republics apart. While heading for exile, Bolívar died in 1830.

Brazil - From colony to independence

The Portuguese, Pedro Álvares Cabral, landed in Brazil on 22 April, 1500. He left after a week, shortly followed by Américo Vespucci who had been sent to explore further. The first system of government adopted by the Portuguese was a Capitania, a kind of feudal principality – there were 13 of them, but these were replaced in 1572 by a viceroyalty. In the same year it was decided to divide the colony into two, north and south, with capitals at Salvador and Rio; it was not until 1763 that Rio became the sole capital.

Three centuries under the paternal eye of Portugal had ill-prepared the colonists for independent existence, except for the experience of Dutch invasion (1624 in Salvador, and 1630-1654 in Recife). The colonists ejected the Dutch from Brazil with little help from Portugal, and Brazilians date the birth of their national sentiment from these events. Growing resentment against Portuguese government and trade intervention led to the **Inconfidência**, the first revolution, masterminded by **Tiradentes** with 11 other citizens of Minas Gerais. They were unsuccessful (Tiradentes was executed), but when France invaded Portugal in 1807, King João VI was shipped to safety in Brazil, escorted by the British navy. Rio was temporarily declared the capital of the Portuguese Empire. The British, as a price for their assistance in the Portuguese war, forced the opening of Brazil's ports to non-Portuguese trade. King João VI returned to the mother country in 1821, leaving his son, the young Pedro, as Regent. Pedro refused to return control of Brazil to the Portuguese Côrtes (parliament), and on 13 May 1822, by popular request, he agreed to stay and assumed the title of 'Perpetual Defender and Protector of Brazil'. On 7 September he declared Brazil's independence with the cry 'Independence or Death' by the Rio Ipiranga; on 12 October he was proclaimed the constitutional emperor of Brazil, and on 1 December he was crowned in Rio.

Post-independence history

Argentina

Independence from Spain

In 1778, Spain finally permitted Buenos Aires to conduct overseas trade. Before that it was controlled by the viceroy in Lima and was merely a military outpost for Spain to confront the Portuguese settlement at Colonia, across the estuary. Its population then was only 24,203 and its main activity was smuggling. Following Spain's alliance with Napoleon, Britain attacked Buenos Aires in 1806 and again in 1807. The defeat of these attacks, known as the Reconquista, greatly increased the confidence of the *porteños* (the name given to those born in Buenos Aires) to deal with all comers, including the mother-country. On 25 May 1810, the *cabildo* of Buenos Aires deposed the viceroy and announced that it was now governing on behalf of King Ferdinand VII, then a captive of Napoleon. Six years later, in July 1816, when Buenos Aires was threatened by invasion from Peru and blockaded by a Spanish fleet in the Río de la Plata, a national congress held at Tucumán declared independence. The declaration was given reality by José de San Martín, who marched an Argentine army across the Andes to free Chile and embarked his forces for Peru, where he captured Lima, the first step in the liberation of Peru.

The formation of the republic

When San Martín returned home, it was to find the country rent by conflict between the central government and the provinces. On the one hand stood the Unitarist party, bent on central control; on the other the Federalist party, insisting on local autonomy. The latter had for members the great *caudillos* (the large landowners backed by the *gauchos*) suspicious of the cities. One of their leaders, Juan Manuel de Rosas, took control in 1829. During his second term as Governor of Buenos Aires he asked for and was given extraordinary powers. The result was a 17-year reign of terror which became an international scandal. When he began a blockade of Asunción in 1845, Britain and France promptly countered with a three-year blockade of Buenos Aires. In 1851 Justo José de Urquiza, Governor of Entre Ríos, one of his old henchmen, organized a triple alliance of Brazil, Uruguay, and the Argentine opposition to overthrow him. He was defeated in 1852 at Caseros, a few kilometres from Buenos Aires, and fled to England. Rosas had started his career as a Federalist; once in power he was a Unitarist. His downfall meant the triumph of federalism. In 1853 a federal system was finally incorporated in the constitution, but Buenos Aires refused to join the new federation until the city, led by Bartolomé Mitre, was finally defeated by the

federal forces in 1880. Buenos Aires was consequently made into a special federal territory. The conquest at about the same time of all the indigenous tribes of the pampas and the south by a young colonel, Julio A Roca, was to make possible the final supremacy of Buenos Aires over all rivals.

The 20th century

From 1916 to 1930 the Unión Cívica Radical (founded in 1890) held power, under the leadership of Hipólito Yrigoyen and Marcelo T de Alvear, but lost it to the 1930 military uprising. Though seriously affected by the 1930s world depression, Argentina's rich soil and educated population had made it one of the world's 10 wealthiest countries, but this wealth was unevenly distributed, and political methods used by the conservatives and their military associates in the 1930s denied the middle and working classes any effective share in their own country's wealth and government.

Peronism and its legacy

A series of military coups in 1943-1944 led to the rise of Col Juan Domingo Perón, basing his power on an alliance between the army and labour; his contacts with labour were greatly assisted by his charismatic wife Eva (since commemorated in the rock-opera and film *Evita*). In 1946 Perón was elected president. His government is chiefly remembered by many Argentines for improving the living conditions of the workers. Especially in its early years the government was strongly nationalistic, but also intolerant of opposition parties and independent newspapers. After reelection in 1951, economic problems led to the introduction of a wage freeze, upsetting the labour unions, which were the heart of Peronist support; the death of Evita in 1952 was another blow. In September 1955 a military coup unseated Perón, who went into exile. With society bitterly divided between Peronists and anti-Peronists and the armed forces equally divided, a climate of tension and guerrilla-inspired violence reigned until 1973, when the military bowed out of politics. Elections were won by the Peronist candidate, Héctor Campora. Perón returned from exile in Madrid to resume as president in October 1973, but died on 1 July 1974, leaving the Presidency to his widow, Vice-President María Estela Martínez de Perón (his third wife). The subsequent chaotic political situation, including guerrilla warfare, led to her deposition by a military junta, led by General Jorge Videla in March 1976.

The Dirty War and after

Under the military, guerrilla warfare and the other features of dissidence were repressed with great brutality: about 9000 people (although human rights organizations believe the total is at least double this) disappeared without trace during the so-called 'dirty war'. In 1982-1983 pressure for a democratic restoration grew particularly after the Falklands (Islas Malvinas) War with Great Britain in 1982, when Argentina invaded the South Atlantic islands run by the British, in an attempt to reclaim them. General elections on 30 October 1983 were won by the Unión Cívica Radical (UCR), with Dr Raúl Alfonsín as president. During 1985

generals Videla, Viola and Galtieri were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for their parts in the 'dirty war'.

The Menem years

When Alfonsín was defeated by Dr Carlos Saúl Menem of the Partido Justicialista (Peronists) in May 1989, Alfonsín stepped down early because of economic instability. Strained relations between the Peronist Government and the military led to several rebellions, which President Menem attempted to appease by pardoning the imprisoned Generals. His popularity among civilians declined, but in 1991-1992 the Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo succeeded in restoring confidence in the economy and government. The key was a Convertibility Law, passed in 1991, fixing the peso against the US dollar, and permitting the Central Bank to print local currency only when backed by gold or hard currency. This achieved price stability; the annual average growth of consumer prices fell from 3080% in 1989 to 3.9% in 1994 and remained in single figures until 2001. Having succeeded in changing the constitution to permit the re-election of the president for a second term of four years, Menem was returned to office in 1995 by an electorate favouring stability. But his renewed popularity was short lived: unemployment remained high and corruption unrestrained. Menem failed to force another constitutional change to allow him to stand for a third term, but his rivalry with Peronist candidate, Eduardo Duhalde, was one of the factors behind the victory of Fernando de la Rúa of Alianza.

The 2001-2002 crisis

De la Rúa pledged to reduce joblessness, provide better healthcare and end corruption, but within a year was facing scandals and a series of economic crises. The peso became increasingly overvalued, but the government refused to modify the Convertibility Law. By the end of 2001, the country was in deep recession, unemployment was 20% and the government had practically run out of money to service its US\$132 billion debt. As faith in the banking system and the government nosedived, Argentines started to take back their savings from banks; on 30 November 2001 alone, US\$2 billion were withdrawn. The government imposed a US\$250 weekly limit on cash withdrawals, leading to rioting, looting and 27 deaths, which eventually forced de la Rúa out of office. Three subsequent presidents resigned. On 2 January 2002, Eduardo Duhalde was sworn in as Argentina's fifth president in two weeks. The mammoth task of dragging the economy out of recession and restoring confidence could not be achieved before elections in April 2003, although positive steps were taken. The devaluation of the peso in 2002, which saw the real value of Argentines' savings plummet, did return the trade balance to surplus. Agriculture and tourism saw dramatic improvements and there was a slight fall in joblessness. Nevertheless, over half the population was living in poverty, desperate for work and food, many surviving thanks to barter clubs. Instead of a display of unity in the crisis, however, the Peronist party pulled itself apart prior to the elections, with the governor of Santa Cruz, Néstor Kirchner, running against ex-president Menem. Facing heavy defeat in the run-off,

Menem pulled out of the race at the last moment, giving Kirchner the presidency but with the electoral support of just 22%.

Economic recovery and the Kirchner dynasty

By October 2005, Kirchner had gained sufficient popular support to win a substantial majority in mid-term congressional elections. He decided not to run for the presidency in 2007, but his wife, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, was nominated as a candidate. Her landslide victory, the first elected female president in Argentina, may have indicated a desire for continuity among the electorate, but many people saw the move as a way of extending Néstor's chance of holding on to power. Her first years in office were confrontational. An increase in taxes on agricultural exports, for instance, in order to redistribute income from high soya, wheat and corn prices, led to strikes and blockades which caused food shortages, adding to problems of energy shortages and general price rises. In mid-term elections in June 2009 Fernández de Kirchner's party lost its majorities in both houses of Congress. By 2011, though, the picture had changed significantly. Néstor Kirchner died of a heart attack in October 2010, but his widow was not prepared to relinquish power. With the opposition fragmented, she won a big majority in presidential elections in October 2011. Her victory was helped greatly by a thriving economy, despite an inability to rein in inflation or to attract investment from abroad. By 2012, Argentine society was becoming increasingly divided. Many low income and rural workers were in favour of the ruling party's policies, but the middle classes, for example, grew more antagonistic over rising prices, the severe restriction of the sale of dollars at the official exchange rate in order to limit the use of international reserves to pay off national debts, and levels of crime.

Following the 30th anniversary of the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas conflict, diplomatic relations with the UK were very strained and remained so into 2015 over the issues of sovereignty and oil exploration. Soon after Jorge Bergoglio, former archbishop of Buenos Aires, was elected Pope Francis I in March 2013, President Fernández asked him to mediate in the dispute, but Francis, the first Latin American pope, has not entered the debate. Fernández de Kirchner has sought to repair the difficult relationship between the Pope and her and her husband's governments which arose partly because of his dealings with opposition politicians, but also because of disagreements over policy towards abortion and homosexuality (gay marriage, for instance, was legalized in 2010, but the Pope remains opposed).

Mid-term congressional elections in October 2013 highlighted the divisions as Fernández's Frente para la Victoria (FPV) party struggled to maintain its position in both houses of congress. In key Buenos Aires province polling, FPV lost to Frente Renovador, a dissident Peronist movement led by Sergio Massa, formerly Fernández's cabinet chief. FPV also lost in five other large voting districts and in Fernández's home province of Santa Cruz. Fernández herself was forced to abandon campaigning in October when she was admitted to hospital for brain surgery, from which she recovered by the end of the year.

Confidence in the economy continued at a low ebb into 2014. Pressure on the peso from inflation, declining international reserves and savers seeking to buy dollars on the unofficial 'blue market' rather than keep their funds in the national currency, forced a devaluation of 15% in January 2014. In May 2014, the government renegotiated its debt to the Paris Club group of creditor countries, an issue dating back to the 2001-2002 crisis, which should allow the country to raise new loans on international markets, but this was threatened by litigation with a small number of hedge funds (labelled *buitres*, or vultures) who purchased Argentine debt after 2001 and demanded full repayment, unlike the majority who accepted reduced terms. In September 2015, the UN General Assembly voted in favour of an Argentine-led resolution limiting the influence that speculative funds can have over sovereign debt restructuring.

The electorate turns its back on Peronism

The 25 October 2015 presidential elections proved inconclusive with, for the first time, a run-off election required on 22 November. In the first poll, Daniel Scioli, of FPV and governor of Buenos Aires province, held a slight majority over Mauricio Macri of Cambiemos, mayor of Buenos Aires city, but in the decider, Macri won by 51.34% to Scioli's 48.66%. To the surprise of many, the electorate rejected the style and left-leaning policies of Fernández de Kirchner and chose Macri as the first non-Peronist president in 14 years.

One of Macri's earliest moves was to lift currency controls and allow the peso to float, sparking a devaluation to boost exports and investment and spur economic growth. At the same time public spending was cut in order to reduce the budget deficit and inflation inherited from Fernández's government. While popular abroad, the removal of energy and transport subsidies, raising interest rates and other measures provoked protests at job losses, growing poverty and falling industrial activity. Macri's moves to stamp his free-market authority on the nation were too rapid for some, but Congress permitted the government to stick to its timetable. Mid-term legislative elections in October 2017 gave Macri and his allies more seats in both houses (but not an overall majority), strengthening his hand to push through the programme of reforms. Until the end of 2017, however, the economy proved unresponsive to most measures, with industrial activity still slack, unemployment high and foreign debt ballooning. In addition the peso continued to fall against the dollar, so much so that a US\$50 billion loan was sought from the IMF. This prompted yet more protests as many Argentines blame IMF-imposed austerity for the 2001-2002 crisis. Strict targets set for inflation for 2018-2021 were relaxed, despite success in 2017 in tackling price rises (which dropped back to about 25% from 2016's 40%), and growth targets for GDP were lowered following the IMF deal. Another challenge facing Macri was to bolster support since Cristina Fernández de Kirchner won a seat in the Senate in October 2017, retaining a toehold on power. Moreover, the various Peronist factions were beginning to look for common ground on which to base their campaign for 2019 elections.

Bolivia

Coups, mines and wars

Bolivian politics have been the most turbulent in Latin America. Although in the 19th century the army was very small, officers were key figures in power-struggles, often backing different factions of the landowning elite. Between 1840 and 1849 there were 65 attempted *coups d'état*. The longest lasting government of the 19th century was that of Andrés Santa Cruz (1829-1839), but when he tried to unite Bolivia with Peru in 1836, Chile and Argentina intervened to overthrow him. After the War of the Pacific (1879-1883) there was greater stability, but opposition to the political dominance of the city of Sucre culminated in a revolt in 1899 led by business groups from La Paz and the tin-mining areas, as a result of which La Paz became the centre of government.

The Bolivian economy depended on tin exports during the 20th-century. Railway construction and the demand for tin in Europe and the USA (particularly in wartime) led to a mining boom after 1900. By the 1920s the industry was dominated by three entrepreneurs, Simón Patiño, Mauricio Hochschild and the Aramayo family, who greatly influenced national politics. The importance of mining and the harsh conditions in the isolated mining camps of the Altiplano led to the rise of a militant miners movement.

Since independence Bolivia has suffered continual losses of territory, partly because of communications difficulties and the central government's inability to control distant provinces. The dispute between Chile and Peru over the nitrate-rich Atacama desert in 1879 soon dragged in Bolivia, which had signed a secret alliance with Peru in 1873. Following its rapid defeat in the War of the Pacific Bolivia lost her coastal provinces. As compensation Chile later agreed to build the railway between Arica and La Paz. When Brazil annexed the rich Acre Territory in 1903, Bolivia was compensated by another railway, but this Madeira–Mamoré line never reached its destination, Riberalta, and proved of little use; it was closed in 1972. There was not even an unbuilt railway to compensate Bolivia for its next loss. A long-running dispute with Paraguay over the Chaco erupted into war in 1932. Defeat in the so-called Chaco War (1932-1935) resulted in the loss of three quarters of the Chaco.

Modern Bolivia

The Chaco War was a turning point in Bolivian history, increasing the political influence of the army which in 1936 seized power for the first time since the War of the Pacific. Defeat bred nationalist resentment among junior army officers who had served in the Chaco and also led to the creation of a nationalist party, the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) led by Víctor Paz Estenssoro. Their anger was directed against the mine owners and the leaders who had controlled Bolivian politics. Between 1936 and 1946 a series of unstable military governments followed. This decade witnessed the apparent suicide in 1939 of one president (Germán Busch) and the public hanging in 1946 of another (Gualberto Villarroel). After a period of civilian government, the 1951 elections were won by the MNR but a coup prevented the party from taking office.

The 1952 revolution In April 1952 the military government was overthrown by a popular revolution in which armed miners and peasants played a major role. Paz Estenssoro became president and his MNR government nationalized the mines, introduced universal suffrage and began the break-up and redistribution of large estates. The economy, however, deteriorated, partly because of the hostility of the US government. Paz's successor, Hernán Siles Zuazo (president from 1956 to 1964), a hero of the 1952 revolution, was forced to take unpopular measures to stabilize the economy. Paz was re-elected president in 1960 and 1964, but shortly afterwards in November 1964 he was overthrown by his vice-president, General René Barrientos, who relied on the support of the army and the peasants to defeat the miners.

Military rule in the 1970s The death of Barrientos in an air crash in 1969 was followed by three brief military governments. The third, led by General Torres, pursued left-wing policies which alarmed many army officers and business leaders. In August 1971 Torres was overthrown by Hugo Banzer, a right-wing colonel who outlawed political parties and trade unions. After Banzer was forced to call elections in 1978, a series of short-lived military governments overruled elections in 1978 and 1979 giving victories to Siles Zuazo. One of these, led by General García Meza (1980-1981) was notable for its brutal treatment of opponents and its links to the cocaine trade, which led to its isolation by the international community.

Return to democracy In August 1982 the military returned to barracks and Dr Siles Zuazo assumed the Presidency in a leftist coalition government with support from the communists and trade unions. Under this regime inflation spiralled out of control. The elections of 1985 were won again by Víctor Paz Estenssoro, who imposed a rigorous programme to stabilize the economy. In the elections of 1989, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada of the MNR (chief architect of the stabilization programme) failed to win enough votes to prevent Congress choosing Jaime Paz Zamora of the Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), who came third in the elections, as president in August 1989. Paz had made an unlikely alliance with the former military dictator, Hugo Banzer (Acción Democrática Nacionalista).

Although Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada just failed to gain the required 51% majority to win the presidency in the 1993 elections, the other candidates recognized his victory. The main element in his policies was the capitalization of state assets, in which investors agreed to inject fresh capital into a chosen state-owned company in return for a 50% controlling stake. The other 50% of the shares were distributed to all Bolivians over 18 via a private pension fund scheme. As the programme gained pace, so did opposition to it. In the elections of 1 June 1997, Banzer and the ADN secured 22% of the vote and ADN became the dominant party in a new coalition. After two years of economic austerity, hardship in rural areas, together with unemployment and anger at a US-backed coca eradication programme and a plan to raise water rates led to violent protests and road blocks

in many parts of the country. President Banzer was forced to resign in August 2001 because of cancer and his replacement, Vice-President Jorge Quiroga, served the final year of Banzer's term before new elections were held, in which a coalition led by Sánchez de Lozada won an extremely narrow victory. The runner-up was Evo Morales, leader of the coca growers, who campaigned for a restoration of traditional coca production and an end to free market reforms.

Turbulence and the rise of Evo Morales

From the outset, Sánchez de Lozada faced economic crisis. Mass demonstrations turned into riots over tax increases and the president was forced to flee the presidential palace in an ambulance. A week later, the cabinet resigned, tax hikes were cancelled, police were awarded a pay rise and Sánchez de Lozada vowed to forego his salary. Subsequent protests over the sale of Bolivian gas to the US became a national uprising and weeks of violent street demonstrations led to Sánchez de Lozada's resignation on 17 October 2003. Vice-President Carlos Mesa became president, but survived only until June 2005, when new elections were called. Evo Morales of Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), self-styled "United States' worst nightmare", beat ex-resident Quiroga by a clear majority on 18 December 2005.

Morales' rise to power was precipitated by the continued opposition to gas exports, mass protests by the inhabitants of El Alto calling for a more equal society and his support for coca growers. Morales soon announced elections to a new constituent assembly and, in May 2006, sent troops into the gas fields, provoking foreign hydrocarbon companies to renegotiate their contracts with Bolivia. The Constituent Assembly eventually approved a new socially oriented constitution in November 2007, but the process was marred by procedural irregularities and violence. In 2008, opponents of the Morales government in northern and eastern lowland departments (Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando and Tarija) pressed their case for autonomy, in response to which the Senate called another referendum. The mandate of the president was ratified by a 67% majority and the most important opposition departmental governors were also ratified. A subsequent referendum approved the new constitution by a 61% majority, but predictably voters in the eastern states rejected it. Despite these profound divisions, presidential and congressional elections in December 2009 revealed greater unity as Morales became the first Bolivian president to be democratically reelected (with a 63% majority) and his MAS party won outright majorities in both houses of the legislature.

Over the next five years, the economy responded well to government policies. Prudent use of the income from sales of natural gas and other commodities gave the country healthy foreign reserves equivalent to almost half of GDP. Acute poverty was being reduced, the minimum wage increased and a law to ensure food security, passed in 2011 after demonstrations over food shortages, led to a decline in hunger and undernourishment of children. Small-scale infrastructure projects were being allocated to many communities, providing medical centres, schools and gymnasiums. Inflation was limited to less than 10% (it was estimated to be 5.5% in 2015) and the foreign debt was also cut drastically.

In this upbeat climate, opinion polls in 2014 showed that President Morales was receiving support from over 40% of voters, way more than that for any of his rivals in the divided opposition. This gave a boost to the president as his bid to run for a third term in office in October 2014 was approved by the Constitutional Court. The court stated that his first term started before the new constitution of 2009 came into force, so elections in 2014 would mark his second consecutive term, not third. Morales won the presidential vote by 61%, compared with 25% for his nearest rival, Samuel Dora Medina of the Concertación Unidad Demócrata. Morales' Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS-IPSP) also won majorities in both houses of congress.

In January 2015 President Morales took office for his third term, due to run until 2020. In February 2016 a referendum was held on whether Morales should be allowed to run for a fourth term in 2019, but this was rejected by a small majority of voters. Nevertheless, in November 2017 the Constitutional Court ruled that, in the case of re-election, the constitution may be ignored. This controversial decision opened the door for Morales to stand again, but also mobilised a grassroots opposition to the administration's lack of respect for both constitution and the popular will demonstrated in the referendum. While this movement showed as much disdain for the traditional opposition parties as for MAS-IPSP, Morales remained the dominant figure in the country, on all sides of the political spectrum, and the champion of the major changes introduced since 2005. These included the reduction of poverty and deprivation, maintaining fiscal discipline and giving previously marginalized sectors of society access to the political process.

As the economy recovered in 2017 from the effects of serious drought in 2016 and the 2015-2016 slump in oil and gas prices, Morales announced in early 2018 that Bolivia's annual GDP growth would be maintained, if not accelerate, in 2018. His optimism was based on strong domestic demand and an ambitious programme of public sector investment. Natural gas, upon which the economy is heavily dependent, featured highly in development planning. Areas of exploration for new deposits included, controversially, national parks such as Madidi.

In April 2018, President Morales submitted Bolivia's claim to access to the Pacific Ocean against Chile at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Chile gained control of Bolivia's Pacific shore in 1883, a fact ratified by treaty in 1904. Bolivia does not share Chile's view that the treaty is the final word on the case.

Brazil

Imperial Brazil

Dom Pedro the First had the misfortune to be faced by a secession movement in the north, to lose the Banda Oriental (today Uruguay) and to get too involved in his complicated love life. Finally, he abdicated as the result of a military revolt in 1831, leaving his five-year-old son, Dom Pedro the Second, in the hands of a regent, as ruler. On 23 July 1840, the lad, though only 15, was proclaimed of age. Dom Pedro the Second, a strong liberal at heart, promoted education, increased communications, developed agriculture, stamped on corruption and

encouraged immigration from Europe. Under his rule the war with the dictator López of Paraguay ended in Brazilian victory. Finally, he declared that he would rather lose his crown than allow slavery to continue, and on 13 May 1888, it was finally abolished by his daughter, Princess Isabel, who was acting as Regent during his temporary absence.

There is little doubt that it was this measure that cost him his throne. Many plantation owners, who had been given no compensation, turned against the Emperor; they were supported by elements in the army and navy, who felt that the Emperor had not given due heed to their interests since the Paraguayan War. On 15 November 1889, the Republic was proclaimed and the Emperor sailed for Europe. Two years later he died in a second-rate hotel in Paris, after steadfastly refusing a pension from the conscience-stricken revolutionaries. At the time of the first centenary of independence in 1922 the imperial family was allowed to return to Brazil, and the body of Dom Pedro was brought back and buried in the cathedral at Petrópolis.

From republic to dictatorship

The history of the 'Old Republic' (1889-1930), apart from the first 10 years which saw several monarchist rebellions, was comparatively uneventful, a time of expansion and increasing prosperity. Brazil declared war on Germany during both wars and Brazilian troops fought in the Italian campaign in 1944-1945. In 1930 a revolution headed by Getúlio Vargas, Governor of Rio Grande do Sul, who was to become known as 'the Father of the Poor', deposed President Washington Luís. Vargas assumed executive power first as provisional president and then as dictator. He was forced to resign in October 1945. In 1946 a liberal republic was restored and the following 18 years saw considerable economic development and social advance.

An increase in government instability and corruption prompted the military to intervene in civil affairs. From March 1964 until March 1985, the military governed Brazil using political repression and torture, yet achieving great economic success (up to 1980). Between 1964 and 1974 average growth was 10% a year, but the divide between rich and poor widened. Labour leaders were oppressed, dissenters were jailed and *favelas* mushroomed. Political reform did not occur until 1980 and free elections were not held until 1989.

Return to democracy

In January 1985 a civilian, Tancredo Neves, representing a broad opposition to the military regime, was elected president by the electoral college introduced under the military's 1967 constitution. He was unable, because of illness, to take office: the vice-president elect, Sr José Sarney, was sworn in as acting president in March 1985, and in April became president on Sr Neves' death. After complete revision by a Constituent Assembly in 1987-1988, Brazil's new constitution of 1988 permitted direct presidential elections in November 1989. These were won by Fernando Collor de Melo, of the small Partido da Reconstrução Nacional, who narrowly defeated Luis Inácio da Silva (Lula), of the Workers Party (PT). Just over

halfway through his five-year term, Collor was suspended from office after a landslide congressional vote to impeach him over his involvement in corruption. He avoided impeachment by resigning on 29 December 1992. Vice-President Itamar Franco took over, but had scant success in tackling poverty and inflation until the introduction of an anti-inflation package which introduced the real as the new currency.

The real plan and after

The success of the *real* plan was the main reason for its architect, finance minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso, defeating Lula in the presidential elections of October 1994. Throughout 1997 and 1998, the financial crisis in Asia threatened Brazil's currency and economic stability. Cardoso was therefore obliged to introduce policies which, at the cost of slowing down economic growth, would prevent an upsurge in inflation and a devaluation of the currency. Concurrently, social imbalances such as unemployment, crime, prison conditions, land reform and the violence associated with landlessness persisted. These issues notwithstanding, Cardoso again defeated Lula in presidential elections in October 1998. As the new administration battled to enforce greater budgetary discipline, the economy finally succumbed to internal and external pressures in early 1999. Brazil's decision in mid-January to devalue the real by 9% sent shockwaves through world financial markets. As capital continued to leave the country, the Government was soon forced to let the real float freely. In March 1999 the IMF resumed lending to Brazil, with support from the USA, and as early as May 1999 the economy showed signs of having confounded all the worst expectations.

Lula, fourth time lucky

The recession had lowered Cardoso's popularity and thus his influence over his coalition partners. At last the door was open for Lula, who in 2002 won the presidency in the run-off vote against José Serra. Contrary to forecasts that he would lead Brazil down a left-wing path unacceptable to many outside agencies and governments, Lula did not abandon orthodox economic policies. At the same time he was passionately committed to social reform, even if the benefits for which poor and dispossessed Brazilians were hoping were slow to materialize.

Lula managed to hold himself above a number of voting and bribery scandals within the Workers Party in 2005, defeating Geraldo Alckmin of the Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB) in the October 2006 presidential elections. By 2008 Lula was presiding over a booming economy, with strong export and energy sectors, healthy consumer spending and significant investment in infrastructure projects. This confidence helped Brazil weather the global credit crunch better than others and President Lula continued his plan of consolidating Brazil's ever-strengthening position in global markets and on the political stage.

After Lula: the end of the boom

Presidential and congressional elections were held in October/November 2010. The PT's candidate was Dilma Rousseff and she defeated her main rival, José

Serra of the PSDB, in two rounds of voting. Voters opted for the continuity of PT government and its overall aims of eradicating poverty and cutting unemployment. Success in both these measures had to be offset against a decline in GDP growth from 7.5% in 2010 to less than 1% in 2012. Contributory factors were a fall in the value of the real, poor levels of investment despite low interest rates and reductions in consumer spending. A consequence of raising Brazilians out of poverty into the 'new middle class' or 'Classe C' was that, as well as having greater spending power, people expected better public services (health, education, transport etc) in return for the taxes they now paid, and less corruption. In mid-2013 frustration boiled over into a series of huge protests around the country, sparked by a rise in transport fares and anger at the cost of staging the soccer World Cup in 2014. Preparing the country for this spectacle and for the Olympic Games in 2016 involved intensive efforts to improve infrastructure and cut crime in favelas. In the event, the World Cup in June-July 2014 ran smoothly despite continuing protests in the run-up to the competition and despite the host nation's disastrous exit in the semi-finals (beaten 7-1 by eventual winners Germany).

While maintaining a significant downward trend since its peak in the early 2000s, deforestation in the Amazon rose again in 2015 and 2016, only to fall back in 2017. Changes to the Forest Code in 2012, the fall in the value of the real encouraging land speculation and an expansion in major infrastructure projects initially spurred land clearance. But economic recession and a fall in livestock prices contributed to 2017's decline, as well as improved state monitoring and controls on deforestation.

In the presidential elections of October 2014 Dilma Rousseff faced Aécio Neves of the PSDB in the final round and retained the presidency by a narrow margin of 3%. The closeness of the vote showed how divided Brazil had become along regional and class lines. Rousseff's support came largely from the lower classes whose living standards had improved under the social welfare programmes such as Bolsa Família, the majority of whom live in the North and Northeast, while the pro-business, centre-right Neves appealed more to the middle and wealthier classes who were desperate to see an end to PT rule. On re-election Rousseff pledged herself to building bridges, but the challenges were many: tackling corruption, pulling Brazil out of the recession into which it had sunk, restoring international and local investors' confidence, reducing crime, but at the same time continuing the policies from which so many Brazilians had benefitted over the previous 12 years.

By mid-2015 it was clear that Rousseff's attempts to build bridges were inadequate. At root was the massive scandal surrounding Petrobras, the national oil company, which threatened to engulf not only many sections of Brazil's commercial and political establishments, but also foreign companies suspected of benefitting from kickbacks for contracts with Brazil's largest investor. From 2003 to 2010 Rousseff was chair of Petrobras and, while no allegations have been made of any wrong-doing on her part, the breadth of the investigations and arrests was alarming, with no sign of the fall-out abating (see below). Investor confidence in the country plummeted and the real was deemed among the

world's worst-performing currencies in 2015. The slump in GDP showed no signs of being reversed: it contracted by 3.8% in 2015 and 3.2 % in 2016. Consumer confidence vanished and inflation started to rise (it was over 10% by the end of 2015, reduced to about 6.5% in 2016). To add to the depression, Rousseff's unpopularity ballooned and demonstrations against corruption and the country's failings attracted hundreds of thousands of people.

Two further episodes in late 2015, early 2016 compounded the pessimism: on 5 November 2015 a dam retaining 50 million cubic metres of toxic iron-ore tailings broke, destroying the town of Bento Rodrigues in Minas Gerais, killing 16 people and poisoning the entire length of the Rio Doce. The mine, from which the lake came, was operated by Samarco, a joint venture between Vale of Brazil and Anglo-Australian BHP Billiton. By 2018 a number of prosecutions were in process, but no party had accepted responsibility. The second problem was the rapid spread of the mosquito-borne zika virus, which was suspected of being the cause of an increase in cases of micro-encephalitis and abnormalities in babies in the womb and other nervous system disorders.

The Petrobras scandal, the political crisis, the floundering economy and zika did not allow the PT government space to set things on firmer footing in the first half of 2016. In fact, worse was to come when charges over misrepresenting the size of the budget deficit in 2014 led to President Rousseff's suspension by the Senate in May and impeachment in August. Vice-President Michel Temer of the PMDB took over and immediately reshaped the government. In no time, two of his ministers resigned over allegations of involvement in the Petrobras scandal. Soon after Rousseff's suspension, the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, Eduardo Cunha, who was the force behind the call for impeachment, was himself suspended and he resigned in July. In the midst of the health concerns posed by zika and the calamitous political and economic climate, Latin America's first Olympic Games, in Rio de Janeiro in August 2016 were an international success, providing a brief respite from the mass of woes besetting the country.

Presidential elections were due in October 2018. Until April 2018 there was a possibility that ex-president Lula would be running and, should that be the case, he was the outright favourite to win. Legal judgments that began in 2017, however, sentenced him to nine years in jail, increased to 12 on appeal, for money-laundering and corruption. His appeal against the ruling was turned down in January and again in April 2018, clearing the way for him to be imprisoned. He strenuously denied the charges and vowed to continue appealing and to campaign for the presidency. In July, a judge ordered that Lula should be released while he contested the imprisonment and prepared his presidential campaign (an official ruling on which was expected in August 2018). The order was overturned immediately. Other candidates showing early promise were former environment minister and twice presidential candidate Marina Silva, governor of Ceará Ciro Gomes and controversial right-wing congressman Jair Bolsonaro, who, at the time of writing, was edging ahead in the polls. Should Lula finally be barred from standing, though, some 32% said they would not vote at all out of disenchantment with the political system.

In 2017 there were signs that the economy was recovering from recession with growth of over 1%. Analysts were cautiously optimistic for further growth up to 3% in 2018. Reforms of social security and cuts to public spending are deemed essential to encourage the economic upturn that had been promoted by improvements in world trade and falls in Brazilian inflation and interest rates. But the uncertain political climate was a major threat, not just in terms of the outcome of the presidential elections but, before that, whether President Temer's precarious position would allow him to introduce the necessary reforms.

The political temperature was raised in mid-March 2018 when Marielle Franco, a city councillor in Rio de Janeiro, was assassinated, together with her driver. She was allied to the PSOL (Socialism and Freedom), a small left-wing party and campaigned against racism and violence against the poor and on behalf of single mothers like herself and LGBT rights. Until her murder she was little known outside Rio and the Maré favela she represented, but immediately afterwards there were mass outpourings of grief and protest all over the country. At the time of writing it was not known who was responsible. When mainstream politicians were generally perceived as corrupt and distant, and when favelas remained in the hands of armed gangs, were subject to armed invasions by the police and faced incursions by the army on the orders of President Temer, Franco's murder and the public reaction suggested that there was little hope for dispossessed communities and those who make an effort to give them a voice.

Chile

Independence

In 1810 a group of Chilean patriots, including Bernardo O'Higgins – the illegitimate son of a Sligo-born Viceroy of Peru, Ambrosio O'Higgins, and a Chilean mother – revolted against Spain. This revolt led to seven years of war against the occupying troops of Spain – Lord Cochrane was in charge of the insurrectionist navy – and in 1817 General José de San Martín crossed the Andes with an army from Argentina and helped to gain a decisive victory. O'Higgins became the first head of state, but his liberal policies offended the dominant landed aristocracy, leading to his downfall in 1823. A period of anarchy followed, but in 1830 conservative forces led by Diego Portales restored order and introduced the authoritarian constitution of 1833. Under this charter, for almost a century, the country was ruled by a small oligarchy of landowners.

The War of the Pacific

During the 1870s disputes arose with Bolivia and Peru over the northern deserts, which were rich in nitrates. Although most of the nitrates lay in Bolivia and Peru, much of the mining was carried out by Anglo-Chilean companies. In the ensuing War of the Pacific (1879-1883), Chile defeated its neighbours, gaining the Bolivian coastal region as well as the Peruvian provinces of Tarapacá and Arica. For the next 40 years it drew great wealth from the nitrate fields. In the south settlers began pushing across the Río Biobío in the 1860s, encouraged by

government settlement schemes and helped by technological developments including repeating rifles, telegraph, railways and barbed wire. At the end of the War of the Pacific the large Chilean army was sent to subdue the Mapuches who were confined to ever-diminishing tribal lands. The territory was then settled by immigrants – particularly Germans – and by former peasants who had fought in the north.

The 20th century

The rule of the Right was challenged by the liberal regime of President Arturo Alessandri in 1920. Acute economic distress in 1924, linked to the replacement of Chilean nitrates with artificial fertilizers produced more cheaply in Europe, led to army intervention and some reforms were achieved. The inequalities in Chilean society grew sharper, despite the maintenance of political democracy, and gave rise to powerful socialist and communist parties. President Eduardo Frei's policy of 'revolution in freedom' (1964-1970) was the first concerted attempt at overall radical reform, but it raised hopes it could not satisfy. In 1970 a Marxist coalition assumed office under Dr Salvador Allende; the frantic pace of change under his regime polarized the country. Increasing social and economic chaos formed the background for Allende's deposition by the army; he died on 11 September 1973. Chile was then ruled by a military president, General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, and a four-man junta with absolute powers. In its early years particularly, the regime suppressed internal opposition by widely condemned methods. Despite economic prosperity and efforts to make the regime more popular, Pinochet's bid for a further eight years as president after 1989 was rejected by the electorate in a plebiscite in 1988.

Post-Pinochet

As a result, presidential and congressional elections were held in 1989. A Christian Democrat, Patricio Aylwin Azócar, was elected president and took office in March 1990 in a peaceful transfer of power. While Aylwin's coalition held the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate majority was controlled by eight Pinochet appointees and General Pinochet himself as Army Commander, who could block constitutional reform. The new Congress set about revising many of the military's laws on civil liberties and the economy. In 1991 the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation published a report with details of those who were killed under the military regime, but opposition by the armed forces prevented mass human rights trials. In December 1993 presidential elections were won by the Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei, son of the earlier president, but in Congress his party failed to achieve the required two-thirds majority to replace heads of the armed forces and end the system of designated senators. Oblivious to public sentiment, the military's position in the Senate was strengthened when General Pinochet as former president, took up an ex-officio Senate seat. His presence, and therefore parliamentary immunity from prosecution for alleged crimes during his dictatorship, was offensive to parliamentarians who had suffered during his regime.

In October 1998, Pinochet's position came under threat from an unforeseen quarter when a Spanish magistrate filed for his extradition from London, where he was on a private visit, to face charges of torture against Spanish and Chilean citizens between 1973 and 1990. He was detained while the British judiciary deliberated and in March 1999 the Law Lords concluded that Pinochet should stand trial for criminal acts committed after 1988, the year Britain signed the international torture convention. Although Home Secretary Jack Straw authorized the extradition, continuous legal disputes culminated in a health report which claimed that Pinochet was too ill to stand trial. On this evidence the Home Secretary was 'minded' to allow Pinochet to return to Chile, which he did in January 2000. After arriving in Santiago apparently fully fit, Pinochet's health did decline, as did his seemingly untouchable status. Implications of his involvement in the torture and killings of the 1970s and 1980s began to surface and in June 2000 an appeals court stripped Pinochet of his immunity from trial.

Partly as a result of the Pinochet affair, but also because of economic recession, President Frei's standing suffered a sharp decline in 1999. The Concertación elected socialist Ricardo Lagos to be its December 1999 presidential candidate and he beat Joaquín Lavín only by the slimmest of majorities, thus becoming Chile's first socialist president since Salvador Allende. Despite positive economic results during his term, the main focus remained the legacy of Pinochet, whose position and image continued to be eroded. Admissions by former military personnel that, under orders from above, they had committed human rights abuses in the 1970s and 1980s, a protracted process of indictments and investigations ensured that Pinochet's past remained in the spotlight up to and even beyond his death on 10 December 2006.

Mass demonstrations, scandals and a loss of political faith

In the December 2005 presidential election, Michelle Bachelet, who had survived torture while a political prisoner during the Pinochet regime, was elected and the Concertación coalition won majorities in both houses of congress. Concertación's supremacy could not prevent an upsurge in unrest, starting in 2006 with strikes by secondary school students, copper workers and, in 2008, government workers demanding better pay, and demonstrations against potentially environmentally damaging mining and energy projects. Bachelet's response to these disturbances and the chaotic introduction of the new Transantiago transport system did not initially restore confidence and her popularity ratings fell. In early 2009 ex-president Eduardo Frei was chosen as Concertación's candidate for the December 2009 elections, but his main opponent, the centre-right Sebastián Piñera, ended the coalition's hold on power. Piñera's first challenges were to deal with reconstruction after the massive earthquake of February 2010 and the rescue of 33 miners trapped underground for 69 days later in the year. The success of the former aided a spurt in economic growth and job creation, while the latter captivated the world's media.

Throughout Piñera's presidency, the economy remained strong. Demonstrations by various groups recurred, however, including miners seeking

better pay and conditions and supporters of indigenous rights and gender equality. Environmentalists protested against a number of hydroelectric schemes, most notably a project in Aysén which would flood 6000 ha on the Ríos Baker and Pascua. The scheme was approved in April 2012, nonetheless, only to be abandoned in 2014. Student protests over unequal opportunities in education for those from poorer backgrounds began in 2011 and continued into 2013. With presidential elections due in November 2013, ex-president Bachelet included in her campaign for re-election policies to confront social inequality and provide free university education by raising taxes. The ruling Conservative Alliance eventually settled on Labour Minister Evelyn Matthei as Bachelet's main rival, two earlier candidates having resigned. Like Bachelet, Matthei's father had been a general when Salvador Allende was opposed, but General Fernando Matthei was in favour of the coup. Over two rounds, Bachelet secured a return to the presidency with a large majority.

The government coalition, previously Concertación, was expanded under the name Nueva Mayoría (New Majority) to include the Communists and other left-leaning parties. Legislation to reform the education sector was introduced in 2014 and 2015, but despite the participation of former student leaders who had been elected as legislators, the new laws failed to satisfy students, teachers or parents. Mass demonstrations recommenced, with the ranks swelled by workers and other left-wing groups who gave the protests a more anti-establishment message. This was inflamed by a series of scandals over corruption, tax evasion and other suspect practices by politicians. The public's loss of trust in the administration was not helped by an economic slowdown, in part due to falling world copper prices, and mayoral elections in October 2016 reflected this as right-wing candidates made significant gains at the expense of a divided Nueva Mayoría. At the same time, candidates from outside the two established coalitions won elections, such as the unaffiliated Jorge Sharp in Valparaíso.

The move away from Nueva Mayoría continued in the general elections in late 2017. For the second time President Bachelet ceded the presidency to Sebastián Piñera, leading the Chile Vamos coalition, who defeated Alejandro Guillier, an independent backed by Nueva Mayoría and other leftist parties, in the second round. Piñera's pro-business stance aligned well with an economic recovery, boosted by strengthening copper prices and renewed investment in the construction sector. GDP growth was expected to be at least 2.5% in 2018, perhaps higher in 2019, compared with less than 2% under Bachelet. Without a majority in either Congress or Senate, Piñera would have some alliances to build in order to push through his plans for public sector efficiency, a reduction in a larger than expected fiscal deficit, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty.

Colombia

Colombia's divided society

After the collapse of Simón Bolívar's Republic of Gran Colombia in 1829/1830, what is now known as Colombia was called Nueva Granada until 1863. Almost from its

inception the new country became the scene of strife between the centralizing pro-clerical Conservatives and the federalizing anti-clerical Liberals. From 1849 the Liberals were dominant during the next 30 years of insurrections and civil wars. In 1885 the Conservatives imposed a highly centralized constitution, unmodified for over 100 years. A Liberal revolt in 1899 turned into civil war, 'the War of the Thousand Days'. The Liberals were finally defeated in 1902 after 100,000 people had died. It was in 1903 that Panama declared its independence from Colombia, following US pressure.

After 40 years of comparative peace, the strife between Conservatives and Liberals was reignited in a little-publicized but dreadfully bloody civil war known as *La Violencia* from 1948 to 1957 (some 300,000 people were killed). This was ended by a unique political truce, decided by plebiscite in 1957 under which the two political parties supported a single presidential candidate, divided all political offices equally between them, and thus maintained political stability for 16 years. The agreement was ended in 1978. Belisario Betancur, the Conservative president from 1982-1986, offered a general amnesty to guerrilla movements in an attempt to end violence in the country. Following an initial acceptance of the offer, only one of the four main guerrilla groups, the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), upheld the truce in 1985-1987. In May 1986, when the Liberal candidate, Virgilio Barco, won the presidential elections, FARC's newly formed political party, the Unión Patriótica (UP), won 10 seats in Congress; the Liberal party took the majority. Right-wing groups refused to accept the UP and by the beginning of 1990, 1040 party members had been killed in five years. During the campaign for the 1990 presidential both the Liberal Party and the UP presidential candidates, Luis Carlos Galán and Bernardo Jaramillo, were assassinated.

The narcotics trade

In Medellín and Cali, two cartels transformed Colombia's drugs industry into a major force in worldwide business and crime. Their methods were very different: Medellín being ostentatious and violent, Cali much more low-key. In 1986, President Barco instigated an international effort to bring them to justice, but opposition to extradition of suspects to the USA stymied progress. Pablo Escobar, the alleged leader of the Medellín drugs cartel, who had surrendered under secret terms in 1991, escaped from custody in July 1992. Despite a multi-million dollar reward offered for his recapture and renewed conditional offers of surrender, he remained at large until he was killed in December 1993.

Modern Colombia

Having won the presidential elections held on 27 May, 1990, César Gaviria Trujillo (Liberal), who took up the candidacy of the murdered Luis Carlos Galán, appointed a coalition government made up of Liberals from rival factions, Conservatives and the M-19 (Movimiento 19 de Abril).

The Gaviria government was unable to stem violence, whether perpetrated by drug traffickers, guerrillas or common criminals. Not surprisingly, this was one of the issues in the 1994 election campaign, in which Ernesto Samper (Liberal)

defeated Andrés Pastrana (Conservative). The main thrust of Samper's programme was that Colombia's current economic strength should provide resources to tackle the social deprivation which causes drug use and insurgency. Most impetus was lost during 1995-1997, however, in the wake of revelations that Samper's election campaign had received about US\$6 million from the Cali cartel. The debate over Samper's awareness of the funding lasted until June 1996, almost overshadowing the capture or surrender of most of the leading Cali drug lords.

In 1998, congressional and presidential elections were relatively peaceful and a welcome boost to confidence was given when the US withdrew its 'decertification' restrictions (in effect recognizing that Colombia was making progress against drug-trafficking, thus allowing US aid in). The new president, Andrés Pastrana, immediately devoted his efforts to bringing the guerrillas to the negotiating table. A stop-go process began with FARC in late 1998 and the insurgents were conceded a large demilitarized zone, based on San Vicente de Caguán in Caquetá. Not everyone was in favour of Pastrana's approach, especially since FARC violence and extortion did not cease. ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional), meanwhile, angry at being excluded from talks, stepped up its campaign, demanding similar treatment. Paramilitary groups, too, showed no signs of ending their activities. Pastrana also sought international aid for his Plan Colombia, aimed at combatting the drugs trade. The US\$1.6 billion package, approved by the US Congress in May 2000, was to cover mainly military and anti-narcotics equipment, with the remainder destined for crop substitution and other sustainable agriculture projects. Attempts to reduce the net area under drugs cultivation were not successful and, with both left-wing guerrillas and right-wing paramilitaries involved in the narcotics trade, the two fronts of fighting terrorism and drugs became increasingly entangled.

Negotiations with the guerrilla groups continued unsuccessfully into 2002, but the terror campaigns of FARC and ELN increased the government's frustration and, with an eye on the approaching May 2002 elections, Pastrana abandoned his peace initiative and sent in the Army. Strategic points in the demilitarized zone were quickly taken but the guerrillas melted away into the forests and countryside and the disruption and kidnapping continued.

Uribe vs FARC

The frontrunners for the 2002 presidential elections were both Liberals: Horacio Serpa was the official party candidate, while Alvaro Uribe Vélez left the Liberals to run under his own movement, Colombia First. The main thrust of Uribe's campaign was that the time had come to stop pandering to the left-wing guerrillas and to use a firm hand to restore order and security. This struck a chord with many Colombians, not just those who supported Pastrana's later hard line, but also the illegal, right-wing paramilitary groups who are waging their own war against FARC and ELN. Consequently, Uribe won with over 50% of the vote in the first round. Despite (or maybe because of) Uribe's anti-guerrilla policies, and despite a decline in support for insurgents following numerous atrocities, violence continued, prompting a tough new anti-terrorism law. At the same time, and in

the face of criticism, Uribe began peace talks with the AUC (United Self Defence Forces of Colombia), the paramilitary group implacably opposed to FARC and ELN and accused of some of the worst human rights abuses. In mid-2004, the AUC eventually agreed to disarm. Uribe then launched Plan Patriota, a huge military offensive against FARC in southern Colombia. The strength of FARC's response to the Plan continued right up to national elections in 2006, but, having altered the constitution to permit a second presidential term, Uribe won the May 2006 elections with a 62% majority. In March 2006 his supporters won most seats in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies.

These election results not only demonstrated that public support for the hard-line approach had not dwindled, but also reassured foreign investors who were keen to support Colombia and its economy. Nevertheless, with many Colombians displaced, bereft of land and affected by violence, the country's internal conflict seemed as intractable as ever until Uribe invited President Chávez of Venezuela to mediate with FARC over the release of hostages. After several months of difficult negotiations, six hostages were finally set free in early 2008. Chávez's involvement was not problem-free. Uribe dismissed him from the process at one point and when, in March 2008, the Colombian army attacked a FARC base in Ecuador, killing among others the group's head of communications, Raúl Reyes, captured computers were alleged to prove that Venezuela was funding FARC. Further setbacks for FARC in 2008, including the death of long-term leader Manuel Marulanda and the rescue of Senator Ingrid Betancourt and 14 other hostages, only inspired FARC to try to regain lost ground. Uribe meanwhile remained on the offensive, but was unable to secure a constitutional amendment to stand for a third term in May 2010 elections. His ally and former Defence Minister Juan Manuel Santos won that poll, defeating former Bogotá mayor Antanas Mockus of the Green Party. While endorsing many of Uribe's policies, Santos sought better relations with Hugo Chávez and diplomatic relations between the two countries were restored in August 2010.

Moves towards peace

An announcement in February 2012 that FARC was renouncing kidnapping for ransom and then in April the release of 10 hostages were seen as indications that they might be seeking talks with the authorities. No offers of negotiations came from Santos, attacks and counter-attacks continued and, at the mid-point of his term (August 2012), President Santos' popularity sank as people could see no improvement in the security situation. Within a month, Santos announced that talks with FARC would begin in October 2012, first in Oslo, then in Havana. The six points of the talks' agenda were land reform, political participation, disarmament, drugs, victims' right and implementation of the deal. Santos initially set a November 2013 deadline for a settlement, but FARC were less keen to stick to a rigid timetable and there were pauses, planned and unplanned. In June 2014 Santos was reelected as president, narrowly defeating Oscar Ivan Zuluaga, in the second round of voting, having lost the first. Zuluaga favoured a more hard-line position against FARC and had the support of Alvaro Uribe, who was to

lead the congressional opposition to Santos from his seat in the Senate. (Uribe had turned from being Santos' sponsor to his most intransigent critic over the peace talks.) Santos claimed his victory as a clear mandate to bring to a successful conclusion the peace talks with FARC with a revised timetable. At the start of talks and at various times subsequently, FARC called a truce, but Santos declared that the military would remain on alert until peace talks were concluded. As the negotiations ebbed and flowed into 2015, each side engaged in armed actions, but these did not halt the process.

Peace accord

Agreement with FARC on land reform took seven months, underlining both the complexity of the process and the task of tackling the problems of huge numbers of displaced people and rural inequality. By the time of Santos' reelection, the issues of drug-trafficking and future political participation had been settled, leaving the rights of victims, disarmament and implementation of the accords outstanding. In September 2015, amid signs of pressure from the guarantor countries, Cuba, Chile, Norway and Venezuela, and from the majority of Colombians, the question of transitional justice for over 7 million victims of the conflict was resolved. Special courts and a peace tribunal will judge both guerrilla and military participants in the conflict. Perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity will not be eligible to apply for amnesty. Also agreed were the levels of punishment for those found guilty and those who confess. In late September President Santos met Rodrigo Londoño, the FARC leader known as Timochenko, in Havana to set a six-month deadline for a final agreement. This, a bilateral ceasefire, cessation of hostilities and laying aside of guerrillas' weapons, was finally achieved on 23 June 2016. Under its terms, a six-month timetable for FARC to hand over its weaponry was laid out, together with the role of the UN in the process. Part of the agreement was that the Colombian people had to approve it by referendum. This they failed to do by a narrow majority on 2 October 2016, so both sides worked to revise the accord which was signed anew and approved by Congress in November. Soon after the plebiscite that rejected the first agreement, President Santos was awarded the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize. In 2013 ELN indicated that it wished to hold peace talks with the government. In August that year President Santos expressed a willingness to open negotiations and on 30 March 2016 the two sides reached agreement on an agenda for formal negotiations to take place. These began in February 2017. In October both sides agreed a ceasefire, but when this expired in January 2018, ELN started attacking the security forces and oil installations again. This led President Santos to break off negotiations at the end of January and, at the time of writing, it was not known when talks would recommence.

Like all oil exporters, Colombia was hard hit in 2014-2016 by the tumbling price of oil which accounts for over 50% of exports. Prices for other major commodity exports (coffee, gold and coal) also fell in this period. As a result, GDP growth slackened from almost 5% in 2014 to under 2% in 2017. Analysts expect improvement from 2018 thanks in the main to a growth in exports, improved oil prices and investment in infrastructure, but chief among a

number of uncertainties was the political climate in the run up to the May 2018 presidential elections.

After the 2016 peace accord, FARC became a political party, renamed Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común, fielding 75 candidates in the 11 March 2018 congressional elections. Transferring its radical agenda from the armed to the legitimate political arena yielded no success as the violent past was too fresh in most voters' mind. Nevertheless, FARC was guaranteed five seats in each house of the legislature under the peace agreement. Another group which fared badly in the March 2018 elections was the coalition led by President Santos, which finished in fifth place. Reasons for this decline included delays in the implementation the development projects (roads, school, hospitals, etc) in communities abandoned by the withdrawal of FARC, the expansion of coca cultivation in those same areas, accusations that Santos' presidential campaign received money from the discredited Odebrecht and incessant opposition to peace from Uribe and others. Winners in the March elections and presidential primaries were right-wing opponents of the peace accord, especially Iván Duque of Centro Democrático, Uribe's favoured candidate. Also standing on an anti-peace ticket was Germán Vargas Lleras, who was vice-president 2014-2017. Among the front-running candidates in support of peace were Humberto de La Calle, the government's chief peace negotiator; Gustavo Petro, former guerrilla and left-wing mayor of Bogotá 2012-2015; and Sergio Fajardo, governor of Antioquia 2012-2015. An inescapable consequence of the peace accord was that the unifying bond between all political parties (defeating the guerrillas) had been taken away and the result of the first round of the presidential election showed how divided the country was. All the centrist candidates were defeated, leaving the right-wing Duque to contest the poll against Petro. In the event, Duque won by a reasonable margin, raising the prospect of Santos' peace accord with FARC being completely redrawn.

Ecuador

After independence

Ecuador decided on complete independence from the Gran Colombia confederation in August 1830, under the presidency of Juan Flores. The country's 19th-century history was a continuous struggle between pro-Church conservatives and anti-Church (but nonetheless devoutly Catholic) liberals. There were also long periods of military rule from 1895, when the liberal General Eloy Alfaro took power. During the late 1940s and the 1950s there was a prolonged period of prosperity (through bananas, largely) and constitutional rule, but the more typical pattern of alternating civilian and military governments was resumed in the 1960s and 1970s. Apart from the liberal-conservative struggles, there has been long-lasting rivalry between Quito and the Sierra on one hand and Guayaquil and the Costa on the other.

Return to democracy

Following seven years of military rule, the first presidential elections under a new constitution were held in 1979. The ensuing decades of democracy saw

an oscillation of power between parties of the centre-right and centre-left. Governments of both political tendencies towed the international economic line and attempted to introduce neoliberal reforms. These measures were opposed by the country's labour organizations and by the indigenous movement, which gained considerable political power. Against a backdrop of this tug-of-war, disenchantment with the political process grew apace with bureaucratic corruption and the nation's economic woes. In 1996 the frustrated electorate swept a flamboyant populist named Abdalá Bucaram to power. His erratic administration lasted less than six months.

A succession of presidents

Following an interim government and the drafting of the country's 18th constitution, Ecuador elected Jamil Mahuad, a former mayor of Quito, to the presidency in 1998. Mahuad began his term by signing a peace treaty to end the decades-old and very emotional border dispute with Peru. This early success was his last, as a series of fraudulent bank failures sent the country into an economic and political tailspin. A freeze on bank accounts failed to stop landslide devaluation of the Sucre (Ecuador's currency since 1883) and Mahuad decreed the adoption of the US dollar in a desperate bid for stability. Less than a month later, on 21 January 2000, he was forced out of office by Ecuador's indigenous people and disgruntled members of the armed forces. The first overt military coup in South America in over two decades, it lasted barely three hours before power was handed to Vice-President Gustavo Noboa.

Noboa, a political outsider and academic, stepped into Mahuad's shoes with remarkable aplomb. With assistance from the USA and the International Monetary Fund, his government managed to flesh out and implement the dollarization scheme, thus achieving a measure of economic stability at the cost of deepening poverty. Social unrest diminished and Ecuadoreans instead attempted to bring about change through the ballot box. In November 2002, Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez, leader of the January 2000 coup, was elected president by a comfortable majority. He had run on a populist platform in alliance with the indigenous movement and labour unions, but he soon squandered his support. In late 2004, the dismissal of all the supreme court judges by unconstitutional means – and tear gas – drew local and international criticism. Popular opposition in Quito grew, with peaceful, well-attended protests. The president's response, using heavy-handed police repression, led to mass demonstrations which swept him from office in April 2005. Vice-President Alfredo Palacio replaced him, but had to face persistent strikes. General elections, brought forward to November 2006, were won by Rafael Correa, leader of the Alianza País (AP) movement. He immediately called a national referendum to convene a constituent assembly to redraw the constitution and, the new president hoped, shift the nation's foundations toward the political left. The Constituent Assembly was elected in September 2007 and a referendum gave the new constitution popular approval in September 2008. With re-election of the president now permitted, new elections were held in April 2009 and Correa won comfortably.

The Correa years

By 2010 social tension was increasing, fuelled by Correa's confrontational tone and stalemate over various legal changes under the new constitution. Events came to a head in October when junior police and soldiers, protesting at austerity measures, briefly held Correa captive in a hospital after he had been tear-gassed. The president was soon released. Meanwhile, government and media maintained a running battle, with a major skirmish in February 2012 when critics of changes to electoral law accused the government of limiting press freedom. Correa maintained that the media had no role to play in political activity. Widespread concern over rising crime led Correa to call a referendum in May 2011 about toughening law enforcement and re-organizing the judiciary, among various unrelated questions, but this rapidly degenerated into a popularity contest, with campaigning and voting focused on whether or not one liked the president, rather than addressing the issues. Correa 'won' by a narrow margin, but a truer test of his popularity came in early 2013 when he stood for reelection as president and defeated all rival candidates in the first round. His Alianza País party also won a majority in Congress. With further four years in power Correa aimed to continue improvements in healthcare, education and roads and further reduce poverty. The high levels of investment in the public sector were largely funded by revenue from oil and borrowing abroad, mostly from China. In August 2013 Correa announced the cancellation of the Yasuní-ITT conservation initiative, which asked the international community to raise US\$3.6 billion to prevent drilling for oil in the Parque Nacional Yasuní. Only US\$13 million had been deposited with the UN-based trust fund administering the scheme and Correa claimed that the world had 'failed' Ecuador. The liquidation of the fund effectively opened the door to oil companies to extract oil from the the park. There was an immediate outcry from indigenous groups and environmentalists and a huge majority of Ecuadoreans were opposed to drilling in what is one of the most diverse regions of the planet.

By mid-2015 indigenous groups appeared finally to have lost patience over Correa's ability to introduce the social programmes and economic equality that he had originally promised. Large numbers of people marched on Quito and blocked major highways. These protests, however, were not isolated, but were part of a succession of significant demonstrations against Correa. Part of the anger was aimed at the president's determination to change the constitution in order to end term limits on office and run again in 2017. As it turned out, the National Assembly approved the change to the constitution in December 2015, but only to take effect from 2021. Correa declared that he had no intention of running in 2017. Another complaint was that press freedom remained limited, even to the point that criticism on social media was outlawed. These general issues were accompanied by more specific grievances, such as opposition to huge increases in inheritance tax and capital gains on land deals. Trades unions, doctors and retirees also took to the streets to air grievances and Correa's popularity began to decline. A big part of the problem was that the revenues from the oil boom masked underlying weaknesses and when the price of oil

collapsed, coupled with a strong US dollar, public spending plans could not be sustained. Consequently, dissatisfaction grew while the government continued to borrow against improved oil prices, postponing any unpopular measures to a future date.

Presidential elections were held on 19 February 2017. The support that Correa did retain helped his preferred candidate, ex-Vice-President Lenín Moreno, to gain victory over the centre-right candidate, Guillermo Lasso. This did not guarantee a continuation of 'Correísmo', however. Much of his legacy was put under scrutiny, especially following the imprisonment of the new vice-president, Jorge Glas, Correa's second vice-president, for his involvement in the Odebrecht bribery scandal that was widely infecting Latin America. Moreno distanced himself from his former boss and in February 2018 a seven-question referendum overturned (among other things) the law permitting indefinite re-election of the president. Only one re-election will be allowed, thus preventing Correa from standing again. Voters also approved the expansion of the 'intangible' area in the Parque Nacional Yasuní to 50,000 ha and the reduction of the area open to drilling from 1030 to 300 ha. Nevertheless, oil exploration had begun and is not scheduled to stop.

On 26 March 2018, three Ecuadorean journalists were kidnapped by a dissident FARC group operating on the Colombia–Ecuador border in Nariño and Esmeraldas provinces. This and other acts of violence provoked tension between the two countries and led to the resignation of Ecuador's defence and interior ministers after it was revealed that the journalists had been murdered. At the time of writing police in both countries were searching for the group's leader, Walter Patricio Arizala, known as Guacho.

Guyana

The country was first partially settled between 1616 and 1621 by the Dutch West India Company, who erected a fort and depot at Fort Kyk-over-al (County of Essequibo). The first English attempt at settlement was made by Captain Leigh on the Oiapoque River (now French Guyane) in 1604, but he failed to establish a permanent settlement. Lord Willoughby, founded a settlement in 1663 at Suriname, which was captured by the Dutch in 1667 and ceded to them at the Peace of Breda in exchange for New York. The Dutch held the three colonies till 1796 when they were captured by a British fleet. The territory was restored to the Dutch in 1802, but in the following year was retaken by Great Britain, which finally gained it in 1814, when the counties of Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara were merged to form British Guiana.

During the 17th century the Dutch and English settlers established posts upriver, in the hills, mostly as trading points with the Amerindian natives. Plantations were laid out and worked by African slaves. Poor soil defeated this venture, and the settlers retreated with their slaves to the coastal area in mid-18th century: the old plantation sites can still be detected from the air. Coffee and cotton were the main crops until the late 18th century, but sugar had become the dominant crop by 1820. In 1834 slavery was abolished. Many slaves became small landholders, and

settlers had to find another source of labour: indentured workers from India, a few Chinese, and some Portuguese labourers. At the end of their indentures many settled in Guyana.

The end of the colonial period was politically turbulent, with rioting between the mainly Indo-Guyanese People's Progressive Party (PPP), led by Dr Cheddi Jagan, and the mainly Afro-Guyanese People's National Congress (PNC), under Mr Forbes Burnham. The PNC, favoured over the PPP by the colonial authorities, formed a government in 1964 and retained office until 1992. Guyana is one of the few countries in the Caribbean where political parties have used race as an election issue. As a result, tension between the ethnic groups has manifested itself mainly at election time.

On 26 May 1966 Guyana gained independence, and on 23 February 1970 it became a co-operative republic within the Commonwealth. The constitution of 1980 declared Guyana to be in transition from capitalism to socialism and relations with the USSR and Eastern Europe were fostered. Following the death of President Forbes Burnham in August 1985, Desmond Hoyte became president, since when relations with the United States improved.

Regular elections to the National Assembly and to the presidency since independence were widely criticized as fraudulent. In October 1992 national assembly and presidential elections, declared free and fair by international observers, the PPP/Civic party, led by Dr Jagan, won power after 28 years in opposition. The installation of a government by democratic means was greeted with optimism, including by foreign investors and the IMF.

In March 1997, President Jagan died after a heart attack. In elections on 15 December 1997, the PPP/C alliance was re-elected with Jagan's widow, Janet, as president. Desmond Hoyte and the PNC disputed the results and a brief period of violent demonstrations was ended by mediation from CARICOM, the Caribbean Common Market. Even though the PPP/C was sworn in to office on 24 December 1997, agreeing to review the constitution and hold new elections within three years, Hoyte refused to recognize Jagan as president. In August 1999 President Jagan resigned because of ill health and Minister of Finance, Bharrat Jagdeo was appointed in her place. In subsequent elections in March 2001 the PPP/C alliance and Jagdeo were returned to office. After the death of Desmond Hoyte in December 2002, his successor Robert Corbin agreed terms with Jagdeo which included an end to the PNC/Reform's boycott of the National Assembly. Jagdeo and the PPP/C again won elections on 28 August 2006, but this time without the inter-party violence that had marred previous polls. This, plus the good showing of the new Alliance for Change (AFC), which campaigned on a non-racial platform, raised hopes for better relations within Guyana's racially divided society.

In the elections of November 2011, PPP/C won the most seats in parliament and its candidate, Donald Ramotar, was named president. PPP/C failed by one seat to win an outright majority, though, as A Partnership for National Unity (APNU – a coalition of PNC and several smaller parties) gained 26 seats and AFC seven to PPP/C's 32. The opposition used its one-seat advantage to delay and thwart legislation

and to impose spending cuts. The president refused to implement the cuts; the assembly passed a motion of no confidence and, in November 2014, Ramotar suspended parliament. In January 2015 he called for early elections which were held on 11 May and were won by the APNU/AFC alliance with the same 33- to 32-seat majority as before. David Grainger of APNU was sworn in as president.

An early challenge for the Grainger administration was Venezuela's claim to sovereignty over the territorial waters off the Essequibo Region. Guyana called the annexation of the continental shelf a violation of international law. Venezuela had objected that Guyana should not grant concessions for oil exploration in the disputed waters to US company Exxon-Mobil who, in both 2015 and 2016, announced the discovery of significant deposits in the Liza-1 field of the Stabroek block – current estimates at around 3.2 billion barrels (2018). The argument continued into 2017, when the case was eventually handed over to the International Court of Justice (whose jurisdiction Venezuela does not recognize). In July 2018 the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) heads of government gave their full support to Guyana's claim. Meanwhile, Guyana was trying to fast-track oil production in order to strengthen its hand in any court proceedings while at the same time trying to deflect accusations that the deal negotiated by the government with Exxon and its partners in 2016 was flawed and too generous to the overseas company.

Since 2009 Guyana has subscribed to an Avoided Deforestation (AD) initiative aimed at setting its rainforest under long-term protection in return for international compensation and support for sustainable development. One casualty of the 2014 political impasse (see above) was a bill to facilitate loans for a hydroelectric scheme at Amaila Falls, which was viewed as essential to provide cheap power for the country. The US developer pulled out of the project and the government declared it 'dead'. But because the Amaila Falls project is a key part of Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy and is linked to the AD initiative, an effect of the stalemate was that Norway withheld a US\$40 million tranche of its support for AD until the APNU government made its position clear on the Strategy. As of June 2015 Norway had committed US\$190 million to the US\$250 million for AD, but of that sum the majority (84%) remained in accounts with the World and Inter-American Development Banks awaiting disbursement. In October 2017 the government decided to abandon the Amaila project, but whether the funds deposited by Norway in the IADB would go towards other renewable energy projects was unclear.

Linked to the plan to keep the rainforest intact is the growing popularity of Guyana as an ecotourism destination. Ecotourism, however, remains a small part of Guyana's tourism mix. In 2012 tourism arrivals rose by almost 20% to about 150,000, the majority being people of Guyanese descent returning for their holidays and the majority of those coming from the US. New measurements for arrivals were introduced by the Caribbean Tourism Organization in 2013 so direct comparisons cannot be made, but in 2014 arrivals were 205,824, rising in 2016 to 235,300, boosted largely by the celebrations for 50 years of independence. But the trend continued in 2017, with arrival numbers growing by 5.7% compared with

the same period of 2016 to 170,322. The World Travel and Tourism Council stated that tourism contributed 7.3% of GDP in 2016, with growth set to continue in the following decade.

Guyane

Several French and Dutch expeditions attempted to settle along the coast in the early 17th century, but were driven off by the native population. The French finally established a settlement at Sinnamary in the early 1660s but this was destroyed by the Dutch in 1665 and seized by the British two years later. Under the Treaty of Breda, 1667, Guyane was returned to France. Apart from a brief occupation by the Dutch in 1676, it remained in French hands until 1809 when a combined Anglo-Portuguese naval force captured the colony and handed it over to the Portuguese (Brazilians). Though the land was restored to France by the Treaty of Paris in 1814, the Portuguese remained until 1817. Gold was discovered in 1853 and disputes arose about the frontiers of the colony with Suriname and Brazil. These were settled by arbitration in 1891, 1899, and 1915. The colony was used as a prison for French convicts with camps scattered throughout the country; Saint-Laurent was the port of entry. After serving prison terms convicts spent an equal number of years in exile and were usually unable to earn their return passage to France. By the law of 19 March 1946, the Colony of Cayenne, or Guyane Française, became the Department of Guyane, with the same laws, regulations, and administration as a department in metropolitan France. The seat of the Prefect and of the principal courts is at Cayenne. A small minority, represented by the MDES (Decolonization and Social Emancipation Movement), favoured independence, but in a referendum in 2010 the majority of voters rejected greater autonomy. The French government has made no move to alter the department's status. Council elections were held in December 2015, when a new Collectivité Territoriale Unique with 51 seats, uniting the General and Regional councils, was formed.

Despite heavy dependence economically on France, unemployment (at over 20% in 2017 with youth unemployment much higher) and a rapidly expanding population have become a serious problem. This has been made worse by illegal immigration, mainly from Haiti, Suriname and Brazil. Starting in March 2017, Guyane was paralysed by a series of protests and general strikes, which targeted the lack of investment in education, health, the environment and the economy and the country's unenviable record as the most violent department of France. The demonstrations, under the umbrella group of Get Guyane Moving (Pou La Gwiyann Dékolé), which included trades unions and the 500 Brothers Against Crime collective, forced the suspension of rocket launches at Kourou in April. That same month the unrest became an issue in the French presidential election and central government offered an emergency package of up to 2.5 billion euros. New President Emmanuel Macron, who hadn't helped ease the sense of neglect by referring to the country as "an island" during his election campaign, visited the department in October, only to be met by renewed rioting. On his visit he

promised more police to tackle crime and immigration, but no more money. Further resentment towards Paris was fuelled by the fact that the final decision on a huge open-pit gold mine in the Mana River basin, deep in the interior, would be taken by central, not local government. Supporters of the Montagne d'Or mine highlight many economic benefits, the discouragement of illegal mining and a number of related infrastructure projects which will boost investment in the country. Opponents say that it will cause massive pollution, destroy natural, indigenous and archaeological sites and open the way for more such schemes.

Paraguay

Independence and dictatorship

The disturbances in Buenos Aires in 1810-1816, which led to independence from Spain, enabled Creole leaders in Asunción to throw off the rule of Buenos Aires as well as Madrid. The new republic was, however, subject to pressure from both Argentina, which blocked Paraguayan trade on the Río de la Plata, and Brazil. Following independence Paraguay was ruled by a series of dictators, the first of whom, Dr Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia (1814-1840), known as 'El Supremo', imposed a policy of isolation and self-sufficiency. The opening of the Río de la Plata after the fall of the Argentine dictator Rosas enabled de Francia's successor, Carlos Antonio López (1840-1862) to import modern technology: in 1856 a railway line between Asunción and Villarrica was begun; an iron foundry and telegraph system were also developed. Carlos López was succeeded by his son, Francisco Solano López (López II), who saw himself as the Napoleon of South America. Believing Paraguay to be threatened by Brazil and Argentina, Solano López declared war on Brazil in 1865. When Argentina refused permission to send troops through Misiones to attack Brazil, López declared war on Argentina. With Uruguay supporting Brazil and Argentina, the ensuing War of the Triple Alliance was disastrous for the Paraguayan forces, who held on against overwhelming odds until the death of López at the Battle of Cerro Corá on 1 March 1870. Of a pre-war population of 400,000, only 220,000 survived the war, 28,000 of them males, mostly either very young or very old. In the peace settlement Paraguay lost territory to Brazil and Argentina, although rivalry between these neighbours prevented a worse fate.

After the war, Paraguay experienced political instability as civilian factions competed for power, often appealing to the army officers for support. Although there were few policy differences between the two political parties (the National Republican Association, known as Colorados from its red banner, and the Liberal party, who adopted the colour blue), rivalry was intense. Elections were held regularly, but whichever party was in government invariably intervened to fix the result and the opposition rarely participated.

The Chaco War

While Paraguayan leaders were absorbed with domestic disputes, Bolivia began occupying disputed parts of the Chaco in an attempt to gain access to the sea via

the Río Paraguay. Although Bolivian moves started in the late 19th century, the dispute was given new intensity by the discovery of oil in the 1920s. In the four-year Chaco War (1932-1935) 56,000 Bolivians and 36,000 Paraguayans were killed. Despite general expectations, outnumbered Paraguayan troops under Mariscal José Félix Estigarribia pushed the Bolivian army out of most of the Chaco.

Victory in war only increased dissatisfaction in the army with the policies of pre-war governments. In February 1936 nationalist officers seized power and appointed the war hero, Colonel Rafael Franco, as president. Although Franco was overthrown in a counter-coup in 1937, the so-called 'February Revolution' began major changes in Paraguay including the first serious attempt at land reform and legal recognition of the small labour movement. Between 1939 and 1954 Paraguayan politics were even more turbulent, as rival civilian factions and army officers vied for power. In 1946 civil war shook the country as army units based in Concepción fought to overthrow President Morínigo.

The Stroessner years

A military coup in May 1954 led to General Alfredo Stroessner becoming president. Stroessner retained power for 34 years, the most durable dictator in Paraguayan history and one of the longest in power in Latin America. His rule was based on control over the army and the Colorado party, both of which were purged of opponents. While a network of spies informed on dissidents, party membership was made compulsory for most official posts including teachers and doctors. In fraudulent elections Stroessner was re-elected eight times. Paraguay, and in particular the outlaw town of Puerto Presidente Stroessner (now Ciudad del Este), became a centre for smuggling, gambling and drug-running, much of it controlled by Stroessner's supporters. Meanwhile the government spent large amounts of money on transportation and infrastructure projects, including the giant hydroelectric dam at Itaipú. Although these projects brought employment, the completion of Itaipú in 1982 coincided with recession in Brazil and Argentina on whose economies Paraguay was heavily dependent. Meanwhile rivalry intensified within the regime over the succession, with Stroessner favouring his son, Gustavo. Opposition focussed around General Andrés Rodríguez, who was married to Stroessner's daughter. When Stroessner tried to force Rodríguez to retire, troops loyal to Rodríguez overthrew the 75-year old Stroessner, who left to live in Brazil where he died in exile in 2006.

Liberalization

Rodríguez, who became provisional president, easily won multi-party elections in May 1989. The commitment to greater democracy permitted opponents who had previously boycotted, or been banned from elections, to gain an unprecedented number of seats in the legislative elections of the same date. Despite considerable scepticism over General Rodríguez's intentions, political liberalization became a reality. The presidential and congressional elections that he promised were held on 9 May 1993. The presidency was won by Juan Carlos Wasmosy of the Colorado Party and Domingo Laíno of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party came second.

The government's commitment to market reforms, privatization and economic integration with Argentina and Brazil within Mercosur inspired protests from all quarters. 1994 saw the first general strike in 35 years. There were also demands for land reform and increased social services. A worsening of relations between the military and the legislature led to a critical few days in April 1996. Army commander General Lino Oviedo was dismissed for threatening a coup; Wasmosy offered him the defence ministry but then withdrew the offer after massive public protest. Oviedo was later arrested on charges of insurrection, but to the dismay of the Colorado leadership, he was chosen as the party's candidate for the May 1998 presidential elections. This intensified the feud between Oviedo and Wasmosy, who eventually succeeded in having Oviedo jailed by a military tribunal for 10 years for the 1996 coup attempt. A compromise ticket of Raúl Cubas Grau (Oviedo's former running mate) and Luis María Argaña (Colorado party president and opponent of Wasmosy) won the election. Within a week of taking office in August 1998, Cubas released Oviedo from prison, despite a Supreme Court ruling that Oviedo should serve out his sentence. Matters came to a head when Vice-President Argaña was shot in March 1999, just before the Senate was to vote on impeachment of Cubas. Intense diplomatic efforts, led by Paraguay's Mercosur partners, resulted in Cubas' resignation on 29 March. He was replaced by Luis González Macchi, the president of Congress. Cubas went into exile in Brazil, and Oviedo in Argentina, from where he escaped in December 1999. His military supporters staged an unsuccessful coup in May 2000 and the following month Oviedo was arrested in Brazil. The González Macchi administration, meanwhile, was facing economic recession, strikes and social discontent. The economic downturn and its repercussions worsened through 2002 as a result of Argentina's financial crisis. In February 2003, González Macchi himself was discredited by allegations of the misuse of state funds, fraud and the torture of left-wing militants (he was imprisoned for illegal enrichment in 2006). Nevertheless, in subsequent elections in April 2003, voters backed the Colorado Party and its candidate, Nicanor Duarte Frutos.

Lugo ends Colorado rule

That nothing really changed under Duarte, certainly no improvement in the living conditions of the poor majority despite record incomes from soya exports, was one of the main causes of the demise of the Colorado presidency. In 2006, Fernando Lugo, the former bishop of San Pedro diocese, left the priesthood to enter politics and soon emerged as an independent, left-leaning leader of those seeking change. He contested the April 2008 elections as a member of the coalition Patriotic Alliance for Change party, with land reform and renegotiation of the treaty with Brazil defining sales of electricity from Itaipú as principal policies. Lugo easily defeated Colorado candidate Blanca Ovelar and Lino Oviedo (who had been released from prison in 2007), but had no political party to back him in Congress. The Colorado party had won most seats in both houses. Lugo's inauguration was the first in Paraguay's history in which a ruling party peacefully ceded power to an elected president from an opposition party. Early in 2009,

political developments were overshadowed by claims that Lugo had fathered sons with three different women. He did acknowledge one, but the allegations lost him much prestige. The activities of a small Marxist insurgent group, Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo (EPP) forced Lugo to suspend constitutional rights in parts of the country in 2010. On the plus side, the economy in 2010 grew at an unprecedented rate, by some 15% according to the Central Bank, thanks to high prices and demand for Paraguay's main commodities, soya, beef and grains. After reduced growth in 2011 and 2012, the economy was almost back at 2010 levels of growth in 2013. The vast majority of Paraguayans, especially in the countryside, gained no benefit from the economic boom, however, and disputes over land and distribution frequently occurred. One such confrontation in June 2012 led to 17 deaths and both houses of congress castigated President Lugo for his handling of the tragedy. Lugo was impeached and forced from office. Vice-President Federico Franco of the Liberal Party took over and Paraguay was expelled from the Mercosur trade group by its partners Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay for the so-called parliamentary coup.

Colorados retake control

In April 2013, presidential elections were won by Horacio Cartes of the Colorado Party. On his election the Mercosur leaders offered to welcome Paraguay back to the group. Since the Paraguayan Congress had always objected to Venezuela joining Mercosur, and since the other three members had made Venezuela a member while Paraguay was expelled, the Mercosur offer was declined until the impasse was resolved in December 2013.

Cartes, a multi-millionaire businessman, promised in his inaugural speech in August 2013 to tackle poverty, but almost his first act had to be to take on new powers to deal with an outbreak of attacks by EPP in the north of the country. A Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (PND) was developed for 2014-2030, aimed at improving social development, providing economic growth for all sectors of society and opening Paraguay up to international trade markets. Even though raising living standards in the poorest areas was seen as one of the ways of reducing the EPP's influence, after four years in office Cartes had neither cut poverty significantly, nor stopped the insurgents' activities altogether. The EPP claims as its main objectives defence of campesinos and of the environment, but its activities are largely limited to kidnapping wealthy landowners or members of their families, robbery and attacks on police and military.

In early 2017, Cartes sought to amend the constitution to allow for presidential reelection, banned since 1992. The Senate approved the change in a vote in closed session at the end of March, but before the lower house had the opportunity to vote, protestors entered Congress, started fires and disrupted the process. Despite having the support of both Colorados and opposition politicians, including ex-president Lugo, the amendment was shelved in the face of public resistance. Although Cartes was thus out of the running for the presidency in April 2018 elections, the Colorados were expected to have a clear majority in the polls. In primaries in December 2017, the Colorado candidacy was won by Mario Abdo

Benítez, who beat Cartes' choice, Santiago Peña. His main opponent was Efraín Alegre Sasain of the Gran Alianza Nacional Renovada (GANAR) coalition, with eight other contenders in the race. In the elections, held on 22 April 2018, Abdo Benítez won the presidency and was due to take office in August 2018. Cartes, rather than taking up a non-voting Senate post for life, opted to stand as a full member of Congress and won his seat at the polls.

Economic growth in 2014 was 4.5%, with a slowdown to 3-4% in 2015-2017 because of reduced electricity output from the Itaipú and Yacretá dams and the deteriorating economic situation in neighbours Brazil and Argentina. The prime movers for growth, however, were construction and the agricultural sector, in particular exports of beef and soya. A downside of the success of the livestock sector has been a rush to convert large areas of the Chaco into land for rearing cattle. Hundreds of thousands of hectares have been deforested, including in protected areas, posing a serious threat to uncontacted Ayoreo indigenous people. While Congress has passed laws to preserve the remaining pockets of Atlantic forest in eastern Paraguay, it has rejected any attempt to stop deforestation of the Chaco. Likewise, in northeastern Paraguay, many people had been displaced as large multinational and Brazilian companies purchased land for intensive agriculture. Most ended up in slums around Asunción and it was to these people that Pope Francis dedicated some of his visit to Paraguay in July 2015. He also dedicated to the women of Paraguay his Mass at the Sanctuary at Caacupé, which was attended by thousands of Paraguayans and Argentines and which coincided with a national debate about sexual abuse, in particular of young girls. The Pope's involvement with Paraguay continued in 2017 when he called for dialogue and reconciliation after the March 2017 riots.

Peru

After independence

Important events following the ejection of the Spaniards were a temporary confederation between Peru and Bolivia in the 1830s; the Peruvian-Spanish War (1866); and the War of the Pacific (1879-1883), in which Peru and Bolivia were defeated by Chile and Peru lost its southern territory. The 19th and early 20th centuries were dominated by the traditional elites, with landowners holding great power over their workers. Political parties were slow to develop until the 1920s, when socialist thinkers Juan Carlos Mariátegui and Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre began to call for change. Haya de la Torre formed the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA), but in the 1930s and 40s he and his party were under threat from the military and the elite.

To the Shining Path

A reformist military Junta took over control of the country in October 1968. Under its first leader, General Juan Velasco Alvarado, the Junta instituted a series of measures to raise the personal status and standard of living of the workers and the rural *indígenas*, by land reform, worker participation in industrial management

and ownership, and nationalization of basic industries, exhibiting an ideology perhaps best described as 'military socialism'. In view of his failing health General Velasco was replaced in 1975 by General Francisco Morales Bermúdez and policy (because of a mounting economic crisis and the consequent need to seek financial aid from abroad) swung to the Right. Presidential and congressional elections were held on 18 May 1980, and Fernando Belaúnde Terry was elected president for the second time. His term was marked by growing economic problems and the appearance of the Maoist terrorist movement Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path).

Initially conceived in the University of Ayacucho, the movement gained most support for its goal of overthrowing the whole system of Lima-based government from highland *indígenas* and migrants to urban shanty towns. The activities of Sendero Luminoso and another terrorist group, Túpac Amaru (MRTA), frequently disrupted transport and electricity supplies, although their strategies had to be reconsidered after the arrest of both their leaders in 1992. Víctor Polay of MRTA was arrested in June and Abimael Guzmán of Sendero Luminoso was captured in September; he was sentenced to life imprisonment (although the sentence had to be reviewed in 2003 under legal reforms). Although Sendero did not capitulate, many of its members in 1994-1995 took advantage of the Law of Repentance, which guaranteed lighter sentences in return for surrender, and freedom in exchange for valuable information. Meanwhile, Túpac Amaru was thought to have ceased operations (see below).

The Fujimori years

The April 1985 elections were won by the APRA party leader Alan García Pérez. During his populist, left-wing presidency disastrous economic policies caused increasing poverty and civil instability. In presidential elections held over two rounds in 1990, Alberto Fujimori of the Cambio 90 movement defeated the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, who belonged to the Fredemo (Democratic Front) coalition. Fujimori, without an established political network behind him, failed to win a majority in either the Senate or the Lower house. Undeterred, and with massive popular support, President Fujimori dissolved Congress and suspended the constitution on 5 April 1992, declaring that he needed a freer hand to introduce free-market reforms, combat terrorism and drug trafficking, and root out corruption.

Elections to a new, 80-member Democratic Constituent Congress (CCD) in November 1992 and municipal elections in February 1993 showed that voters still had scant regard for mainstream political groups. A new constitution drawn up by the CCD was approved by a narrow majority of the electorate in October 1993. Among the new articles were the immediate re-election of the president and, as expected, Fujimori stood for re-election on 9 April 1995. He beat his independent opponent, the former UN General Secretary, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, by a resounding margin. The coalition that supported him also won a majority in Congress.

The government's success in most economic areas did not accelerate the distribution of foreign funds for social projects. Furthermore, rising unemployment and the austerity imposed by economic policy continued to

cause hardship for many. Dramatic events on 17 December 1996 thrust several of these issues into sharper focus. 14 Túpac Amaru terrorist infiltrated a reception at the Japanese Embassy in Lima, taking 490 hostages and demanding the release of their imprisoned colleagues and new measures to raise living standards. Most of the hostages were released and negotiations were pursued during a stalemate that lasted until 22 April 1997. The president took sole responsibility for the successful, but risky assault which freed all the hostages (one died of heart failure) and killed all the terrorists. By not yielding to Túpac Amaru, Fujimori regained much popularity. But this masked the fact that no concrete steps had been taken to ease poverty. It also deflected attention from Fujimori's plans to stand for a third term following his unpopular manipulation of the law to persuade Congress that the new constitution did not apply to his first period in office. As his opponents insisted that Fujimori should not stand, the popularity of Alejandro Toledo, a centrist and former World Bank official of humble origins, surged to such an extent that he and Fujimori were neck and neck in the first poll. Toledo and his supporters claimed that Fujimori's slim majority was the result of fraud, a view echoed in the pressure put on the president, by the US government among others, to allow a second ballot. A run-off election was set for 28 May 2000, but all but the authorities pressed for a delay, saying that the electoral system was unprepared and flawed. Toledo boycotted the election and Fujimori was returned unopposed, but with minimal approval. Having won, he proposed to "strengthen democracy".

This pledge proved to be worthless following the airing of a secretly shot video on 14 September 2000 of Fujimori's close aide and head of the National Intelligence Service (SIN), Vladimiro Montesinos, handing US\$15,000 to a congressman, Alberto Kouri, to persuade him to switch allegiances to Fujimori's coalition. Fujimori's demise was swift. His initial reaction was to close down SIN and announce new elections, eventually set for 8 April 2001, at which he would not stand. Montesinos, denied asylum in Panama, was hunted down in Peru, Fujimori personally taking charge of the search. While Montesinos evaded capture, investigators discovered that hundreds of senior figures were under his sway and that he held millions of dollars in overseas bank accounts. As the search continued, Fujimori, on an official visit to Japan, sent Congress an email announcing his resignation. Congress rejected this, firing him on charges of being "morally unfit" to govern. An interim president, Valentín Paniagua, was sworn in, with ex-UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar as Prime Minister, and the government set about uncovering the depth of corruption associated with Montesinos and Fujimori. From 2002 onwards, Montesinos was involved in a series of trials and was convicted of a number of crimes. In 2004, prosecutors also sought to charge exiled Fujimori with authorizing deaths squads at Barrios Altos (1991) and La Cantuta (1992) in which 25 people died. This followed the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's report (2003) into the civil war of the 1980s-1990s, which stated that over 69,000 Peruvians had been killed. Declaring from exile in Japan that he would be exonerated and stand for the presidency in 2006, Fujimori flew to Chile in November 2005, but the Chilean authorities jailed him

for seven months and then held him on parole until an extradition request was finally approved in September 2007. In December that year the first of several trials began, Fujimori being charged with, but strenuously denying, the Barrios Altos and La Cantuta murders, kidnapping and corruption. He was found guilty of human rights abuses in 2009 and sentenced to 25 years in prison (further convictions followed).

After Fujimori

In the run-up to the 2001 presidential ballot, the front-runner was Alejandro Toledo, with ex-president Alan García as his main opponent. After winning a run-off vote, Toledo pledged to heal the wounds that had opened in Peru since his first electoral battle with the disgraced Fujimori, but his presidency was marked by slow progress on both the political and economic fronts. With the poverty levels still high, few jobs created and a variety of scandals, Toledo's popularity plummeted. Major confrontations and damaging strikes ensued, and charges of corruption were laid at his own door.

The April 2006 elections were contested by Alan García, the conservative Lourdes Flores and Ollanta Humala, a former military officer and unsuccessful coup leader who claimed support from Venezuela's Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales of Bolivia. García and Humala won through to the second round, which García won, in part because many were suspicious of Chávez's interference in Peruvian affairs. García was anxious to overcome his past record as president and pledged to rein in public spending and not squander the benefits of an economy growing consistently since 2005. Throughout his term of office, controversy surrounded García's free-market and mineral exploration policies, with major demonstrations being held over both. Clashes in mid-2009 between indigenous protestors from near Bagua Grande (Amazonas) and police over oil-drilling rights led to over 50 deaths and claims of human rights abuse.

Strong economy, weak governance and the (almost) return of the Fujimoris

The first round of voting in the presidential and congressional elections of 2016, held on 10 April, gave Keiko Fujimori of Popular Force (Fuerza Popular) the lead, some way ahead of nearest rival Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (popularly known as PPK) of Peruvians for Change (Peruanos por el Cambio). These two candidates contested the second round on 5 June and, after third-placed Verónica Mendoza of the left-wing Broad Front (Frente Amplio) urged her followers to support Kuczynski amid a late surge of sentiment against the Fujimori family, Kuczynski secured 50.1% of the vote to snatch the presidency.

Kuczynski, an economist who has held various high-ranking posts in previous governments, planned to build on the economy's health and stimulate further growth through tax cuts and investment in public works. His programmes were difficult to implement, however, as he had to govern without a majority in Congress (Fuerza Popular having 71 out of the 130 seats). In September 2017, after a two-month teachers' strike, the government lost a vote of no-confidence and the whole cabinet had to resign. Any goodwill for Kuczynski's new cabinet

was short-lived as PPK himself became increasingly involved in accusations of corruption involving his company's dealings with Brazilian construction firm Odebrecht in 2004-2006, when he was minister of finance. Opponents called for PPK's impeachment, but narrowly lost the vote in December 2017 when ten members of Fuerza Popular, led by Kenji Fujimori, Keiko's brother, sided with PPK. On the face of it, Kenji's move could be seen as a power struggle with his sister in the run-up to local elections in October 2018 and presidential elections in 2021. But many viewed PPK's reliance on Kenji's faction as a face-saver in return for the pardoning of Alberto Fujimori on health grounds on 24 December, three days after the impeachment vote. Kenji and Kuczynski had in fact been negotiating Alberto's release for some three months, but that did not stop the pardon being a hugely divisive action.

Neither surviving the first impeachment vote nor freeing Fujimori let Kuczynski off the hook, as parties that had supported him in the first vote called for a new impeachment vote. PPK had to reshuffle his cabinet again in January 2018, as ministers and government officials resigned in protest at Fujimori's pardon. But the pressure for impeachment became intolerable. To add to the corruption charges, evidence emerged of Kuczynski's supporters offering inducements to members of Congress to vote against impeachment, which was due to be held on 22 March 2018. PPK resigned on 21 March, but categorically denied that he had been dishonest. Vice-President Martín Vizcarra was sworn in as president almost immediately. In his inauguration speech he said that the time had come to root out corruption from Peruvian society.

Suriname

Although Amsterdam merchants had been trading with the Wild Coast of Guiana as early as 1613 (the name Parmurbo-Paramaribo was already known) it was not until 1630 that 60 English settlers came to Suriname under Captain Marshall and planted tobacco. The real founder of the colony was Lord Willoughby of Parham, governor of Barbados, who sent an expedition to Suriname in 1651 under Anthony Rous to find a suitable place for settlement. Willoughbyland became an agricultural colony with 500 little sugar plantations, 1000 white inhabitants and 2000 African slaves. Jews from Holland and Italy joined them, as well as Dutch Jews ejected from Brazil after 1654. On 27 February 1667, Admiral Crijnssen conquered the colony for the states of Zeeland and Willoughbyfort became the present Fort Zeelandia. By the Peace of Breda, 31 July 1667, it was agreed that Suriname should remain with the Netherlands, while Nieuw-Amsterdam (New York) should be given to England. The colony was conquered by the British in 1799, only to be restored to the Netherlands with the Treaty of Paris in 1814. Slavery was forbidden in 1818 and formally abolished in 1863. Indentured labour from China and Indonesia (Java) took its place.

On 25 November 1975, the country became an independent republic, which signed a treaty with the Netherlands for an economic aid programme worth US\$1.5 billion until 1985. A military coup on 25 February 1980 overthrew the elected

government. The military leader, Sergeant Desi Bouterse, and his associates came under pressure from the Dutch and the USA as a result of dictatorial tendencies. After the execution of 15 opposition leaders at Fort Zeelandia on 8 December 1982 (the December Murders), the Netherlands broke off relations and suspended its aid programme, although bridging finance was restored in 1988.

The ban on political parties was lifted in late 1985 and a new constitution was drafted. In 1986 guerrilla rebels (the Jungle Commando), led by a former bodyguard of the promoted Lieutenant-Colonel Bouterse, Ronny Brunswijk, mounted a campaign to overthrow the government, disrupting both plans for political change and the economy. Nevertheless, elections for the National Assembly were held in November 1987. A three-party coalition (the Front for Democracy and Development) gained a landslide victory over the military, but conflicts between Assembly President Ramsewak Shankar and Bouterse led to the deposition of the government in a bloodless coup on 24 December 1990 (the 'telephone coup'). A military-backed government under the presidency of Johan Kraag was installed and elections for a new national assembly were held on 25 May 1991. The New Front of three traditional parties and the Surinamese Labour Party (SPA) won most Assembly seats and Ronald Venetiaan was elected president on 6 September 1991. Meetings between Suriname and the Netherlands ministers after the 1991 elections led to the renewal of aid in 1992. In August 1992, a peace treaty was signed between the government and the Jungle Commando.

During the 1990s successive administrations, characterised by alliances and defections, tried to deal with a foundering economy. Throughout the manoeuvrings following the 1996 elections, Bouterse's National Democratic Party (NDP) played a greater or lesser role even if the leader himself did not hold a position of power. In fact at this time, in July 1999, Bouterse was convicted *in absentia* in the Netherlands on charges of drug trafficking. Elections in May 2000 were won by the New Front coalition led by ex-president Venetiaan. His most urgent priority was to stabilize the economy, which, by 2000 and with Dutch aid terminated, had fallen back into recession. From 2001, there were renewed signs of improvement, but the outlook remained grim for over 60% of the population estimated by the United Nations to be living in poverty. In January 2004, Suriname abandoned its currency, the guilder, in favour of the Suriname dollar, and simplified exchange rates. In general elections in May 2005, the outgoing New Front coalition retained power, even though Bouterse's NDP became the largest single political party in the country. Five years later the NDP, with its Mega Coalition partners which included Ronny Brunswijk's A-Combination, overturned the NF's majority and in July 2010 parliament elected Bouterse as president, regardless of the convictions and accusations hanging over him. In 2012 a law giving the president and 24 other suspects amnesty from any alleged involvement in the December Murders was disallowed as unconstitutional and the trial of those accused of involvement continued (it began in 2007). In 2017, as completion neared, the prosecution called for Bouterse to be imprisoned for 20 years. General elections were held on 25 May 2015 and the NDP won a slim outright majority. Second was the V7 coalition with 18 seats. Ronny Brunswijk's

A-Combination won 5. On 14 July, Bouterse was re-elected president unopposed; the opposition parties decided that continuity was in the country's best interests. Among the reasons for Bouterse's success was spending on social policies for the improvement of education, housing, healthcare and pensions, but on retaking office, he was forced to introduce severe austerity measures to cope with the collapse in prices for the country's main exports, oil and gold. The economy went into reverse in 2015-2016 (GDP contracted by 2.7% in 2015 and 9% in 2016 – IMF figures), many businesses were forced to close and inflation began to rise. The Recovery and Stabilization Plan 2016-2018 set out reforms which began to arrest the decline through fiscal and monetary policies and stimulation of the private sector, coupled with significant spending on infrastructure and energy projects. GDP fell by only 0.7% in 2017 and inflation was halved from over 60% to about 30% (source IMF). Despite these improvements, the general public saw no benefits and increases in fuel and water prices provoked protests, which grew into major demonstrations against the NDP in 2017. Whether, or perhaps how, Bouterse would survive the economic crisis and, indeed, the culmination of the trial of the December Murders remains to be seen.

Uruguay

Struggle for independence

In 1808 Montevideo declared its independence from Buenos Aires. In 1811, the Brazilians attacked from the north, but the local patriot, José Gervasio Artigas, rose in arms against them. In the early stages he had some of the Argentine provinces for allies, but soon declared the independence of Uruguay from both Brazil and Argentina. Buenos Aires invaded again in 1812 and was able to enter Montevideo in June 1814. In January the following year the Orientales (Uruguayans) defeated the Argentines at Guayabos and regained Montevideo. The Portuguese then occupied all territory south of the Río Negro except Montevideo and Colonia. The struggle continued from 1814 to 1820, but Artigas had to flee to Paraguay when Brazil took Montevideo in 1820. In 1825 General Juan Lavalleja, at the head of 33 patriots (the Treinta y Tres Orientales), crossed the river and returned to Uruguay, with Argentine aid, to harass the invaders. After the defeat of the Brazilians at Ituzaingó on 20 February 1827, Britain intervened, both Argentina and Brazil relinquished their claims on the country, and independence was finally achieved in 1828.

19th-century upheavals

The early history of the republic was marked by a civil war (known as the Guerra Grande) which began as a conflict between two rival leaders, José Fructuoso Rivera with his Colorados and Manuel Oribe with his Blancos; these are still two of the three main parties today. Oribe was helped by the Argentine dictator, Juan Manuel de Rosas, but was overthrown in 1838. Blanco forces, backed by Rosas, besieged Montevideo between 1843 and 1851. Although Rosas fell from power in 1852, the contest between Colorados and Blancos continued. A Colorado,

General Venancio Flores, helped by Argentina, became president and, in 1865, Uruguay was dragged into the war of the Triple Alliance against the Paraguayan dictator, López. Flores was assassinated in 1868 three days after his term as president ended.

Batlle y Ordoñez

The country, wracked by civil war, dictatorship and intrigue, only emerged from its long political turmoil in 1903, when another Colorado, a great but controversial man, José Batlle y Ordóñez was elected president. During Batlle y Ordóñez's two terms as president, 1903-1907 and 1911-1915, Uruguay became within a short space of time the only 'welfare state' in Latin America. Its workers' charter provides free medical service, old age and service pensions and unemployment pay. Education is free and compulsory, capital punishment abolished, and the church disestablished.

Guerrillas and military rule

As the country's former prosperity has ebbed away since the 1960s, the welfare state has become increasingly fictitious. The military promised to reduce bureaucracy and spend more on the poor and development after the turmoil of 1968-1973, the period in which the Tupamaros urban guerrilla movement was most active. In practice the military, which effectively wiped out the Tupamaros by 1972, expanded state spending by raising military and security programmes. Real wages fell to less than half their 1968 level and only the very wealthy benefited from the military regime's attempted neo-liberal economic policies. Less than 10% of the unemployed received social security payments. Montevideo began to sprout shanty towns, once unheard of in this corner of the hemisphere. Nevertheless, the country's middle class remains very large, if impoverished, and the return to democracy in 1985 raised hopes that the deterioration in the social structure would be halted. Almost 10% of the population emigrated for economic or political reasons during the 1960s and 1970s: the unemployed continue to leave, but the political and artistic exiles have returned.

Allying himself with the Armed Forces in 1973, the elected president, Juan M Bordaberry, dissolved Congress and stayed on to rule as the military's figurehead until 1976. Scheduled elections were cancelled in that year and a further wave of often brutal political and trade union repression instituted. Unable to convince the population to vote for a new authoritarian constitution in 1980, the military became increasingly anxious to hand back power to conservative politicians.

Return to democracy

In August 1984 agreement was reached finally on the legalization of most of the banned leftist parties and elections were held in November. Under the moderate government of Julio María Sanguinetti (of the Colorado party) the process of national reconstruction and political reconciliation began with a widespread political amnesty. The moderate conservative Partido Nacional (Blancos) won November 1989 presidential and congressional elections and Luis Alberto Lacalle

became president. There was considerable opposition to plans for wage restraint, spending cuts, social reforms and privatization. As a result, his Blanco Party lost the November 1994 elections: Colorado ex-president Sanguinetti was again victorious over the Blancos and the Frente Amplio, a broad left front. Each party won about a third of the seats in Congress. Soon after taking office in March 1995, President Sanguinetti managed to forge an alliance with the Blancos to introduce economic restructuring and steps towards implementing much needed social security reforms. While the coalition worked together to reduce the influence of the public sector, the Frente Amplio gained support for its aim of maintaining the welfare state. In December 1996 a referendum approved constitutional reforms and the first elections under a new system (end 1999) were won by Jorge Batlle of the Colorados, who narrowly defeated Tabaré Vázquez of the Frente Amplio, the party with the largest number of seats in Congress.

After his predecessor had implemented essential reforms of the social security system, Batlle planned to bring new impetus to the economy through diversification away from wool and beef and opening new export markets. Unfortunately, the recession that began in 1999 persisted, exacerbated by severe drought affecting domestic agriculture. Argentina's economic meltdown in 2001 ended any hope of improvement. In 2002 GDP fell by 20%, according to some estimates, unemployment stood at 20% of the workforce and the banking sector was in crisis. Financial collapse was averted in August 2002 only through an emergency loan of US\$1.5 billion from the US. In this climate the ruling Colorado party lost to the Frente Amplio and its presidential candidate, Tabaré Vázquez, in the 31 October 2004 elections. Vázquez made his immediate priority the alleviation of poverty and this aim was bolstered by a strong economy, fuelled mainly by increased exports. High levels of investment in agro-industry, mining, communications and tourism helped to maintain economic growth, dampening the effects of the 2008 global economic crisis.

Pepe Mujica and after

Presidential and legislative elections were held in October 2009. The contenders were former president Lacalle of the Partido Nacional and José (Pepe) Mujica Cordano, once a Tupamaro guerrilla who spent 13 years in jail, now member of the Movimiento de Participación Popular. Mujica won the elections with a 53% majority and vowed to continue many of Vázquez's policies. In 2012 Uruguay became the second Latin American country to legalize abortion for all women. It also approved a Marriage Equality law (marriage independent of the sex of the couple) having already approved same-sex civil unions, adoption by gay couples and permission for gays to join the armed forces. In 2013 a bill was passed to legalize marijuana, under certain controls.

Tabaré Vázquez, who was re-elected president on 30 November 2014, defeated Luis Lacalle Pou of the Partido Nacional by taking almost 53% of the vote. He promised to continue the Frente Amplio policies of the previous 10 years and called upon all Uruguayans to work together towards halting a rise in crime and introducing improvements in education, housing and healthcare. By most

measures the Uruguayan economy performed strongly through 2013 and 2014 and this, plus political stability, encouraged the expectation that the country would be better placed than in the 1990s to withstand adverse external pressures. In 2015, the economic downturn in both Argentina and Brazil threatened Uruguay's prosperity. By late 2016, however, the Uruguayan economy began to revive and growth of 1.5% was translated into an estimated 3.4% increase in GDP in 2017. This was helped by a modest economic upturn in Brazil, strong export prices and improved domestic consumption. Despite this, strains between the left and more moderate wings of the ruling coalition over public spending, allegations of corruption relating to Vázquez' previous administration and disagreements between government and the farming sector (the biggest contributor to exports), began to erode the president's popularity. Ahead of the 2019 presidential elections, the Partido Nacional was leading opinion polls.

Venezuela

After independence

Despite being at the heart of Simón Bolívar's cherished Gran Colombia (together with Ecuador, Colombia and Panama), Venezuela under General Páez became an independent nation in 1830, before Bolívar's death. Páez was either president, or the power behind the presidency from 1831 to 1848, a time of stability and economic progress. In the second half of the 19th century, though, the rise of the Liberal Party in opposition to the ruling Conservatives led to conflicts and social upheaval. In 1870 a Liberal politician-general, Antonio Guzmán Blanco, came to power. Even though his term was peaceful, it marked the entry of the army into Venezuelan politics, a role which it did not relinquish for almost a century.

The 20th century

In the first half of the century presidents of note were Juan Vicente Gómez (1909-1935), a brutal but efficient dictator, and Isaiás Medina Angarita, who introduced the oil laws. There was much material progress under the six-year dictatorship of General Marcos Pérez Jiménez (1952-1958), but his Gómez-like methods led to his overthrow in January 1958. A stable democracy has been created since, with presidential elections every five years. Carlos Andrés Pérez of the centre-left Democratic Action party (AD) took office in 1974, presiding over a period of rapid development following the first great oil-price rise, and was succeeded in 1979 by Luis Herrera Campins of the Christian Democratic party, Copei. Jaime Lusinchi of Democratic Action was elected president in 1983, to be followed by Carlos Andrés Pérez, who began his second term in 1989.

The 1990s: instability and economic crisis

Pérez's second term was marked by protests against economic adjustment and growing levels of poverty. In 1992 there were two unsuccessful coup attempts by military officers, including Colonel Hugo Chávez Frías, who became president by legitimate means in 1999. Among reforms designed to root out corruption, the

Supreme Court and Central Bank were given greater independence. Both bodies were instrumental in the decision that Pérez himself be tried on corruption charges in 1993. The president was suspended from office, arrested and, after two years of house arrest, was found guilty in May 1996. An interim president, Senator Ramón José Velázquez, took office until the presidential elections of December 1993, in which Rafael Caldera, standing as an independent, was re-elected to office (as a member of Copei, he was president 1969-1974). Many of his aims, such as improvement in social conditions, tax reform and the control of inflation, had to be postponed, even reversed, in favour of solving an economic and financial crisis which began in 1994. This helped him to conclude an agreement with the IMF, but caused public protest at declining salaries and deteriorating public services.

Chávez' Bolivarian revolution

Presidential elections in December 1998 were won by Hugo Chávez, by an overwhelming majority. On taking office in February 1999, Chávez called for a complete overhaul of Venezuela's political system in order to root out corruption and inefficiency. He obtained special powers from Congress to reduce the budget deficit and diversify the economy away from oil. These were first steps towards his aim of eradicating poverty and restoring real incomes, which had fallen by two thirds in 15 years. He set up a constituent assembly which drew up a new constitution and 70% of the electorate approved it in a plebiscite in December 1999. New elections, scheduled for May 2000 but postponed until the end of July as the electoral commission failed to make the necessary preparations, were won comfortably by Chávez. Opposition parties did, however, increase their share of seats in Congress as the middle and upper classes supported Chávez's main challenger, Francisco Arias Calderón, while the president held on to his heartland in the poverty-stricken slums.

The 2002 coup

Through 2001 and into 2002 Chávez succeeded in antagonizing dissident military officers, the business sector, the Roman Catholic Church and the press. The middle classes, office workers and trades unionists blamed him for mismanaging the economy. Pro- and anti-Chávez street demonstrations became a regular event in Caracas. When Chávez tried to reform PDVSA, the state oil company, replacing executives with his own allies, the value of the bolívar slumped against the dollar and oil workers went on strike. This led to a 48-hour general strike in early April and, during the protests, 16 people were killed. On 12 April it was announced that Chávez had been replaced as president after being arrested by the military high command. His successor was businessman Pedro Carmona, who dissolved Congress and cancelled the constitution, only to resign a day later in the face of pro-Chávez demonstrations equally as strong as those that had ousted the president. On 14 April, Chávez was restored to office, but society remained deeply polarized. The opposition coalition, made up of the business sector, the main trades union and the private media, kept up its pressure on Chávez. Calls for

early elections were backed by the US, but the government insisted that the first poll to be held would be a mid-term referendum in August 2003, as required by the constitution if sufficient voters requested it.

By the end of 2002, the political situation had deteriorated to such a degree that a general strike call was met with massive support. It lasted two months and cost Venezuela some US\$6 billion as the oil industry was paralyzed, the banking sector shut down and the bolívar plummeted to record lows against the dollar. Chávez stood firm, the strike eventually ended, but the demand for a mid-term referendum did not evaporate. This was eventually held and Chávez won comfortably. Subsequent opinion polls showed that the majority of Venezuelans supported the changes Chávez instituted in political participation, economic benefits for the poor and social reform, despite the fierce debates within and outside Venezuela over the true meaning of Bolivarian democracy. Consequently, there was little danger of Chávez losing the presidential elections of December 2006.

In early 2008 Chávez brought in a new economic team to tackle, among other problems, rapidly rising inflation, stimulated mainly by oil profits being pumped into the economy for infrastructure projects and food subsidies. In an effort to increase oil revenues and restrict non-essential imports, the bolívar was devalued to a two-tier official exchange rate in January 2010. The exchange rate for essential imports (eg food and medicines) was further devalued on 1 January 2011 and another full-scale devaluation took place in February 2013. In 2012 and 2013 inflation remained stubbornly high, between 25 and 30% (the highest in Latin America), still largely because of the cost of food.

Having first applied for membership of Mercosur in 2006, Venezuela was eventually admitted in June 2012. Paraguay had opposed Venezuelan membership, but when the other members suspended Paraguay after the deposition of President Lugo (see Paraguay, above), that objection was removed. Chávez's attendance at the Mercosur ceremony at the end of July 2012 was the first official foreign trip he made since he was diagnosed with cancer in mid-2011. From the outset, that single issue overshadowed just about everything in Venezuela. In July 2011 Cuban surgeons removed a tumour from his pelvic area and several other operations followed. The president revealed little about the precise nature of the cancer and the true state of his health was the subject of much speculation. Nevertheless, he stood for reelection in October 2012, running against the opposition's elected candidate, Henrique Capriles Radonski, governor of Miranda state. Chávez won with a comfortable majority, but his illness prevented him from being inaugurated in January 2013. All the debate about the constitutional position of the president-elect finally came to an end when, on 5 March 2013, he succumbed to the illness that he had fought for almost two years. His death meant that new elections had to be called. These were held in April 2013 and were won by Chávez's chosen successor, Nicolás Maduro, by the slimmest of margins over Henrique Capriles.

Chávez and his legacy

Hugo Chávez Frías (1954-2013), President of Venezuela from 1999 to 2013, was undoubtedly the most high-profile Latin American politician of the early

21st century. Outspoken critic of globalization and neoliberalism he tirelessly promoted Latin American unity and democratic socialism. Under his leadership, Venezuela pulled out of the World Bank and IMF (after paying off its debts) and key industries were nationalized. Critics at home and abroad called him populist, even a tyrant. Supporters stressed that his rule was fully democratic, with almost every important change decided by referendum.

Under Chávez, Venezuela allied itself not only with Latin American nations sympathetic to his vision of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA – integration based on social welfare and equity rather than trade liberalization), for example Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua, but also with Iran, China and Russia. His model of 21st-century socialism included the removal of Latin America from the US sphere of influence and wresting power for the unrepresented people from the hands of the oligarchies that have controlled the region. The main methods included the supply of cheap oil, transcontinental infrastructure projects and forging ties with indigenous movements and opposition parties in other countries. At the other extreme, relations with the US were bitterly strained, particularly during the George W Bush presidency (but not so badly as to affect sales of Venezuelan oil), with Chávez unceasingly vocal in his disgust at US foreign policy.

On the social front, the Chávez government promoted alternative models of economic development, combating poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and disease. Subsidized food stores, well-equipped hospitals and schools and a model housing scheme for low-income families were established. Land was returned to indigenous groups.

Post-Chávez Venezuela faced huge challenges. These included the political divisions between the many Venezuelans helped by the programmes mentioned above and the privately owned media and others determined to discredit the Bolivarian Revolution. The government was accused repeatedly of not listening to grievances and of corruption. Police brutality and Venezuela's high crime rates (including homicide – the highest in the world according to some statistics) were of great concern. Capriles' improved showing in the second election of 2013 should have given the opposition heart, but even though the various groups combined in a coalition called the Mesa de la Unidad Democrática (MUD) they could not find a unified voice with which to confront the government. In the first quarter of 2014 a series of prolonged, violent demonstrations, sparked by student protests at high crime rates, shortages of basic goods and other economic difficulties, failed to bring about change. Neither the antagonistic approach, favoured by, for example, Leopoldo López, leader of Voluntad Popular (arrested in February 2014), and María Corina Machado, a deposed deputy, nor the moderates' tactic of seeking talks with the government had any effect. In September 2015 López was sentenced to 13 years nine months in prison on a charge of inciting violence. The previous May he went on hunger strike to protest against what he called the government's authoritarianism. Also on hunger strike was Daniel Ceballos, ex-mayor of San Cristóbal de Táchira, but Ceballos and former Chávez aide and retired general Raúl Baduel, were released in August.

Meanwhile, María Machado was suspected of being involved in a plot to assassinate Maduro and in February 2015, Antonio Ledezma, mayor of Caracas, was arrested on charges of conspiracy in an attempted coup that was prevented by armed forces loyal to the government.

The president stated that the coup attempt was backed by the US (a charge that was strenuously denied), who, he said, were also waging “economic war” against Venezuela through support for the opposition and its alleged efforts to cause chaos and discontent through shortages of staple goods, among other activities. Relations with the US deteriorated in December when the US Congress approved sanctions against seven officials who were said to have directed human rights abuses during the early 2014 riots. The majority of Latin American countries denounced the sanctions and President Obama faced much criticism at the Summit of the Americas in Panama in April 2015. Maduro and Obama met briefly at the Summit, but Obama did not attend Maduro’s speech. US and Venezuelan officials did, however, meet for talks in Haiti in June to try to reduce tensions between the two countries. By late 2016 some of the goodwill towards Venezuela seemed to be waning as Mercosur suspended Venezuela for failing to bring human rights and trade rules into legislation and China, after a decade of substantial loans in exchange for oil, appeared to be withdrawing its financial support.

Economic chaos

Legislative elections were held on 6 December 2015 and, as many opinion polls predicted, the ruling PSUV (United Socialist Party of Venezuela) fared very badly. The Mesa de la Unidad Democrática (MUD) coalition won 109 seats in the 167-seat National Assembly, with the three indigenous members also allied to MUD. The PSUV and its allies won 55, a reduction of 44 seats. At root were the economic problems which not only provoked fierce opposition, but also caused rifts within the PSUV on how to tackle inflation, reduce subsidies and end the supply problems and imbalances caused by multiple exchange rates. These problems were exacerbated by the catastrophic fall in global oil and gold prices, which threatened to undermine social spending. The 2015 budget had stated that social spending programmes would be maintained on the strength of inflation falling from its 2014 level of 68.5%, GDP growth of 3% and a slight fall in unemployment. The crash in oil and gold prices undermined all that and, in the absence of official data, analysts have put inflation for the three following years at around 275% in 2015, up to 1000% in 2016 and up to 4000% in 2017 (many alternative estimates exist, but there is no doubt that Venezuela was experiencing hyperinflation, with no end in sight: the National Assembly put the annual rate at 24,000% in May 2018). GDP was said to have fallen by 6% in 2015, by 16% in 2016 and by 14% in 2017 (a similar decline is expected in 2018, but here again, no official statistics have been released). At the same time, production of the country’s main source of income, oil, fell to a 30-year low in January 2018 as PDVSA, the state oil company, foundered under massive debts, failing infrastructure and corruption.

Having introduced a new foreign exchange regime in February 2015 (on the same day that the above-mentioned coup was revealed), the government

brought in another regime in March 2016: a preferential rate of 10 bolívares to the dollar and a floating rate which started at BsF206. In January 2018 the 10-bolívar rate was removed leaving the floating rate as the official one. At its initial auction in February 2018, it was set at BsF30,987.5 to the euro. At the end of June it had fallen to BsF134,263 to the euro (about BsF115,000 to the dollar; the black market rate stood at over BsF3.4 million to the dollar at this time). With the bolívar practically worthless, Maduro announced in January 2018 that Venezuela would issue the world's first state crypto-currency, the petro, backed by reserves of oil; in February he launched the petro gold, backed by reserves of precious metals. At the time of writing it was unknown how the petro would be received long-term on international markets, but while the Venezuelan government was planning a digital crypto-currency bank funded by the petro, President Trump banned US companies and citizens from dealing in it. In March the president further announced that the bolívar would be redenominated as the bolívar soberano (BsS) and revalued at the ratio of BsS1 = BsF1,000. The introduction of the new currency was postponed from 4 June to 4 August 2018.

Through all the government's efforts to turn the economy round, the general public continued to endure many hardships, the most visible of which were long queues at supermarkets for basic goods and drastic shortages of medicines. Official efforts to improve supplies were patchy and violent protests and lootings took place as consumers lost patience with the shortages and the government line that the country was in the middle of an 'economic war' with domestic and foreign opponents. In 2016, the opposition attempted to raise the required number of signatures to force a recall referendum against Maduro, but a lot of political wrangling and official obstacles surrounded the move and in the end it failed. In this critical climate, joint efforts to address Venezuela's domestic decline and loss of support abroad would seem to be essential, but attempts at dialogue between MUD and the PSUV, even with Vatican support, came to nothing. The public reacted to the blocking of the recall referendum with huge demonstrations in which several people died. The opposition's attempts to effect change through the National Assembly faced obstruction from the judiciary and, in March 2017, the supreme court took over the Assembly entirely. This move was reversed, but in May Maduro introduced yet another plan to sidestep the Assembly: a Constituent Assembly, charged with rewriting the constitution. Yet more riots and international criticism followed this announcement, the National Assembly voted to reject it and opposition parties boycotted the elections that set it up. Among the Constituent Assembly's first acts was to call for presidential elections in April 2018 (subsequently delayed to May), several months ahead of schedule. The president and his allies relished the idea, especially since most opposition leaders were in jail, banned from political office or in self-imposed exile. Regardless of the fact that the MUD said it would boycott the presidential election, almost all political parties were excluded anyway because they had boycotted municipal elections in 2017 (government supporters won 17 of the 23 governorships). Several candidates stood against Maduro, but only Henri Falcón (former Chávez supporter and governor of Lara

state, founder of anti-Chávez party Avanzada Progresista) broke with the MUD boycott and was a viable alternative to the incumbent. Nevertheless, Maduro won the election with a significant majority. Other than further consolidation of Maduro's power, it was hard to see what the election would achieve, since many foreign states and international bodies said not only that they would not recognize the result, but also that they would increase pressure for change in Venezuela's troubled democracy and human rights situation. Among the most vocal outside opponents was the US which, under President Trump, made no secret of its desire for regime change. The majority of Venezuelans, meanwhile, were of the opinion that the election would make no difference to the country's dire economic and political situation and the number of economic migrants seeking a better life in Colombia, Brazil and elsewhere was said to be in the hundreds of thousands.

Government

Argentina (*La República Argentina*)

The form of government is a representative, republican federal system. The president is elected for four years and may stand for reelection once. Of the two legislative houses, the Senate has 72 seats, and the Chamber of Deputies 257. By the 1853 Constitution (amended most recently in 1994) the country is divided into a Federal Capital (the city of Buenos Aires) and 23 Provinces. Each Province has its own Governor, Senate and Chamber of Deputies. The municipal government of the Federal Capital is exercised by a Mayor who is directly elected.

Bolivia (*Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia*)

The Constitution of 2009 (last amended 2013) vests executive power in the president, who can stand for immediate re-election. The presidential term is five years. The rights of 36 indigenous groups are enshrined in the constitution, including the recognition of indigenous systems of justice. Congress (*Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional*) consists of two chambers: the Senate, with 36 seats, and the Chamber of Deputies, with 130 seats. There are nine departments; each is controlled by a *Prefecto* appointed by the president. **Note** Sucre is the legal capital, La Paz is the seat of government.

Brazil (*República Federativa do Brasil*)

The 1988 constitution (last amended 2015) provides for an executive president elected by direct popular vote, balanced by a bicameral legislature (81 seats in the Federal Senate, 513 seats in the Chamber of Deputies) and an independent judiciary. Presidential elections are held every four years, with a second round one month after the first if no candidate wins an outright majority. The president may stand for reelection once. Congressional elections are held every four years, the deputies being chosen by proportional representation. The country is divided into 26 states and one federal district (*Brasília*).

Chile (*República de Chile*)

The March 1981 constitution was last amended in 2011. It provides for a four year non-renewable term for the President of the Republic, a bicameral Congress of a 120-seat Chamber of Deputies and a 38-seat Senate and an independent judiciary and central bank. The country is divided into 15 regions.

Colombia (*República de Colombia*)

The 1886 Constitution was reformed by a Constituent Assembly in 1991 (last amended 2011). The Senate has 102 members, and the Chamber of Representatives has 166. The president is elected by direct vote for a term of four years and may stand for a second term. Administratively the country is divided into 32 Departments and the Capital District of Bogotá.

Ecuador (*República del Ecuador*)

The Constitution dates from 2008 (amended 2011). There are 24 provinces, including the Galápagos Islands. The president and vice-president are elected for a four-year term and can be re-elected for a second term (once only). The parliament, Asamblea Nacional, is also elected for four years; it currently has 137 seats. The number of *asambleistas* will vary according to the size of the population.

Guyana (*Co-operative Republic of Guyana*)

Under the 1980 constitution (last revised 2007), a Prime Minister and cabinet are responsible to the National Assembly, which has 65 members, elected for a maximum term of five years, with not more than four non-elected non-voting ministers and two non-elected non-voting parliamentary secretaries appointed by the president. The president is Head of State. Elections must be held every five years. The country is divided into 10 administrative regions.

Guyane (*République française*)

The head of state is the president of France; the local heads of government are Le Préfet (the Prefect), for France, and, as of end 2015, the president of the single assembly Collectivité Territoriale Unique with 51 members. Previously the Department was governed by the General Council (19 members) and the Regional Council (31 members). Guyane sends two representatives to the French Senate and two deputies to the National Assembly in Paris. The country is divided into two *arrondissements*, Cayenne and St-Laurent-du-Maroni, with 22 *communes*.

Paraguay (*República del Paraguay*)

The current Constitution was adopted in 1992 (last amended 2011). The country has 17 departments, with Asunción, the capital, as a separate entity. Executive power rests with the president, elected for five years. There is a two-chamber Congress (Senate 45 seats, Chamber of Deputies 80).

Peru (*República del Perú*)

Under the constitution of December 1993 (amended 2009), there is a single chamber, 130-seat Congress. Men and women over 18 are eligible to vote; registration and voting is compulsory until the age of 70. The president, to whom is entrusted the Executive Power, is elected for five years. The country is divided into 25 regions, plus the province of Lima.

Suriname (*Republiek Suriname*)

The constitution dates from 1987, last revised in 1992. There is one legislative house, the National Assembly, which has 51 members, elected every five years. The president is head of state and of government and is elected by the National Assembly for a five-year term. Suriname is divided into 10 districts, of which the capital is one.

Uruguay (*República Oriental del Uruguay*)

The current Constitution dates from 1966, last revised 2004. Uruguay is a republic with a bicameral legislature: a Senate with 31 seats and a Chamber of Representatives with 99 seats. The president, who is head of state and of the government, holds office for five years. The country is divided into 19 departments.

Venezuela (*República Bolivariana de Venezuela*)

Under the Constitution of 1999 (last amended 2009), the president holds office for six years and may stand for immediate reelection. There are 23 states, a Capital District and federal dependencies of 72 islands. There is one legislative house, a Chamber of Deputies with 165 members who are elected every five years, with three seats reserved for indigenous peoples. The president is elected for a six-year term. All elected officials are eligible for unlimited reelection.

People

Argentina

Population in 2017 was 44.3 million. Population growth 0.91%; infant mortality rate 9.8 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 98.1%; GDP per capita US\$20,700 (2017).

In the Federal Capital and Province of Buenos Aires, where about a third of the population lives, the people are almost exclusively of European origin, although in the second half of the 20th century there was a significant influx of people from other South American countries and from southeast Asia. In the far northern provinces, colonized from neighbouring countries, at least half the people are *mestizos* (people of mixed Spanish and indigenous origin). It is estimated that 12.8% are foreign born and generally of European origin, though there are also important communities of Syrians, Lebanese, Armenians, Japanese and Koreans. Not surprisingly, the traditional image of the Argentine is that of the *gaucho*; *gauchismo* has been a powerful influence in literature, sociology and folklore, and is celebrated each year in the week before the 'Day of Tradition', 10 November.

In the highlands of the northwest, in the Chaco, Misiones and in the southwest, there are still some **indigenous groups**. The total of the indigenous population is unknown; estimates vary from 600,000 to 955,000. There are 35 different, recognized indigenous groups. The pampas tribes were virtually exterminated in the 19th century; those of Tierra del Fuego are extinct. Surviving peoples include the Wichí and others in Salta and Jujuy provinces, various peoples of the Chaco and tribes related to the Mapuche and Tehuelche nations in the southwest.

Bolivia

Population in 2017 was 11.1 million. Population growth was 1.5%; infant mortality rate 35.3 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 92.5%; GDP per capita US\$7500 (2017).

Of the total population, over 40% identify as *indígena* to some degree, the remainder being *mestizo*, European and other. Some surveys put the percentage of indígenas at 20%. The racial composition varies from place to place: *indígena* around Lake Titicaca; more than half *indígena* in La Paz; three-quarters *mestizo* or European in the Yungas, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and Tarija, the most European of all. There are also about 17,000 blacks, descendents of slaves brought from Peru and Buenos Aires in 16th century, who now live in the Yungas. Since the 1980s, regional tensions between the 'collas' (*altiplano* dwellers) and the 'cambas' (lowlanders) have become more marked. Less than 40% of children of school age attend school even though it is theoretically compulsory between seven and 14.

The most obdurate of Bolivian problems has always been that the main mass of population is, from a strictly economic viewpoint, in the wrong place, the poor Altiplano and not the potentially rich Oriente; and that the *indígenas* live largely outside the monetary system on a self-sufficient basis. Since the land reform of 1952 isolated communities continue the old life but in the agricultural area around Lake Titicaca, the valleys of Cochabamba, the Yungas and the irrigated areas of the south, most peasants now own their land, however small the plot may be. Migration to the warmer and more fertile lands of the east region has been officially encouraged. At the same time roads are now integrating the food-producing eastern zones with the bulk of the population living in the towns of the Altiplano or the west-facing slopes of the Eastern Cordillera.

The **highland** *indígenas* are composed of two groups: those in La Paz and in the north of the Altiplano who speak the guttural Aymara and those elsewhere, who speak Quechua (this includes the *indígenas* in the northern Apolobamba region). Outside the big cities many of them speak no Spanish. In the lowlands are some 150,000 people in 30 groups, including the Ayoreo, Chiquitano, Chiriguano, Garavo, Chimane and Mojo. The **lowland** *indígenas* are, in the main, Guaraní. About 70% of Bolivians are Aymara, Quechua or Tupi-Guaraní speakers. The first two are regarded as national languages, but were not, until very recently, taught in schools.

Brazil

Population in 2017 was 207.4 million. Population growth was 0.7%; infant mortality rate 17.5 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 92.6%; GDP per capita US\$15,500 (2017).

Francisco de Orellana's chronicle of his journey down the Amazon, with its reports of great cities, was dismissed as fancy, but felling of the rainforest has revealed remains of urban developments and other finds which suggest that the region did in fact support large populations of settled people who had flourished from the first to the 15th centuries AD, before being decimated by European diseases. These discoveries are controversial archaeologically, demographically and in terms of the 'pristine' nature of the rainforest, but as the Amazonian peoples were dying, to be lost to the jungle, the Portuguese colony was growing only slowly on the coast. From 1580 to 1640 the population was only about 50,000 apart from the million or so indigenous people. In 1700 there were some 750,000 non-indigenous people in Brazil. Early in the 19th century Humboldt computed there were about 920,000 whites, 1,960,000 Africans, and 1,120,000 indigenous and *mestiços*: after three centuries of occupation a total of only four million, and over twice as many Africans as there were whites.

Modern immigration did not begin effectively until after 1850. Of the 4.6 million immigrants from Europe between 1884 and 1954, 32% were Italians, 30% Portuguese, 14% Spanish, 4% German. Since 1954 immigrants have averaged 50,000 a year. There are some one million Japanese-descended Brazilians. Today

the whites and near-whites are about 54% of the population, people of mixed race about 40% and Afro Brazilians 6%; the rest are Asians.

The whites predominate in the south, which received the largest flood of European immigrants. Most of the German immigrants settled in the three southern states: Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul, and Paraná. The Germans (and the Italians and Poles and other Slavs who followed them) did not in the main go as wage earners on the big estates, but as cultivators of their own small farms.

The arid wastes of the Sertão remain largely uncultivated. Its inhabitants are people of mixed Portuguese and indigenous origin (*mestiço*); most live off the 'slash and burn' method of cultivation, which involves cutting down and burning the brushwood for a small patch of ground which is cultivated for a few years and then allowed to grow back.

Brazilian culture is rich in African influences. Those interested in the development of Afro-Brazilian music, dance, religion, arts and cuisine will find the whole country north of São Paulo fascinating; the cities of Bahia and São Luís retain the greatest African influences. Though there is no legal discrimination against black people, the economic and educational disparity – by default rather than intent of the Government – is such that successful Afro Brazilians are active almost exclusively in the worlds of sport, entertainment and arts.

Rural and urban population The population has historically been heavily concentrated along the coastal strip where the original Portuguese settlers exploited the agricultural wealth, and further inland in the states of Minas Gerais and São Paulo where more recent development has followed the original search for gold, precious stones and slaves. Much of the interior of Pará, Amazonas, Goiás and the Mato Grosso has densities of one person per sq km or less. Internal migration has brought to the cities problems of unemployment, housing shortage, and extreme pressure on services; shanty towns – or *favelas*, *mocambos*, *alagados*, according to the region – are an integral part of the urban landscape. But while the northeast, because of its poverty, has lost many workers to the industries of the southeast, many rural workers from southern Brazil have moved north, drawn by the rapid development of Amazônia, creating unprecedented pressures on the environment.

Indigenous peoples It is estimated that, when the Portuguese arrived in Brazil, there were between three and five million indigenous people living in the area. Today there are only about 900,000. Tribal groups number 240; each has a unique dialect, but most languages belong to four main linguistic families, Tupi-Guarani, Ge, Carib and Arawak. A few tribes remain uncontacted, others are exclusively nomadic, others are semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers and farmers, while some are settled groups in close contact with non-indigenous society. The struggle of groups such as the Yanomami to have their land demarcated in order to secure title is well documented. The goal of the Statute of the Indian (Law 6.001/73), for demarcation of all indigenous-owned land by 1978, is largely unmet. It was feared that a new law introduced in January 1996 would slow the process even more.

Funai, the National Foundation for the Support of the Indian, a part of the Interior Ministry, is charged with representing the interests of the indigenous people, but lacks resources and support. There is no nationwide, representative body for indigenous people. Most of Brazil's indigenous people live in the Amazon region; they are affected by deforestation, encroachment from colonizers, small- and large-scale mining, and the construction of hydroelectric dams. Besides the Yanomami, other groups include the Xavante, Tukano, Kreen-Akrore, Kaiapó, Arawete and Arara.

Chile

Population of Chile in 2017 was 17.8 million. Population growth was 0.77%; infant mortality rate 6.6 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 97.5%; GDP per capita US\$24,600 (2017).

There is less racial diversity in Chile than in most Latin American countries. Over 90% of the population is *mestizo*. There has been much less immigration than in Argentina and Brazil. The German, French, Spanish, Italian and Swiss immigrants came mostly after 1846 as small farmers in the forest zone south of the Biobío. Between 1880 and 1900 gold-seeking Serbs and Croats settled in the far south, and the British took up sheep farming and commerce in the same region. The influence throughout Chile of the immigrants is out of proportion to their numbers: their signature on the land is seen, for instance, in the German appearance of Valdivia, Puerto Montt, Puerto Varas, Frutillar and Osorno.

The population is far from evenly distributed: Middle Chile (from Copiapó to Concepción), 18% of the country's area, contains 77% of the total population. The Metropolitan Region of Santiago contains, about 39% of the whole population. Many Chileans live in slum areas called *callampas* (mushrooms), or *tomas* on the outskirts of Santiago and around the factories.

There is disagreement over the number of **indigenous people** in Chile. The Mapuche nation, 95% of whom live in forest land around Temuco, between the Biobío and Toltén rivers, is put at 1.3 million, but less by other, including official, statistics. There are also 15,000–20,000 Aymara in the northern Chilean Andes and 2000 Rapa Nui on Easter Island. A political party, the Party for Land and Identity, unites many *indígena* groupings, and legislation is proposed to restore indigenous people's rights.

Colombia

Population in 2017 was 47.7 million. Population growth was 0.99%; infant mortality rate 13.6 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 94.2%; GDP per capita US\$13,800 (2015).

The regions vary in their racial make-up: Antioquia and Caldas are largely of European descent, Pasto is *indígena*, the Cauca Valley and the rural areas near

the Caribbean and Pacific are African or *mulato*. However, continual population migrations are evening out the differences. The birth and death rates vary greatly from one area to the other, but in general infant mortality is high. Hospitals and clinics are few in relation to the population. Education is free, and since 1927 theoretically compulsory, but many children, especially in rural areas, do not attend. There are high standards of secondary and university education, when it is available.

An estimated 1-1.5 million **tribal peoples**, from 87 ethnic groups, live in Colombia. Groups include the Wayuú (in the Guajira), the Kogi and Arhauco (Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta), Amazonian peoples such as the Witoto, the nomadic Nukak and the Ticuna, Andean groups and those of the Llanos and in the Pacific Coast rainforest. The diversity and importance of indigenous peoples was recognized in the 1991 constitutional reforms when they were granted the right to two Senate seats. State recognition and the right to bilingual education have not, however, solved major problems of land rights, training and education, and justice.

Ecuador

Population in the 2010 census was 14.5 million (estimates for 2017 are 16.3 million). Population growth was 1.28%; infant mortality rate 16.4 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 94.4%; GDP per capita US\$11,200 (2017).

Roughly 50% of Ecuador's people live in the coastal region west of the Andes, 45% in the Andean Sierra and 5% in Oriente. Migration is occurring from the rural zones of both the coast and the highlands to the towns and cities, particularly Guayaquil and Quito, and agricultural colonization from other parts of the country is taking place in the Oriente. There has also been an important flux of mostly illegal migrants out of Ecuador, seeking opportunities in the USA and Spain (officially put at 300,000 – probably an underestimate). Meanwhile, Colombian refugees and migrants are becoming an important segment of Ecuador's population. The national average population density is the highest in South America.

There are 900,000 Quichua-speaking **highland indígenas** and about 120,000 **lowland indígenas**. The following groups maintain their distinct cultural identity: in the Oriente, Siona, Secoya, Cofán, Huaorani, Zápara, Kichwa del Oriente, Shiwiar, Achuar and Shuar; in the Sierra, Otavalo, Salasaca, Puruhá, Cañari and Saraguro; on the coast, Chachi (Cayapa), Tsáchila (Colorado), Awa (Cuaiquer) and Epera. Many Amazonian communities are fighting for land rights in the face of oil exploration and colonization.

Guyana

Population in 2017 was 737,718. Population growth was 0.32%; infant mortality rate 30.4 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 88.5%; GDP per capita US\$8300 (2017).

Until the 1920s there was little natural increase in population, but the eradication of malaria and other diseases has since led to rapid expansion, particularly among the East Indians (Asian). The 2002 census showed the following ethnic distribution: East Indian 39.8%; black 29.3%; mixed 19.9%; Amerindian 10.5%; other (including Chinese, Portuguese and white) 0.5%. The latest census was taken in September 2012. Descendants of the original **Amerindian inhabitants** are divided into nine ethnic groups, including the Akawaio, Makuxi and Pemon. Some have lost their isolation and moved to the urban areas, others keenly maintain aspects of their traditional culture and identity. The 2012 census did show that 89.1% of the population lived in the coastal regions, including the capital.

Guyane

Total population in 2017 was estimated by the UN at 282,731. Population growth in 2017 was estimated at 2.55%, same source (infant mortality rate was 10 per 1000 live births, 2010-2015). GDP per capita (not PPP) US\$17,961 (2016).

There are widely divergent estimates for the ethnic composition of the population. Calculations vary according to the number included of illegal immigrants, attracted by social benefits and the high living standards. In broad terms, between 30 and 50% of the population are Créoles. Haitians represent about 20% of the total, Europeans 10-14% (of whom about 95% are from France), Brazilians 8%, Asians 4-5% (3-4% from China and Hong Kong, 1-2% from Laos), with about 4% from Suriname and 2.5% from Guyana. The **Amerindian population** is put at 5%, about 10,000 people. The main groups are Kali'na/Galibi, Arawak, Wayanas, Palikurs, Wayampis-Oyampis and Emerillons. There are also bush negroes (Alaku, Paramaca, Saramaca, Djuka), who live mostly in the Maroni area, and others (Dominicans, St Lucians, etc) at 0.7%.

Note Statistics, unless indicated otherwise, are taken from *The CIA World Factbook*, 2017 edition. GDP per capita is measured at purchasing power parity (PPP). Information on indigenous populations is taken from the *International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs – IWGIA – 2017 report*.

Paraguay

Population in 2017 was 6.9 million. Population growth was 1.18%; infant mortality rate 18.7 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 95.1%; GDP per capita US\$9800 (2017).

Since Spanish influence was less than in many other parts of South America, most people are bilingual, speaking both Spanish and Guaraní. Outside Asunción, most people speak Guaraní by preference. There is a Guaraní theatre, it is taught in private schools, and books and periodicals are published in that tongue, which has official status as the second national language. According to the 2012 National Indigenous Census, the **indigenous population** was 112,848. There are 19 distinct ethnic groups with five different languages, among which Guaraní predominates. The 1981 Law of Native Communities in theory guarantees indigenous rights to ownership of their traditional lands and the maintenance of their culture. See www.tierraviva.org.py.

Peru

Population in 2017 was 31.0 million. Population growth was 0.95%; infant mortality rate 18.4 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 94.2%; GDP per capita US\$13,300 (2017).

Peruvian society is a mixture of native Andean peoples, Afro-Peruvians, Spanish, immigrant Chinese, Japanese, Italians, Germans and, to a lesser extent, indigenous Amazon tribes. The first immigrants were the Spaniards who followed Pizarro's expeditionary force. Their effect, demographically, politically and culturally, has been enormous. Peru's black community is based on the coast, mainly in Chincha, south of Lima, and also in some working-class districts of the capital. Their forefathers were originally imported into Peru in the 16th century as slaves to work on the sugar and cotton plantations on the coast. Large numbers of poor Chinese labourers were brought to Peru in the mid-19th century to work in virtual slavery on the guano reserves on the Pacific coast and to build the railroads in the central Andes. The Japanese community, now numbering some 100,000, established itself in the first half of the 20th century. Like most of Latin America, Peru received many emigrés from Europe seeking land and opportunities in the late 19th century. The country's wealth and political power remains concentrated in the hands of this small and exclusive class of whites, which also consists of the descendants of the first Spanish families.

The **indigenous population** is put at over four million, of whom 94% are Quechua and Aymara in the Andean region and the remainder are Amazonian people. There are about 55 ethnic groups. In the Andes, there are 5000 indigenous communities but few densely populated settlements. Their literacy rate is the lowest of any comparable group in South America and their diet is 50% below acceptable levels. About two million *indígenas* speak no Spanish, their main

tongue being Quechua; they are largely outside the money economy. Many indigenous groups are under threat from colonization, development and road-building projects.

Suriname

Population in 2017 was 591,919. Population growth was 1.02%; infant mortality rate 24.5 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 95.6%; GDP per capita US\$13,900 (2017).

The estimated make-up of the population in 2012 was: **Indo-Pakistanis** (known locally as Hindustanis), 27%; **Bush Negroes**, called 'Maroons' locally (retribalized descendants of slaves who escaped in the 17th century, living on the upper Saramacca, Suriname and Marowijne rivers), 22%; **Creoles** (European-African and other descent), 16%; **Javanese**, 14%; **Amerindians**, 4%; and **Europeans, Chinese** and others, 17%. About 90% of the existing population live in or around Paramaribo or in the coastal towns; the remainder, mostly Carib, Arawak and Maroons, are widely scattered. The Asian people originally entered the country as contracted estate labourers, and settled in agriculture or commerce after completion of their term. They dominate the countryside, whereas Paramaribo is racially very mixed. Although some degree of racial tension exists between all the different groups, Creole-Hindustani rivalry is not as fundamental an issue as in Guyana, for example. Many Surinamese, of all backgrounds, pride themselves on their ability to get along with each other in such a heterogeneous country.

Uruguay

Population in 2017 was 3.4 million. Population growth was 0.27%; infant mortality rate 8.3 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 98.5%; GDP per capita US\$22,400 (2017).

Uruguayans are virtually all European, mostly of Spanish and Italian stock. A small percentage in parts of Montevideo and near the Brazilian border are of mixed African and European descent. Less than 10% are mestizos. There was little Spanish settlement in the early years and, for a long time, the area was inhabited mainly by groups of nomadic *gauchos* who trailed after the herds of cattle killing them for food and selling their hides only. Organized commerce began with the arrival of cattle buyers from Buenos Aires who found it profitable to hire herdsmen to look after cattle in defined areas around their headquarters. By about 1800 most of the land had been parcelled out into large *estancias*. The only commercial farming was around Montevideo, where small *chacras* grew vegetables, wheat and maize for the nearby town. Only after 1828 did immigration begin on any scale. Montevideo was then a small town of 20,000 inhabitants. Between 1836 and 1926 about 648,000 immigrants arrived in Uruguay, mostly from Italy and Spain, some into the towns, some to grow crops and vegetables round Montevideo.

The native Uruguayans remained pastoralists, leaving commercial farming to the immigrants. More recent immigrants, however, Jewish, Armenian, Lebanese and others have chosen to enter the retail trades, textiles and leather production rather than farming.

Venezuela

Population was 31.3 million in 2017. Population growth was 1.24%; infant mortality rate 12.2 per 1000 live births; literacy rate 97.1%; GDP per capita US\$12,400 (2017).

A large number are of mixed Spanish and indigenous origin. There are some pure Africans and a strong element of African descent along the coast, particularly at the ports. The arrival of 800,000 European immigrants, mostly in the 1950s, greatly modified the racial make-up in Venezuela. Despite its wealth, Venezuela still faces serious social problems. Many rural dwellers have drifted to the cities; one result of this exodus is that Venezuelan farmers do not provide all the food the nation needs and imports of foodstuffs are necessary, even for items such as beans and rice. About 2.8% of the population identifies as indígena. Among the best-known groups are the Yanomami, who live in Amazonas, and the Bari in the Sierra de Perijá (on the northwest border with Colombia). An Indian Reserve gives the Bari effective control of their own land, but this has not prevented infringement from mining, plantation or settlers. Other groups include the Wayuu (in the Guajira), the Panare and the Piaroa.

Land & environment

The Andean countries

Colombia

Land area: 1,242,568 sq km.

Four ranges of the Andes (*cordilleras*) run from north to south. Between the ranges run deep longitudinal valleys. Roughly half of Colombia consists of these deep north-south valleys of the Andes and the coastal fringes along the Pacific and Caribbean shorelines. The remaining 620,000 sq km east of the Andes consists of the hot plains (*llanos*) to the north, running down to the Orinoco River, and the Amazon forests to the south. Near the foot of the Andes, the llanos are used for cattle ranching, but beyond is jungle. Except for the northwest corner where oil has been found, islands of settlement are connected with the rest of the country only by air and river; the few roads are impassable most of the year. Almost all Colombians live in the western 50% of the country.

The **cordilleras**, the main Andes ranges, run northwards for 800 km from the borders of Ecuador to the Caribbean lowlands. A few peaks in the Western Cordillera are over 4000 m but none reaches the snowline. The Central Cordillera, 50-65 km wide, is much higher; several of its peaks, snow clad, rise above 5000 m and its highest, the volcano cone of Huila, is 5750 m. The Eastern Cordillera extends north across the border into Venezuela (see below), and includes the spectacular Cucuy ranges. Apart from the peaks (a few are active volcanoes), there are large areas of high undulating plateaux, cold, treeless and inhospitable, dissected by deep river gorges. They have interesting flora and fauna and many of these regions are protected as national parks. In a high basin of the Eastern Cordillera, 160 km east of the Río Magdalena, the Spaniards in 1538 founded the city of Bogotá at 2560 m, now the national capital. The great rural activity here is the growing of food: cattle, wheat, barley, maize and potatoes. The **valleys** between the Cordilleras are deep and dominated by the Magdalena and Cauca Rivers. The upper sections are filled with volcanic ash and are very fertile. With the tropical range of temperature and rainfall, this is very productive land. Coffee dominates but almost every known tropical fruit and vegetable grows here. In the upper parts of the valleys, the climate is more temperate, with another wide range of crops. There is cattle production everywhere; sugar, cotton, rice and tobacco are common.

The **Caribbean lowlands** include three centres of population, Cartagena, Barranquilla and Santa Marta, behind which lies a great lowland, the floodplain of the Magdalena, Cauca and their tributaries. During the dry season from

October to March great herds of cattle are grazed there, but for the rest of the year much of it is a network of swamps and lagoons with very little land that can be cultivated except for a few ranges of low hills near the coast. The **northeast** includes one more mountain group in Colombia, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, standing isolated from the other ranges on the shores of the Caribbean. This is the highest range of all: its snow-capped peaks rise to 5800 m within 50 km of the coast. Further northeast, is La Guajira, a strange region of semi-desert, salt-pans, flamingos and unusual micro-climates. The **Pacific coast** stretches for 1300 km. Along the coast north of Buenaventura runs the Serranía de Baudó, the shortest of the Cordilleras, thickly forested. East of it is a low trough before the land rises to the slopes of the Western Cordillera. The trough is drained southwards into the Pacific by the Río San Juan, and northwards into the Caribbean by the Río Atrato, both are partly navigable. The climate is hot and torrential rain falls daily. The inhabitants are mostly black. The 320 km south of the port of Buenaventura to the border with Ecuador is a wide, marshy, and sparsely inhabited coastal lowland.

Ecuador

Land area: 272,045 sq km.

The Andes, running from north to south, form a mountainous backbone to the country. There are two main ranges, the Central Cordillera and the Western Cordillera, separated by a 400-km long Central Valley, whose rims are about 50 km apart. The rims are joined together, like the two sides of a ladder, by hilly rungs, and between each pair of rungs lies an intermont basin with a dense cluster of population. These basins are drained by rivers which cut through the rims to run either west to the Pacific or east to join the Amazon. Both rims of the Central Valley are lined with the cones of more than 50 volcanoes. Several of them have long been extinct, for example, Chimborazo, the highest (6310 m). At least eight, however, are still active including Cotopaxi (5897 m), which had several violent eruptions in the 19th century; Pichincha (4794 m), which re-entered activity in 1998 and expelled a spectacular mushroom cloud in October 1999; Sangay (5230 m), one of the world's most active volcanoes, continuously emitting fumes and ash; Tungurahua (5016 m), active since 1999; and Reventador (3562 m), which has erupted several times since 2002. Earthquakes too are common.

Brazil

Land area: 8,547,404 sq km.

Brazil is one of the largest countries of the world. It stretches over 4300 km across the continent but is one of the few in South America that does not reach the Andes. The two great river basins, the Amazon and the River Plate, account for about three-fifths of Brazil's area.

The **Amazon Basin**, in northern and western Brazil, takes up more than a third of the whole country. The basin borders the Andes and funnels narrowly to the Atlantic, recalling the geological period, before the uplift of the Andes, when the Amazon flowed into the Pacific Ocean. Most of the drained area has an elevation of less than 250 m. The rainfall is heavy: some few places receive 3750-5000 mm a year, though over most of the area it is no more than from 1500 to 2500 mm. This heavy rain comes from the daily cycle of intense evaporation plus the saturated air brought by winds from the northeast and southeast, losing their moisture as they approach the Andes. Much of the basin suffers from annual floods. The region was covered by tropical forest, with little undergrowth except along the watercourses; it is now being rapidly cut down. The climate is hot and humidity high all year. The **Brazilian Highlands** lying southeast of the Amazon and northeast of the River Plate Basin form a tableland of from 300 to 900 m high, but here and there, mostly in southeast Brazil, mountain ranges rise from it. The highest temperature recorded was 42°C, in the dry northeastern states. The highest peak in southern Brazil, the Pico da Bandeira, northeast of Rio, is 2898 m. The **Great Escarpment** is where the Brazilian Highlands cascade sharply down to the Atlantic, leaving a narrow coastal strip which is the economic heartland of the country. It runs from south of Salvador as far as Porto Alegre and in only a few places is this Escarpment breached by deeply cut river beds, for example those of the Rio Doce and the Rio Paraíba. Along most of its course, the Great Escarpment falls to the sea in parallel steps, each step separated by the trough of a valley. The few rivers rising on the Escarpment, which flow direct into the Atlantic are not navigable. Most of the rivers flow west, deep into the interior. Those in southern Brazil rise almost within sight of the sea, but run westward through the vast interior to join the Paraná, often with falls as they leave the Escarpment, including the spectacular Iguazú. In the central area the Escarpment rivers run away from the sea to join the São Francisco river, which flows northwards parallel to the coast for 2900 km, to tumble over the Paulo Afonso Falls on its eastward course to the Atlantic.

The **River Plate Basin**, in the southern part of Brazil, has a more varied surface and is less heavily forested than the Amazon Basin. The land is higher and the climate a little cooler. The **Guiana Highlands**, north of the Amazon, are ancient rock structures, some of the world's oldest. The area is part forest, part hot desert. Slopes facing northeast trade winds get heavy rainfall, but south it is drier. Brazil's highest peak, Pico da Neblina, 3014 m, is on the Venezuelan border.

Guyane

Land area: 83,900-86,504 sq km (estimate).

Guyane has its eastern frontier with Brazil formed partly by the river Oiapoque (Oyapock in French) and its southern, also with Brazil, formed by the Tumuc-Humac mountains (the only range of importance). The western frontier with Suriname is along the river Maroni-Litani. To the north is the Atlantic coastline of 320 km. The land rises gradually from a coastal strip some 15-40 km wide to the higher slopes and plains or savannahs, about 80 km inland. Forests cover the hills and valleys of the interior, and the territory is well watered, for over 20 rivers run to the Atlantic.

Suriname

Land area: 163,820 sq km. (A large area in the southwest is in dispute with Guyana. There is a less serious border dispute with Guyane in the southeast.)

Like its neighbours, Suriname has a coastline on the Atlantic to the north. The principal rivers are the Marowijne in the east, the Corantijn in the west, and the Suriname, Commewijne (with its tributary, the Cottica), Coppename, Saramacca and Nickerie. The country is divided into topographically quite diverse natural regions: the northern lowlands, 25 km wide in the east and 80 km wide in the west, have clay soil covered with swamps. There follows a region, 5-6 km wide, of a loamy and very white sandy soil, then an undulating region, about 30 km wide. It is mainly savanna, mostly covered with quartz sand, and overgrown with grass and shrubs. South of this lies the interior highland, almost entirely overgrown with dense tropical forest, intersected by streams. At the southern boundary with Brazil there are savannas.

Guyana

Land area: 215,083 sq km.

Guyana has an area of 215,083 sq km, nearly the size of Britain, but only about 2.5% is cultivated. About 90% of the population lives on the narrow coastal plain, either in Georgetown, the capital, or in villages along the main road running from Charity in the west to the Suriname border. The rivers give some access to the interior beyond which are the jungles and highlands towards the border with Brazil.

The **coastal plain** is mostly below sea level. Large wooden houses stand on stilts above ground level. A sea wall keeps out the Atlantic and the fertile clay soil is drained by a system of dykes; sluice gates, *kokers* are opened to let out water at low tide. Separate channels irrigate fields in dry weather. Most of the western third of the coastal plain is undrained and uninhabited. Four **major rivers** cross the coastal plain, from west to east they are the Essequibo, the Demerara, the Berbice, and the Corentyne. Only the Demerara is crossed by bridges. Elsewhere ferries must be used. At the mouth of the Essequibo River, 34 km wide, are islands the size of Barbados. The lower reaches of these rivers are navigable; but waterfalls

and rapids prevent them being used by large boats to reach the interior. (The area west of the Essequibo River, about 70% of the national territory, is claimed by Venezuela.) The **jungles** and the **highlands** inland from the coastal plain, are thick rain forest, although in the east there is a large area of grassland. Towards Venezuela the rain forest rises in a series of steep escarpments, with spectacular waterfalls, the highest and best known of which are the Kaieteur Falls on the Potaro River. In the southwest is the Rupununi Savanna, an area of grassland more easily reached from Brazil than from Georgetown.

Venezuela

Land area: 912,050 sq km.

Venezuela has 2800 km of coastline on the Caribbean Sea and many islands. The Andes run up northeastwards from Colombia, along the coast eastwards past Caracas, ending up as the north coast of the Caribbean island of Trinidad. In the northwest corner is the Maracaibo basin. South of the Andean spine is the vast plain of the Orinoco which reaches the sea near the Guyana border and to the southeast of that are the ancient rocks known as the Guayana Highlands.

The **Andes** are highest near the Colombian border where they are known as the Sierra Nevada de Mérida. Beyond they broaden out into the Segovia Highlands north of Barquisimeto, and then turn east in parallel ridges along the coast to form the Central Highlands, dipping into the Caribbean Sea only to rise again into the Northeastern Highlands of the peninsulas of Araya and Paria. This region has an agreeable climate and is well populated with most of the main towns. The **Maracaibo Lowlands** are around the fresh water lake of Maracaibo, the largest lake in South America, is 12,800 sq km. Considerable rainfall feeds the lake and many rivers flow through thick forest to create swamps on its southern shore. The area is dominated by the oil producing fields on both sides of the lake and beneath its surface. To the west, the Sierra de Perijá forms the boundary with Colombia and outside the lake to the east is the most northerly point of the country the peninsular of Paraguaná, virtually desert.

The **Llanos**, as the Orinoco plains are called, cover about one third of the country. They are almost flat and are a vast cattle range. The Orinoco river itself is part of Latin America's third largest river system. Many significant rivers flow from the Andes and Guayana Highlands to join the Orinoco, whose delta is made up of innumerable channels and thousands of forest-covered islands. The **Guayana Highlands**, which take up almost half the country, are south of the Orinoco. This is an area of ancient crystalline rocks that extend along the top of the continent towards the mouth of the Amazon and form the northern part of Brazil. In Venezuela they are noted for huge, precipitous granite blocks known as *tepuys*, many of which have their own unique flora, and create many high waterfalls including the Angel Falls, the world's highest.

The Southern Cone

Chile

Land area: 756,626 sq km.

Chile is a ribbon of land lying between the Andes and the Pacific. The Andes and a coastal range of highland take up from a third to a half of its width. There are wide variations of soil and vast differences of climate; these profoundly affect the density of population. Down virtually the whole length, between the Andes and the coastal ranges, is a longitudinal depression. For 1050 km south of the capital Santiago this is a great valley stretching as far as Puerto Montt. South of Puerto Montt the sea has broken through the coastal range and drowned the valley, and there is a bewildering assortment of archipelagos and channels. The Andes, with many snow-capped peaks over 6000 m, culminate near Santiago with several of almost 7000 m. They diminish in height from Santiago southwards, but throughout the range are spectacular volcanoes right down to the southern seas, where the Strait of Magellan gives access to the Atlantic. Associated with the mountains are geological faults and earthquakes are common.

From north to south the country falls into five contrasted zones: The first 1250 km from the Peruvian frontier to Copiapó is a rainless desert of hills and plains devoid of vegetation. Here lie nitrate deposits and several copper mines. There is almost no rain, just occasional mists. From Copiapó to Illapel (600 km) is semi-desert; there is a slight winter rainfall, but great tracts of land are without vegetation most of the year. Valley bottoms are cultivated under irrigation. From Illapel to Concepción is Chile's heartland, where the vast majority of its people live. Here there is abundant rainfall in the winter, but the summers are perfectly dry. Great farms and vineyards cover the country, which is exceptionally beautiful. The fourth zone, between Concepción and Puerto Montt, is a country of lakes and rivers, with heavy rainfall through much of the year. Cleared and cultivated land alternates with mountains and primeval forests. The fifth zone, from Puerto Montt to Cape Horn, stretches for 1600 km. This is archipelagic Chile, a sparsely populated region of wild forests and mountains, glaciers, islands and channels. Rainfall is torrential, and the climate cold. South of Puerto Montt, the Camino Austral provides almost unbroken road access for more than 1000 km. Chilean Patagonia is in the extreme south of this zone. A subdivision of the fifth zone is Atlantic Chile – that part which lies along the Magellan Strait to the east of the Andes, including the Chilean part of Tierra del Fuego island. There is a cluster of population here raising sheep and mining coal. Large offshore oilfields have been discovered in the far south.

Argentina

Land area: 2,780,092 sq km.

Argentina occupies most of the southern cone of the continent. There are four main physical areas: the Andes, the north and Mesopotamia, the Pampas, and Patagonia. Much of the country is comparatively flat which made modern

communications easy. The **Andes** run the full length of Argentina, low and deeply glaciated in the Patagonian south, high and dry in the prolongation in northwest Argentina adjoining the Bolivian Altiplano. Though of modest height, Cerro Fitzroy and other peaks on the fringes of the Patagonia icecap are amongst the most dramatic on the continent, while many peaks in the north are over 6000 m, including Aconcagua, the highest outside the Himalayas. To the east, in the shadow of the Andes, it is dry. Oases strung along the eastern foot of the Andes from Jujuy to San Rafael, including Tucumán and Mendoza, were the first places to be colonized by the Spaniards. Further south is the beautiful Lake District, with Bariloche at its heart. The mountain ridges and the many lakes created by the glaciers are now withdrawing under the impact of global warming. The **north** and **Mesopotamia** contains the vast plains of the Chaco and the floodplain lying between the rivers Paraná and Uruguay. Rice growing and ranching are widespread. The Province of Misiones in the northeast lies on the great Paraná plateau, while the northwest Chaco has some of the highest temperatures in the continent.

The **Pampas** make up the heart of the country. These vast, rich plains lie south of the Chaco, and east of the Andes down to the Río Colorado. Buenos Aires lies on the northeast corner of the Pampas and is the only part of the country which has a dense population – about 40% of Argentines live in and around the capital. The Pampas stretch for hundreds of kilometres in almost unrelieved flatness, but get progressively wetter going east. Cattle and cereal growing dominate. **Patagonia** lies south of the Río Colorado – a land of arid, windswept plateaux cut across by ravines. In the deep south the wind is wilder and more continuous. There is no real summer, but the winters are rarely severe.

Uruguay

Land area: 176,200 sq km.

Unlike all other South American countries, Uruguay is compact (it's the smallest Hispanic country in South America), accessible and homogeneous. The **coast** along the Atlantic consists of bays, beaches and offshore islands, lagoons and bars, the sand brought by currents north from the River Plate. Behind is a narrow plain which fringes most of the coast (but not near Montevideo). Behind is a line of mainly wooded hills (called *cuchillas*), the whole area extensively farmed with grain and cattle *estancias*. **Central Uruguay** up to the Brazilian border is pleasant, rolling country dissected by the Río Negro which rises in Brazil and on which a number of dams have been built. North of the river is agricultural and pasture country dominated by sheep. Near Minas there are stone quarries and other mining activity. **Western Uruguay** is dominated by the River Plate from Montevideo round to Colonia, then north up the Río Uruguay which provides the frontier with Argentina. It consists of an alluvial flood plain stretching north to Fray Bentos where the first road crossing can be made. Thereafter, the general character of the land is undulating, with little forest except on the banks of its rivers and streams. The long grass slopes rise gently to far-off hills, but none of

these is higher than 600 m. Five rivers flow westwards across the country to drain into the Río Uruguay, including the Río Negro. Cattle and wheat are the main traditional products.

Paraguay

Land area: 406,752 sq km.

Paraguay is landlocked, divided into two distinct regions by the Río Paraguay. Eastern Paraguay combines habitats characteristic of three ecoregions: *cerrado* (a mosaic of dry forest and savannah habitats) in the north, humid Atlantic forest in the east, and natural grasslands and marshes in the south. West of the river lies the vast expanse of the Chaco, comprised of seasonally flooded palm-savannahs in the southeast, semi-arid thorn scrub-forest to the west, and in the north, the Pantanal, part of the world's largest wetland. The Río Paraná forms part of the eastern and southern boundaries of the country but the rivers are so difficult to navigate that communication with Buenos Aires, 1450 km from Asunción, has been mainly on land.

Eastern Paraguay is the 40% of the country east of the Río Paraguay, a rich land of rolling hills in which the vast majority of the population live. An escarpment runs north from the Río Alto Paraná, west of Encarnación, to the Brazilian border. East of this escarpment the Paraná Plateau extends across neighbouring parts of Argentina and Brazil. The Plateau, which is crossed by the Río Paraná, ranges from 300–600 m in height, was originally forest and enjoys relatively high levels of rainfall. West and south of the escarpment and stretching to the Río Paraguay lies a fertile plain with wooded hills, drained by several tributaries of the Río Paraná. Most of the population of Paraguay lives in these hilly lands, stretching southeast from the capital, to Encarnación. The area produces timber, cotton, hides and semi-tropical products. Closer to the rivers, much of the plain is flooded once a year; it is wet savannah, treeless, but covered with coarse grasses. The **Chaco**, about 60% of the country's area, is a flat, infertile plain stretching north along the west bank of the Río Paraguay. The marshy, largely unnavigable Río Pilcomayo, flowing southeast across the Chaco to join the Río Paraguay near Asunción, forms the frontier with Argentina. The landscape is dominated by the alluvial material brought down in the past by rivers from the Andes. As the rainfall diminishes westwards, the land can support little more than scrub and cacti. The arrival of the Mennonites in the 1930s in the Chaco brought some intense production of fruit and other crops.

Culture

Music in South America

From buses and street buskers to bars and beaches, travel in South America comes with an almost constant and richly varied soundtrack. But just as anywhere, the music to which travellers are initially exposed tends to be the most commercial and least interesting. It's well worth spending a little time exploring further. Some of your most memorable times will be on musical nights out: learning tango steps in Buenos Aires, salsa in Medellín or *farró* on a Brazilian beach; hearing live music played by an Andean quartet in a *peña* in La Paz or Cuzco, or a symphony orchestra playing Villa-Lobos in one of São Paulo's concert halls.

South America's music falls into three broad categories; all of which are as distinct from each other as they are from music from the rest of the world. First there is the music of Spanish America, from Cuban and Spanish Caribbean-influenced Venezuela and Colombia to the indigenous melodies and rhythms of the Andean countries and the political folk music and tango of Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. Then there is the music of Brazil, a musical continent in its own right, whose panoply of styles and rhythms is perhaps the richest of any single country on the planet. Finally there's the music of the Guianas, whose *calypso* and *kaseko* offers a tiny Caribbean coda to a vast Latin musical manuscript.

Tango and the protest song: Argentina, Chile and Uruguay

Musically **Argentina** is forever associated with tango: an exuberant musical style and dramatic, entwined close dance which has so much become the passionate step of choice in Hollywood films, that it is in danger of becoming a cliché, even in its home city. But beyond the Buenos Aires tourist shows and in the more resolutely Argentine bars and clubs, tango remains mesmerising. Its musical origins lie in the *milonga*, an African-infused rhythm and dance popular in Argentina's small slave communities in the 19th century which later developed as a dance in its own right. According to Argentines, the fusion of *milonga* rhythms with European and Cuban styles in the overcrowded tenements and bordellos around the Buenos Aires docks in the late 19th century gave birth to tango, its name originally associated with a place where freed African slaves and impoverished Europeans would gather to dance.

Initially tango was probably played on guitar and fiddle. But as it grew in popularity it met with a new instrument, a button accordion or 'bandonion', developed in Germany by Heinrich Band and probably taken to Buenos Aires by

MUSIC

Argentina, Chile and Uruguay: the essential albums

Astor Piazzolla, *Maestro and Revolutionary*. An excellent two-volume compilation covering a sweep of the great composer and *bandoneón* player's work.

Víctor Jara, *Antología Musical*. A e-mastered collection of many of Jara's greatest songs.

Mercedes Sosa, *30 Años*. The best of the numerous collections with many of her classics.

Soda Stereo, *Canción Animal*. Their sixth and most successful, multi-platinum album, showcasing their trademark Hispanic Indie rock with Edge-influenced rhythm guitar.

Bavarian immigrants. By the late 19th century, a 142-note version with 71 buttons called the *bandoneón* was being played in a new, exuberant percussive style with chops on chords intertwining with more lyrical solo passages, far removed from its Protestant origins, but perfect for tango. Bandoneón-powered tango swept through blue-collar Buenos Aires in the early 20th century, where it was discovered by the young Buenos Aires elite. They in turn introduced the music to Belle Epoque Paris, where it became a fashion craze in 1913. From there it spread to the rest of Europe and thence to the United States, where it was introduced to the Hollywood screen by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in the 1939 film *The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle*.

Meanwhile in Buenos Aires the tango had evolved in altogether different directions, where a French-born Porteño street urchin turned bordello singer called Charles Romauld Gardés (**Carlos Gardel**) re-invented tango – see also under Uruguay, below. Before Gardel tango was instrumental, but the singer introduced poetic lyrics, sung in a rich baritone infused with wistful Gallic melancholy. His first recording in 1917 was an instant hit with all social classes and his rakish good looks, trademark fedora hat, sharp suits and faux-Rudolph Valentino stage make-up made him one of Argentina's first pin-ups. Gardel died in a plane crash over Colombia in 1935, but he left an extensive back catalogue of tango standards, a burgeoning golden era (with new stars like Osvaldo Pugliese, Aníbal Troilo, Tita Merello, Alberto Castillo and Roberto Goyeneche) and a 14 year-old protégé, **Astor Piazzolla**.

If Gardel took tango from the underground to the mainstream, Piazzolla took it from the mainstream to the intelligentsia; creating the *nuevo tango*, a fusion of tango, jazz harmony and classical lyricism born of his exposure to international styles in pre-War New York where he lived with his parents as a teenager. On his return to Buenos Aires Piazzolla joined **Aníbal Troilo's** tango orchestra in the 1940s. Through the 1950s and 60s he perfected his classical composition with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, incorporated his bandoneón into jazz-tango octets and composed symphonic pieces rooted in tango. Not until the 1980s did his new

tango quintet achieve worldwide recognition and inspire a renaissance in danced tango. Post-Piazzolla, tango is a diverse, international genre, incorporating traditional sung and instrumental tango but stretching into classical and jazz-tango and recently the tango rock and electronica of bands like the Bajofondo, the Gotan Project, Kantango and Tanghetto. Danced tango is booming, with Buenos Aires celebrating three important festivals: the Tango Championship, the Tango World Cup and the Tango Festival.

Argentine music is not of course limited to tango. Argentina's borders with Uruguay and Brazil have produced music inspired by the African-infused cultures of those countries and there has been much cross-over from other South American countries. They include *chacarera*, a popular dance in the northwest, *chamamé*, its counterpart in the northeast, and *zamba*, a slow dance in waltz time played on guitar and *bombo legüero* drum. Once considered Argentina's national dance, the *zamba* is now known to have originated in the creole region of Peru.

Chile and the nueva canción

Popular music shows an even stronger cross-over, mostly notably in the *nueva canción*, a politically aware rootsy folk music genre sung by charismatic performers and inspired by the Cuban *nueva trova*. The movement probably began in Chile in the late 1950s and early 1960s, where a group of middle-class, intellectual artists which included **Violeta Parra** began to fuse traditional Andean and creole musical forms (notably the *cueca*) with folk music. Parra and her children Angel and Isabel, were among the first middle-class musicians to 'rediscover' the armadillo-shell mandolin (*charango*) and the bamboo Inca flute (*queña*). Violeta Parra composed what later became one of the *nueva canción* anthems, *Gracias a la vida*. By the late 1960s their songs had become politically motivated and the musical textures increasingly Andean. And their work inspired groups like **Inti-Illimani** and **Quilapayún**, who used pre-Columbian rhythms and instruments, juxtaposing them with European melodies and contemporary lyrics. They sang of solidarity among Latin American peoples and demanded social justice, in particular for the oppressed native majority.

In Santiago in 1965 Angel and Isabel Parra opened what would become the crucible for *nueva canción*, the **Peña de los Parra**. One of the regulars at the club was a radical young poet and songwriter, **Víctor Jara**, whose witty, subversive songs, which poked fun at conservative Chilean society and satirized government, earned him a loyal following. The Parras, Jara and the other artists became closely involved with **Salvador Allende's** Popular Unity government. After it came to power in 1970 Allende appeared on a giant stage in the centre of Santiago surrounded by *nuevo cancioneros* under a banner proclaiming 'No hay revolución sin canciones' (There is no revolution without songs). Three years later Allende was dead and many of the *nuevo cancioneros* were tortured and murdered by the Pinochet regime. Víctor Jara's body was found in a pile of unidentified bodies in a Santiago mortuary, his hands and wrists smashed and his torso shredded by machine gun bullets. *Nueva canción* and even Andean traditional music were banned until Pinochet's fall.

Argentina

Atahualpa Yupanqui was perhaps the most important early figure in the *nueva canción* movement in Argentina. Born Héctor Chavero in 1908, he changed his name in honour of the last Inca Emperor and in homage to the Andean people after undertaking a musicological journey throughout the continent between the World Wars. His song *¡Basta Ya! (que el yanqui mande)* (That's enough! Of taking orders from the Yankees) made him one of the movement's first exiles and ironically Yupanqui later found his most appreciative audience in Europe, especially France where he was made a Chevalier dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters) in 1986.

The other giant figure in Argentine *nueva canción* was **Mercedes Sosa**, who had one of the most beautiful, resonant voices in 20th-century popular music. Like Yupanqui she had been involved in the movement from the outset, unveiling the *nuevo cancionero* manifesto in 1962: to revive old pre-Columbian musical forms and sing about rural poverty, injustice and the beauty of native Latin America. Her renditions of songs by artists like Violeta Parra earned her the enmity of the military junta in the 1960s and 1970s. And after singing *Cuando Tenga la Tierra* (a song which championed all those who fight against oppressive landowners) she was arrested and forced into exile in Europe. She returned to Argentina after the dictatorship was weakened by the Falklands/Malvinas conflict. In the Uruguayan *canto popular* movement, artists like **Los Olimareños**, **Daniel Viglieti** and **Alfredo Zitarrosa** were similarly critical of the existing order in the 1960s and 1970s. Like their Chilean and Argentine counterparts, several were persecuted or forced into exile.

While *nueva canción* has all but disappeared, Argentine rock, or *rock nacional*, has bloomed since the fall of the military junta. It began in the 1960s, inspired strongly by British Merseybeat and the Rolling Stones, who were Latinized by Uruguayan group Los Shakers who arrived in Buenos Aires, complete with pudding bowl haircuts in 1965. British rock continued to be influential through the late 1960s and into the 1970s, though it increasingly incorporated national styles. Important figures include **Los Gatos**, whose 1967 *La Balsa* established a melodic national pop style, the inventive maverick **Charly García** and his groups (which included Sui Generis and Serú Girán), who fused this melodic style with psychedelia and established national rock firmly with the Porteño middle classes.

Until the collapse of the military dictatorship Argentinean rock was largely limited to Argentina. But in the 1980s, Argentine rock became popular throughout Latin America through bands like the irrepressibly funky, brass-driven **Fabulosos Cadillacs** and **Soda Stereo**, one of the biggest selling Spanish language bands of all time. National rock is now the most popular music with young Argentines, far more so than tango. Bands of the moment to look out for include: **Los Piojos**, **Babasónicos**, **La Renga**, **Las Pelotas**, **Divididos**, **Ataque 77**, **Intoxicados**, and **Bersuit**.

Uruguay

Uruguay has long been a cultural bridge between Brazil and Argentina and generally shares its musical heritage with both (not that many Uruguayans would agree). They complain that they are treated merely as an addendum to their giant neighbours, while in fact it was they who invented tango, and who have been hosting one of the liveliest carnivals on the continent for at least as long as Rio. The Uruguayan tango narrative is similar to Argentina's; their story merely replaces Buenos Aires' poor Africanized quarters as the setting for tango's fomentation with Montevideo's. Carlos Gardel, say Uruguayans was born in Tacuarembó in Uruguay's cattle country, and not Paris. There's even a museum to him in that town. And while both claims are disputed by Porteños across the water, there is no question that a number of tango's biggest names are Uruguayan: **Gerardo Matos Rodríguez** who wrote many of the genres most famous standards including *La Cumparsita*; Fifties crooner **Julio Sosa** and his contemporary, the orchestra maestro and virtuoso violinist **Francisco Canaro**; bandoneón virtuoso **Marino Rivero** and singer **Elsa Morán**.

In the 18th century, half of Uruguay's population was made-up of mostly Bantu-speaking African slaves, from a similar cultural background to those transported to Brazil. And while African culture was more brutally and successfully suppressed by the Spanish than by the Portuguese, it left its rhythms and rituals which can still be seen today. *Murga* is a kind of musical theatre backed by a rhythm similar to maracatu, with extemporaneous poetry recalling the Brazilian *repentistas* and costumes inspired by a pre-Lenten festival in Cadiz. *Candombe* drum and dance troupes (who recall those of Salvador or Cuba), play in Montevideo most weekends and both *murga* and *candombe* play in huge parades during Carnival. In the 1960s *candombe* was incorporated into Uruguayan mainstream music, from chart pop to folk, rock and jazz. A tradition which continued in the music of artists like **Hugo Fattorusso** and **Jorge Drexler** and in Uruguayan rock, which is as popular as Argentine and a good deal older. As said above, it was Uruguay's Los Shakers who brought rock to Argentina. The annual rock festival in Durazno attracts hundreds of thousands, to hear a string of cult bands who include **La Vela Puerca**, **No Te Va Gustar**, **La Trampa** and **Buitres**. See also Argentina, Chile and Uruguay: the essential albums, page 82.

South American Caribbean: Colombia, Venezuela and the Guianas

While Venezuela and Colombia are famously at odds, musically they share much in common, both in their folk traditions and in their national obsessions with **salsa**, a style born from Cuban rhythms in the back streets of New York but kidnapped by these two nations who have made it their own. Venezuela gave the world **Oscar d'León**, a former motor mechanic from Caracas with an irrepressible smile who made his name dancing and playing upright bass with Cuban-influenced son band, **La Dimensión Latina** in the 1970s. He has since become one of the biggest salsa acts in the world, with a host of imitators. **Caracas'** clubs and bars are filled with imitation Oscar d'León big bands and singers.

Colombia

Colombia's most famous musical export is **Shakira**, whose good looks and high-octane salsa pop (infused with Arabic rhythms drawn from her Lebanese heritage) have made her one of the Hispanic world's most successful recording artists. She was born in Barranquilla and her sound is typical of Western and coastal Colombia. Cities like Cali, Medellín, Cartagena and Barranquilla pulsate to a fusion of contemporary Hispanic rhythms; but mostly to salsa. Much to the chagrin of Caracas, Colombia's third largest city, **Cali** declares itself the world salsa capital and has re-christened its annual, week-long July festival La **Feria de la Salsa**, the largest and loudest salsa celebration on the planet. Colombian salsa singers who often play in Cali include **Grupo Niche** and **Joe Arroyo**, the inventor of *música tropical*, a peculiarly Colombian fusion of salsa and other musical ingredients. Moreover, the city has re-invented salsa dancing; its style, possibly the most respected on the world salsa circuit, has complex, fast and furious steps and swings.

Colombians claim that salsa's roots lie in their national rhythm, *cumbia*, as much as Cuban *son* or *mambo*, or Dominican *merengue*. Indeed most visitors to Colombia will find it hard to distinguish between contemporary *cumbia* and *salsa*; both of which are powered by shuffling kit drums, congas and bass, peppered with brass and garnished with lightly syncopated piano. Traditional *cumbia* is quite different; and seeing it played and danced in a little bar in Cartagena or by a drum choir in Bogotá is a magical experience. *Cumbia* grew from the miscegenation of enslaved Africans and local indigenous people. Like other such styles (*candombe* in Uruguay or *samba de roda* in Brazil), it traditionally consists of no more than percussion, *flauto de millo* and *gaita* flutes and vocals. It is danced in a series of distinctive short, scraped steps which reputedly hark back to a time when Africans were forced to dance in leg irons.

In the 1980s a rural, accordion-driven form of *cumbia* called *vallenato* emerged in the north-eastern municipality of Valledupar and swept across Colombia. It was born from a far older style whose origins are shrouded in mystery. A Valledupar urban myth claims that *vallenato* was invented by a mythical figure called **Francisco el Hombre** who, like Robert Johnson, learnt his skill from the devil after being challenged to a musical duel on a dusty road in Alta Guajira. Modern *vallenato*'s sweet ballads seem to belie any demonic origins. But an exploration of the genre's back catalogue reveals artists like the late great **Alejo Durán**, whose rootsy renditions of songs like *Fidelina* and *Altos del Rosario* have much of the Robert Johnson to them. A **Vallenato festival** is held in Durán's honour every April or May in Valledupar, offering the chance to hear some of the best traditional artists in the genre. These include the Hendrix of the genre, **Alfredo Gutiérrez**, who plays the accordion with his toes.

Venezuela

If Venezuela has a national music it is *llanera*, sung by cowboy troubadours from the sweeping grasslands, accompanied by harp, guitar and percussion. In its most refined form, as played by the likes of stetson-clad nonagenarian **Juan Vicente Torrealba**, *llanera* sounds like a fusion between calypso, easy listening

MUSIC

South American Caribbean: the essential albums

Oscar d'León, *The Millennium Collection*. A representative selection of his greatest hits.

Grupo Niche, *Los Clásicos*. The salsa groups early greatest hits.

Alejo Durán, *15 Exitos de Antología*. One of the few CDs available on the international market.

Juan Vicente Torrealba, *Concierto en la Llanura*. One of Torrealba's grand *llanera* compositions.

Yakki Famirie, *Gowtu*. Irrepressibly dancey *kaseko* music from a Suriname and Holland-based band.

and classical music, whilst mainstream, popular *llanera*'s syrupy songs are closer to Mexican mariachi music. There's *llanera* in Colombia too, together with a broad diversity of other national musical styles. These include an alluring, seductive fusion of Caribbean, East African and Latin rhythms called *champeta* which is popular in Colombia. In the villages of the Sabana de Bolívar you'll hear lively *porro* brass bands. And in some of the southern mountain towns and in neighbouring Ecuador, there are groups of *bambuco* musicians who play *música del interior*, which is akin to the Andean music of Peru and Bolivia.

The Guianas

The Guianas have some of the most interesting and unexpected ethnic mixes in South America: Caribbean and East Indian, Amerindian, Dutch and Javanese, West African, Hmong, French, British, and Garifuna. While the music is strongly influenced by the Caribbean, particularly Jamaica (through **reggae** and **dub**) and Trinidad (through **calypso** and **soca**), Guianan music reflects this diversity. In Georgetown you'll hear Jamaican Reggae alongside **Bollywood film music** and South Asian Guianese music from the likes of Berbice-born **Terry Gajraj**, whose spicely mix of soca, reggae and Indian singing is known as **chutney** music. And you'll hear **shanto**, Trinidad calypso with a Guyanese spin and mischievous lyrics, and local pop, reggae and soca from a diverse roll call of musicians from established names like **Eddy Grant** (who had big international hits with *Baby Come Back* and *I Don't Want to Dance*) and new faces like **Fojo**.

In Cayenne and Paramaribo there's energetic French Antillean **zouk** which swept out of Guadeloupe and across France in the 1990s, and **kaseko**, one of the most exciting sounds on the continent, a swirling, fast-paced fusion of African and Caribbean music played by the likes of **Yakki Famirie**, with a called vocal and choral response sung in *papamiento* Creole or Dutch over frenetic percussion. It is impossible to keep still to. And then there's Caribbean carnival music. Cayenne prides itself on having one of the best Caribbean carnivals outside Trinidad.

The pipes of the Andes: Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador

For many, the sprightly pan-pipe and charango mandolin music of the Andes, played by a troupe dressed in woven ponchos is synonymous with pre-Columbian South America. Yet while bamboo pipes or *siku*, and split-reed *quena* flutes have been used to make music in the Andes (together with conches and various percussion instruments) for thousands of years, contemporary Andean music is in reality a recent invention, born of a meeting between the indigenous past and the *nueva canción* movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Brazil

Brazil is the musical capital of South America and one of the world's great musical nations, with more unique home-grown styles, breadth and diversity than the rest of the continent put together. And it's a musical continent apart: cross-overs between Brazil and Spanish America are almost non-existent and you'll struggle to find a Brazilian who's even heard of salsa, Shakira or who could name a single tango musician. Nor will you hear much *bossa nova*, that soft, lilting style sung by a breathy woman from an eternal summer and which is forever associated with Brazil abroad. It's a style which belongs to the late 1950s and which is heard mostly in tourist bars nowadays. Instead Brazilians dance to or play a bewildering array of contemporary musical styles which are unique to their country but which seldom escape its borders. Many are regional, as follows.

Rio: samba, funk and bossa nova

If you've heard one Brazilian tune it's likely to be either the joyful chorus of *Mas que Nada* or a lift music version of *The Girl from Ipanema*. Both songs come from Rio de Janeiro and a time before men had walked on the moon. *Mas que Nada* is a **samba**, the country's most ubiquitous and enduring music style and the sound of Rio carnival. Samba was born in the poor, black district of Gamboa in the early 20th century and it comes in many forms, from the big drum troupes whose chorus of *tambores* and giant *surdo* bass drums can fill a stadium, to quieter, acoustic sung samba. But it is invariably best heard live and preferably in Rio de Janeiro itself. Despite its age samba lives on and remains very popular with young Brazilians – particularly as **samba soul** and **samba funk** (also known as Rio Samba, whose most famous exponents are **Jorge Ben** and **Seu Jorge**) and in its close-danced beach and barbecue form, *pagode*. Both samba and *pagode* are also dance styles, characterized by fast feet and leg movements and stiff hips and upper body. They are incredibly tricky to master.

For the first half of its life samba was working class, poor and black. But in the 1950s its rhythms were adopted by a group of young, white middle class boys from Ipanema and Copacabana. Musicians like the conservatory trained **Antônio Carlos (Tom) Jobim**, the poet and diplomat **Vinícius de Moraes** and Bahian émigré **João Gilberto** began to play a kind of samba on the acoustic guitar or piano. And they accompanied it with witty lyrics and more complex chord progressions

MUSIC

Essential Brazilian music

Samba: Bezerra da Silva, *O Partido Alto da Samba*

Bossa Nova: Elis Regina and Tom Jobim, *Elis e Tom*

Rio Funk: Seu Jorge, *América Brasil*

Tropicália: various artists, *Tropicália: Panis e Circenses*; Caetano Veloso, *Bicho*; Gilberto Gil, *Realce*

Blocos Afros: Olodum, *20 Anos*; Carlinhos Brown, *Alfagamabetizado*

Bahian Samba: Mariene de Castro, *Abre Caminho*

Contemporary Bahian music: Tiganá Santana, *The Invention of Colour*; Metá Metá, *Metal Metal*

Cacuriá: Dona Teté, *O Divino Cacuriá de Dona Teté*

Mangue Beat & Modern Pernambuco: Nação Zumbi, *Afrociberdelia*; Mundo Livre s/a, *Bit*; Siba, *Avante*

Forró: Sivuca, *Cabelo do Milho*

Guitarrada/guitarrada rock: Pio Lobato, *Technoguitarrada, La Pupuña, All right Penosol*; Dona Onete, *Feitiço Caboclo*

Belém Rock/Metal: Coletivo Rádio Cipó, *Formigando na Calçada do Brasil*; Madam Saatan, *Madam Saatan*

Minas Gerais: Milton Nascimento, *Clube da Esquina* and *Clube da Esquina II*

São Paulo: Criolo, *No na Orelha*; Tulipa, *Efemera*

Gaúcho music: Gilberto Monteiro, *De Lua & Sol*

Avant Garde: Itamar Assumpção, *Preto Bras*; Karnak, *Karnak*; Max de Castro, *Max de Castro* (2005)

Club: DJ Patife, *Cool Steps*

Websites

www.bma.org.br/brmusicexchange

www.soundcloud.com/bm-a

www.mixcloud.com/brazil, the online bible for all things Brazilian music.

drawn from French impressionist composers and a jazzier Brazilian musical style called *choro* (which is still popular today). Few of these new samba singers could sing and their breathy almost spoken vocal style became a trademark of the their

sound, which was christened the new wave or **A Bossa Nova**. Bossa Nova became internationally famous when was adopted by a series of US 'cool jazz' musicians in the 1960s. The foremost of these was the saxophonist **Stan Getz** who in 1964 released one of the best-selling jazz albums of all time, *Getz/Gilberto*, with João Gilberto. It included a single version of Tom Jobim and Vinícius de Moraes' 'The Girl from Ipanema' (with English lyrics vastly inferior to Vinícius's). This rocketed into the Billboard chart and João's wife, **Astrud Gilberto**, who sang the song, was propelled to stardom. Her success defined and continues to define the Brazilian vocal style – light, happy and invariably female – in the minds of foreigners. It also stimulated an exodus of musicians from Brazil which included a Carioca session pianist called **Sergio Mendes**. He repeated Astrud's success with a popular samba song by Jorge Ben, *Mas Que Nada*. Bossa largely died in Brazil in the 1970s and it can be hard to hear it beyond the tourist bars. But it lived on in the USA as jazz-bossa and hotel lobby music and was resurrected in Europe in the new millennium with **Bebel Gilberto's** club-chill out room re-recordings of her father João's music. Her sound has begun to filter back to Brazil's club chill-out and cocktail bar scene today but for most Brazilians it remains resolutely old fashioned.

Bahia: Tropicália and the rhythms and rituals of Africa

Brazil's other great musical capital city is Salvador. From the late 1960s to the 1980s, this most African of Brazilian cities produced some of Brazil's most creative and exciting musicians. Choro, samba and bossa nova were all acoustically driven. When the Beatles and Hendrix rose to global stardom in the 1960s and Dylan picked up an electric guitar, there was something of a revolution in Brazil. Conservatives wanted to keep the country's music 'authentic' and unpolluted by foreign influences. Liberals, spearheaded by a group of avante garde musicians from Bahia led by **Tom Zé, Gilberto Gil** and **Caetano Veloso** and a São Paulo trio called **Os Mutantes**, embraced electric instruments and psychotropic drugs and took Brazilian music in a new electric direction. This was christened **Tropicália** or Tropicalismo after a fusion of the words psychedelia and Tropical. Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso and Tom Zé continue to produce interesting music to this day. Gil explores Brazil and Bahia's roots with his music. After a brief but disastrous spell as a crooner, Caetano found a more interesting niche in the new Millennium working with a string of young cutting-edge Rio producers and composers on three bittersweet albums *Zii e Zie, Cê* and *Abraço*. Tom Zé continues to be more avante garde; the most recent of his CDs are deconstructions of pagode samba and bossa nova, respectively called *Estudando O Pagode* and *Estudando A Bossa*. The seeds of Tropicália blew from Bahia over the whole of Brazil to produce fusions of rock, soul, funk and Brazilian rhythms. Collectively these came to be known as MPB, Música Popular Brasileira.

Acoustic music lived on in Bahia after Tropicália. The late 1970s saw the emergence of a string of heavily percussive bands focused around drum troupes and called **blocos afros**. These were cultural organizations associated with Salvador carnival and rooted in the ritual music of the African Brazilian spirit religion of **candomblé**, traditional **samba de roda**, sung in a ring of people and

accompanied only by percussion, and the martial art dance of **capoeira**. Bands like **Olodum**, **Ilê Aiyê** and **Carlinhos Brown's Timbalada** promoted African-Brazilian issues and solidarity through their music. Seeing them up close in the streets of Salvador with dozens of drummers playing together in perfect syncopated unison is an incredibly powerful experience. But even the drums of the *blocos afros* are being drowned out by Bahia's most popular music, **axé**, which sounds a little like salsa sexed-up, fused with rock and roll and overdosing on speed. It is energetic but shallow, with slushy lyrics and little sophistication. It's also relentlessly commercial and is sweeping through the carnivals and clubs of the Northeast leaving musical variety and the more traditional musical styles in its wake. Thankfully Bahia's better music is undergoing a mini-Renaissance spurred on by the arrival of exciting new acts like samba singer **Mariene de Castro**, experimental Bahian roots meets Afro beat band **Metá Metá** and African-influenced singer-songwriter **Tiganá Santana**, whose 2015 release **The Invention of Colour** is a masterpiece.

Recife and São Luís: back to Africa and into the Mangroove

For the time being Salvador's crown as the musical capital of the Northeast has passed to **Recife**, the new centre of African-Brazilian music, where the spirit of Tropicália lives on as **Mangue Beat**, and **São Luís** on the frontier of the Amazon. Going out for a Saturday night in the colonial centre of São Luís is unforgettable. Great groups of people gather together in impromptu bands to play the local equivalent of samba, **cacuriá**. Women dance, swing and swirl together in long flowing dresses and everyone is sucked into the throng. The city is at its liveliest during the Bumba meu Boi festivals, which have their own costumed dances. It also preserves a strong connection to the Caribbean through reggae, which is played live in many of the small bars in the city centre.

Recife is more avant garde and intellectual. The city has been producing great musicians for decades, including cult 70s and 80s singers **Alceu Valença** and **Lenine**, both of whom play superb shows at carnival. At weekends the smoky bars of the old city centre vibrate to the guitars, drums, desert fiddles and electrified accordions of dozens of experimental bands and singers, whose sound is a fusion of the traditional **maracatu** rhythms of African Pernambuco, folk sounds from the arid backlands and international rock influences from bands like Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds and Radiohead. Out of this diversity and desire to rediscover Pernambuco's African and rural-poor heritage emerged the scene known as **Mangue Beat** (or Mangue Bit) in the 1990s. It was led by the charismatic singer **Chico Science** and his band **Nação Zumbi**, Fred Zeroquatro lead singer of another group **Mundo Livre** and rootsier **Mestre Ambrósio**. Chico died in a car crash in 1997 but Mundo Livre and Mestre Ambrósio's lead singer Siba, can be heard around Carnaval time. Their legacy and spirit live on in bands like **Mombojó** and **Cabruêra** from Paraíba who fuse mangue beat with experimental rock and hip hop.

The northeast and the back-land barn dance jig

The rest of Northeastern Brazil is dominated by **forró**, a kind of punchy jig originally driven by triangle, accordion and a deep bass drum, but now usually played by a full band. Popular wisdom says that the name derives from a Brazilianized pronunciation of the 'For All' dances thrown for railway workers by their British bosses in the early 20th century. But the dance is probably far older and the name probably comes from an abbreviation of *forrobodó*, meaning dragged feet. Forró is party music. And the biggest parties of all are the **Festas Juninas** in the Sertão backlands in Caruaru, Pernambuco and Campina Grande in June when hundreds of thousands gather to dance at break net speed, yet so close that they are literally entwined. You can do the same at any time of year though in the beach bars in Maceió, Fortaleza and half a dozen other little resorts. But get a Brazilian to show you the dance steps first or you'll feel like a rugby player dancing ballet. In the last decade, perhaps inspired by Manguê Beat a number of acts have taken forró and the rhythms of the Sertão in more experimental directions. **Dona Zefinha** from Ceará mix theatre, roots music and dance in a spectacular show and **Dorivã** from Tocantins draws on Northeastern roots music to craft beautifully composed and played CDs. These and a further array of mesmerizing acts can be heard at the **Mês da Música** in Fortaleza in November. The tiny states of Alagoas and Sergipe, sandwiched between Bahia and Pernambuco, have an illustrious musical heritage too, producing great names like **Hermeto Pascoal**, Brazil's Mingus, and the soul singer **Djavan**.

The Amazon: surf guitar and carimbó rock

There's only one place in the Amazon for music, Belém. The city pounds to a springy West African meets the Caribbean rhythm of **carimbó** and twangs to the psychedelic sixties Dick Dale surf twang of *guitarrada*. A night out on the town is unforgettable – don't miss the wonderful **Templários** club where the best local bands gig on a Friday and Saturday night. In the bigger warehouse venues like **O Pororoca** DJs housed in giant space-pod sets as large as a truck and covered in shimmering flashing lights play pounding **techno-guitarrada** to gargantuan crowds of revellers. The city is also the birthplace of Amazon power metal bands like **Madame Saatan**, fronted by a wispy woman with dreadlocks and a tapestry of tatoos. There's really nowhere like it anywhere, even in Brazil. Come here for the **Círio festival** celebrations if you can.

Minas Gerais: Milton Nascimento and metal from the mines

The state of Minas is Brazil's lyrical, reflective heart. Many of the country's finest poets and writers grew up in its pretty villages. The Minas sound is usually associated with **Milton Nascimento** and his band, the **Clube da Esquina**. Clube da Esquina formed as a loose association of like-minded musicians in 1970s Belo Horizonte and together they forged a new Brazilian musical style whose influence has spread far beyond their country. Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Stevie Wonder are admirers of Nascimento and the French modern jazz and classical composer Lionel Belmondo has called him as important a composer as Ravel.

Unlike much Brazilian music the Clube da Esquina sound is textural and melodic rather than rhythmic and dancey. Milton's golden baritone or searing falsetto, telling stories of Minas Gerais, of Brazil and their marginalized and innocent, soars above a rich, pastoral landscape of sound which melds the chants of Africa, indigenous Brazil and the Catholic church, children's voices, gentle acoustic guitar, the orchestra, a distant organ or drum, a ringing bell tower. Although his legacy lives on in a hundred singer songwriters who play in the bars and theatres of Belo Horizonte, Minas continues to produce some of Brazil's most individual voices. The all-instrumental band **Uakti** build their own unique percussion instruments and play a kind of mesmerizing minimalist trance on them, collaborating with composers like Philip Glass. **Erika Machado** sings beautiful, catchy pop with quirky, witty lyrics, **Proa** play new wave indie electronica, and Brazil's most commercially successful band, **Sepultura**, play some of the world's most driving, exciting virtuoso death metal.

The Centre West: Rock and Rodeo crooning

Brazil's Centre West states of Goiás, the Mato Grossos and the Federal District of Brasília are dominated by Brazilian rock and Brazilian country music or **sertanejo**. Brazilian rock began with Tropicália and a maverick Bahian occult anarchist and political subversive called **Raul Seixas**. But it really took off in the 1980s when British new wave records were smuggled into Brasília in the diplomatic bag, finding their way into the hands of an introspective young bass player, **Renato Russo**. In 1982 Russo formed **Legião Urbana**, a Brazilian new-wave rock band whose combination of eighties rhythms and sarcastic lyrics struck a chord with Brazilian university students the country over. Imitators included bands like Cariocas **Barão Vermelho**, **Kid Abelha**, **Os Paralamas do Sucesso** (founded by friends of Russo's) and Paulistanos **Os Titãs**. In the late 1980s and 1990s, after the collapse of the dictatorship, Brazilian rock exploded producing myriad bands many of whom remain huge in Brazil today. They include Mineiro reggae rockers **Skank**, funk-rockers **Jota Quest** and indie rockers **Megarex**.

Together with pumped-up Bahian axê pop sung by the likes of **Ivete Sangalo**, **sertanejo** is the biggest music in Brazil. It's pretty cheesy stuff: Male duos with mullet hair cuts, usually dressed in checked shirts and Stetsons sing romantic power ballads about 'grande amor'. Videos are often intercut with shots of prize bulls and rodeos. Gigs by the likes of **Bruno & Marrone** and **Victor & Leo** are attended by tens of thousands.

The South: MPB and gaúcho music

The German, Azorean and Italian immigrants who colonized the far south of Brazil were christened *gaúchos* by the Tupi indigenous people. The word translates as 'the people who sing sadly', and gaúchos have produced some of Brazil's finest MPB singers and musicians in general. They include **Elis Regina**, a tragic character with a magnificent voice that could be both sweet and tender and astonishingly powerful. She rose to fame in the late 1960s with what are now classic recordings of songs by composers like João Bosco and Milton Nascimento. Two of Brazil's

finest contemporary musicians, guitarist **Yamandu Costa** and band leader **Artur Faria**, are both from the far south as are a swathe of cult rock bands and avante garde singers like **Jupiter Maça**. Regional *gaúcho* music or *música nativista* strongly features the guitar and the bandoneón and often incorporates rhythms and cadences which have much in common with nearby Uruguay and Argentina including *chamamé*, *milonga* and *tango*. Astor Piazzolla himself is said to have admired the skill of *bandoneón* player **Gilberto Monteiro**. He often plays at regional festivals like the **Canto Sem Fronteira** on the Uruguayan border at Bagé which usually takes place in November (www.cantosemfronteira.com).

São Paulo: the avant garde

Everything from all over the Brazilian musical continent comes together in São Paulo. It is where the talent gravitates in search of money. On any night anywhere you can hear a bizarre *carimbó* metal act from Belém, Recife Manguê Beat, an off the wall Mineiro songwriter, cowboy ballads from Goiás or some old school samba. Yet the city has its own sound too, a kind of avant garde art rock samba formulated by one of Brazil's great unsung musical geniuses, **Itamar Assumpção**. Itamar, a supremely odd, witty, musical and lyrical voice, gathered a group of immensely talented musicians around him in the 1980s and performed strings of famously bizarre, theatrical shows. His work inspired numerous other mavericks like baroque music hall samba rockers, Karnak and their charismatic lead singer and solo artist, André Abujamra, and the electronica pioneer Max de Castro. Together their sound became known as *vanguarda*. Many other Paulistano artists dip their feet in *vanguarda*: ace producer Beto Villares and Latin Grammy winner CéU fuse *vanguarda* with other Brazilian and international styles, Renato Goda with English new wave and cabaret, while Criolo mixes rap and funk to make resolutely populist music with a cutting political message. São Paulo also has the country's liveliest club scene which has produced many of Brazil's internationally famous DJs, notably Patife and Marky, both of whom have a predilection for drum 'n bass. See also Essential Brazilian Music, page 89.

South American literature

Early literary efforts in South America can be said to have focused primarily on chronicling the conquest and the subsequent colonisation of the Americas. It was only at the start of the independence struggles in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as well as during the period of nation building immediately following, that South American literature starting coming into its own.

Whereas Brazil enjoyed a relatively stable transition to independence, Spanish America experienced turbulent years and long periods of social unrest, something that is reflected in the writing of the time. Literary output of the era is also characterized by a search for a true American identity, a current that runs through much of the continent's writing after independence from Spain was achieved in the 19th century. Political struggles and agendas have strongly influenced South American writing from the very beginning, with politics and literature seemingly going hand in hand across the continent, perhaps more so here than anywhere else in the world. Many literary figures have run for, even served as, presidents of their countries, or have held other government posts. Men of letters were frequently taking a distinctly political stance, playing active roles in influencing the course of their countries.

In many parts of the continent, essays, novels, short stories, poems and theatrical works often remain more than just light-hearted entertainment, containing political and social messages. Originally South American writers were mostly influenced by Spain and Portugal, but these were later surpassed by France and many in the 'New World' were inspired by the ideas behind the French, and later the American, Revolutions. Writers who made their mark during the independence struggles and post-independence include Venezuelan **Andrés Bello** and Argentine **Domingo Faustino Sarmiento**, who published *Facundo: Civilisation and Barbarism* in 1845. He also went on to serve as president of Argentina 1868-1874.

The first major poet hailing from South America was Ecuadorean **José Joaquín de Olmedo**, whose most famous poem, *La Victoria de Junín* (1825), celebrates Simón Bolívar's victory at Junín. More nation-building and political messages were written into **José Marmol's** *Amalia* (1851-1855), neatly disguising his anti-Rosas sentiments (the Argentine dictator of the time) in a romantic novel. Also from Argentina, José Hernández wrote the nation's best known long narrative poem *El Gaucho Martín Fierro* in two parts (1872, 1879), recapturing and idealising the pampas gaucho, turning this poem into something of a national epic. Another of the best-loved works of 19th-century South American fiction was penned by a Colombian, the novel *María* (1867), by **Jorge Isaacs**.

Early women writers might seem few and far between, but one example is Peru's **Clorinda Matto de Turner**, whose novel *Aves sin nido* (Birds without a nest)

was published in 1889. The book is one of the few early works to deal with the indigenous population of the region and a precursor to the so-called *indigenista* movement, which flourished during the first half of the 20th century and included writers such as **José Carlos Mariátegui**, also Peruvian, and Ecuadorean **Jorge Icaza**. The latter penned *Huaspungo* (The Villager – 1934), one of the movement's best known works, dealing with the exploitation of Ecuador's indigenous population.

Although novelists can be said to have had great impact on cultural and political life, essayists have also very much influenced the course of South American society. Uruguayan **José Enrique Rodó** published his lengthy essay *Ariel* in 1900 and this work, contrasting the values of ancient Rome and Greece with the rising power of the United States, remained influential throughout the continent in the 1910s and 20s. The struggles of liberalism versus conservatism, city versus countryside, civilisation versus barbarism is present in much of South American literature in general. One particularly popular example is Venezuelan **Rómulo Gallegos'** *Doña Bárbara* (1929), where the author even chooses to name the protagonist 'bárbara', in reference to barbarism. Gallegos was another man of letters who went on to become the president of his country in 1947.

The 20th century saw the rise of modernism, and then post-modernism, with writers and poets such as Argentine **Jorge Luis Borges**, Chilean **Pablo Neruda** and Peruvian **César Vallejo** coming to the fore and reaching worldwide renown. Neruda received the Noble Prize for Literature in 1971. In the late 1940s and early 50s magical realist writing started to appear on the scene, a genre that has since become the hallmark of some of the contemporary South American greats such as **Gabriel García Márquez** of Colombia (Nobel laureate in 1982) and **Isabel Allende**, born in Peru to Chilean parents. Some of the many writers emerging and establishing themselves during this era were **Juan Carlos Onetti** of Uruguay, **João Guimarães Rosa** and **Clarice Lispector** of Brazil.

The 1960s and 70s also saw the rise of authors such as Argentine **Julio Cortázar**, Peru's **Mario Vargas Llosa** (winner of the 2010 Nobel Prize for Literature), **Augusto Roa Bastos** of Paraguay and **Manuel Puig** also of Argentina. The years of repression that swept through large parts of the continent in the 1960s, 70s and early 80s had tremendous impact on the literary output, with writers forced into exile or even silenced forever. Those who chose to stay had to endeavour to find different ways of using language as a means of saying the unsayable.

Many of the above writers are associated with the 'boom' in Latin American writing (1960s to mid-1970s), but of course their work in most cases spans a wider period. After 1975, the term post-'boom' fails to recognize the subsequent breadth of literary output in South America. This ranges from the McOndo movement, which was a deliberate attempt to move away from magic realism and paralleled Mexico's Crack Generation, through the influence of pop and, latterly, digital culture to the confrontation through fiction of past atrocities (for example the Sendero Luminoso and Fujimori years in Peru – Daniel Alarcón, *Lost City Radio*; Santiago Roncagliolo *Abril Rojo*) and present conflicts, as in Colombia (Evelio Rosero, Juan Gabriel Vásquez, Tomás González). Among those who have achieved international recognition are **Roberto Bolaño** of Chile (died

BOOKS

Highlights of South American literature

The poems of Chilean Nobel Laureate (1971) Pablo Neruda (1904-1973).

Julio Cortázar (Argentina, 1914-1984), *Hopscotch* (1963), can be read in two ways, as a straight narrative, or jumping about all 155 chapters, an unclassifiable novel ideal for a long trip.

Jorge Amado (Brazil, 1912-2001), *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands* (1966). Set in Salvador, Brazil, this tale follows a woman's search for happiness.

The short stories of Jorge Luis Borges (Argentina, 1899-1986).

Books by Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia, 1927-2014), particularly *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967). This seminal magical realist novel set in fictitious Macondo is the Colombian author's best-known novel, translated into 27 languages.

Manuel Puig (Argentina, 1932-1990), *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1976). A homosexual and a terrorist bond in prison. Also made into a film in 1985 starring William Hurt and Raúl Julia.

Books by Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa (born 1936), particularly *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* (1977), *The War of the End of the World* (1984) and *Who Killed Palomino Molero?* (1986).

Clarice Lispector (1920-1977), *The Hour of the Star* (1977). This novel depicts the life of a country girl living in the slums of Rio de Janeiro.

Books by Isabel Allende (Chile, born 1942), particularly *The House of the Spirits* (1982). Chilean Allende's best-selling debut novel, spanning four generations and the turbulent times they are living through.

Ernesto 'Che' Guevara (Argentina, 1929-1967), *The Motorcycle Diaries* (first published in 1993). Che Guevara's diaries from his epic motorcycle journey through Latin America as a 23-year-old medical student.

The works of Eduardo Galeano (Uruguay, 1940-2015), including the *Memoria del fuego trilogy* (*Memory of Fire*, 1982-1986) and his treatise on football, *El fútbol a sol y sombra* (*Football in Sun and Shadow*, 1995).

Books by Roberto Bolaño (Chile, 1953-2003), principally *Los detectives salvajes* (*The Savage Detectives*, 1998) and *2666* (2004).

2003) and César Aira of Argentina. Although it can be difficult to find examples of early South American women writers, many prominent female authors have emerged in the last century. Previously, it was **Clorinda Matto de Turner's** 1889 novel *Aves sin nido* which is accepted as the forerunner of the *indigenista* genre,

which deals with the plight of indigenous people. One of the most intellectually influential writers of the 20th century was the Argentine **Victoria Ocampo**, who founded literary journal *Sur* and wrote a number of literary works herself. Her sister **Silvina** was also a writer and poet. The first and only South American woman to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature was Chilean **Gabriela Mistral** in 1945. Other excellent women writers not already mentioned include **Marta Traba**, **Alejandra Pizarnik**, **Luisa Valenzuela** (all from Argentina), **Cristina Peri Rossi** (Uruguay), **Damiela Eltit** (Chile) and **Laura Restrepo** (Colombia). Their work, and that of many other women novelists, poets and critics represents what Gerald Martin, in *Journeys through the Labyrinth* (1989), calls "without doubt the single most important phenomenon of the post-'boom' era" (page 343). See also Highlights of South American literature, page 97.

South American cinema

Cinema in South America began and became popular surprisingly early, with moving images having arrived in both Argentina and Brazil by 1896, so it's no coincidence that these two nations have come to lead the way in terms of cinematic production across South America. The first genre to take root and become popular was the documentary, but soon many of the early efforts became highly influenced by Hollywood. There was, however, also space for more home-spun films, focusing on 'el barrio', local issues and concerns. Incidentally the world's first animated film, *El Apóstol*, was made in Argentina in 1917. Argentina captured the hearts of national and Latin American audiences generally, through the magic of tango, with singer Carlos Gardel (see page 82), starring in many films such as *Cuesta Abajo* and *El día que me quieras*. In neighbouring Brazil, the *chanchada*, a type of musical comedy, was the preferred vehicle of expression. In both cases music, song and dance were key elements of the earlier film efforts, often with a hearty sprinkling of melodrama.

By the 1940s and 50s cinema in South America generally, began to change – or rather, come of age – and the 1960s could be considered the start of a new cinematic era in the region. This was a decade of great socio-political changes and upheaval, inspiring lively debate, creativity and greater cultural output, with Brazil leading the way with **Cinema Novo** (New Cinema). The focus of films started veering towards the more realist and, some would argue, more grim and there was greater exploration of topics such as poverty and social ills, as well as sexuality and sensuality, with many directors taking their inspiration from literary works. State repression under the dictatorships in many South American nations in the 1970s and 80s hampered cinematic production and, indeed, the topics that could be dealt with, for a number of years, but the last few decades have seen South American cinema recover and continue to evolve with new directors reaching an international audience. See also Cinematic highlights in South America, page 100.

FILM

Cinematic highlights in South America

1934 *Cuesta Abajo (Downward Slope)* (Louis Gasnier). Tango singer Carlos Gardel sings his heart out in one of his most popular films.

1946 *Notorious* (Alfred Hitchcock). Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman chase neo-Nazis in Brazil.

1959 *Orfeu Negro (Black Orpheus)* (Marcel Camus). Orpheus and Eurydice mixed with the Rio Carnival.

1966-1968 *La Hora de los Hornos (The Hour of the Furnaces)* (Fernando Solanas). A four-hour long Argentine documentary with a strong political message.

1969 *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (Roy Hill). Set in Patagonia and Bolivia, this film follows the last few years of the outlaws, starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford.

1972 *Aguirre, Wrath of God* (Werner Herzog). The tale of Spanish conquistador Lope de Aguirre and his journey up the Amazon.

1982 *Fitzcarraldo* (Werner Herzog). The story of building an opera house in the Peruvian Amazonian jungle.

1983 *Romancing the Stone* (Robert Zemeckis). Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner go emerald-hunting in Colombia (although mostly filmed in Mexico).

1984 *Camila* (Maria Luisa Bemberg). The story of a woman's love for a Catholic priest, leading to her execution, set in 19th century Argentina.

1985 *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Héctor Babenco). This prison cell dialogue between a homosexual and a terrorist is based on Argentine Manuel Puig's novel of the same name.

1986 *The Mission* (Roland Joffé). Robert de Niro and Jeremy Irons portray two Jesuit priests in the Missions in Argentina and Paraguay at the time of the Jesuit expulsion.

1986 *La Historia Oficial (The Official Version)* (Luis Puenzo). The first Argentine film to win an Oscar, set during the Dirty War.

1992 *Alive* (Frank Marshall). Members of the Uruguayan rugby team survive a plane crash in the Andes.

1993 *The House of the Spirits* (Bille August). Film adaptation of Isabel Allende's family epic.

1994 *Death and the Maiden* (Roman Polanski). Based on Ariel Dorfman's play, a woman (Sigourney Weaver) aims to take revenge on her torturer (Ben Kingsley).

1998 *Central do Brasil (Central Station)* (Walter Salles). A young boy's search for his father in Brazil.

2001 *Nine Queens* (Fabian Bielinsky). Argentine thriller set in Buenos Aires over 24 hours.

2003 *Cidade de Deus (City of God)* (Fernando Meirelles). A compelling, violent drama of the Rio favelas, with a great soundtrack.

2004 *The Motorcycle Diaries* (Walter Salles). The story of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara and his friend Alberto Granada's epic journey around South America in 1952.

2004 *María Llena de Gracia (Maria Full of Grace)* (Joshua Martson). Depicts 17-year old Maria's life from small-town Colombia to international drug-trafficking.

2008 *Linha de Passe* (Walter Salles). Football obsession and poverty in São Paulo.

2010 *Nostalgia por la luz* (Patricio Guzmán). Documentary investigating the relationship between astronomy and women searching the Atacama desert for the remains of their loved ones, disappeared during the Pinochet dictatorship.

2012 *No* (Pablo Larraín). A film about the advertising campaign in the 1998 plebiscite by those against General Pinochet retaining power.

2013 *Pelo Malo* (Mariana Rendón). The bad hair in question belongs to a nine-year-old boy who wants it straightened for his class photo, provoking a confrontation with his recently widowed mother to add to the challenges she already faces in a housing project in Caracas.

2014 *Relatos salvajes (Wild Tales)* (Damián Szifrón). An anthology of six darkly funny short films from Argentina about vengeance.

2014 *The Salt of the Earth* (Wim Wenders and Juliano Ribeiro Salgado). Biography and study of the work of the great Brazilian photographer, Sebastião Salgado.

2015 *Que horas ela volta? (The Second Mother)* (Anna Muylaert). The routines of a live-in housekeeper and the family she works for in São Paulo are thrown into disarray by the arrival of the housekeeper's estranged daughter from Pernambuco.

South American arts & crafts

Art and sculpture

Art and sculpture have not reached the same international success and breadth of expression enjoyed by South American literature and cinema, with far fewer artists or sculptors reaching worldwide renown. There are, however, a few notable exceptions from different eras, eg 19th-century realist painter **Juan Manuel Blanes** of Uruguay and Colombian painter and sculptor **Fernando Botero**, currently residing in Europe.

Indigenous cultures such as the Incas of the Andean countries had their own art forms, many of which would now be considered handicrafts, or *artesanías* (see below). Early South American art was highly influenced by European styles and much of the artistic output was religious in nature. Among the first to arrive and work with the native population were priests and friars, often using skilled indigenous artisans for the construction and decoration of new churches. Religious paintings and church ornamentation are among the best-preserved works of art in the Americas, many made by unnamed local artists working with the religious communities established shortly after the conquest. Arrivals from Europe also brought renaissance, baroque and rococo influences. The colonial period was characterized by a blending of indigenous and European traditions, with African influences added to the styles at a later date. One of the best, and also earliest, schools of painting in South America was the **Cuzco School** in Peru, where most of the painters were indigenous or mestizo.

It was mostly the newly arrived Europeans who were mixing the styles and influences, while many of the native communities did their utmost to keep their traditions intact. After independence from Spain and Portugal, a much greater exchange began, with Europeans coming over to South America to teach, while in turn many South Americans visited Europe, returning with new skills, techniques and knowledge. As with literary output, art and artistic expression have been strongly influenced by the politics of the region. Independence movements, in particular, fuelled a continent-wide reassessment of what it meant to be 'American' and there was a widespread search for identity away from the colonial powers that played a key part in all forms of culture of the time. Despite this, many artists, art historians and scholars continued to be educated abroad, more often than not in Europe, thus continuing European influence over South American art in the centuries that have followed independence.

Muralism is mostly associated with the Mexican greats of Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco, but there were also muralists

working further south. Among the best known are Chilean **José Venturelli** and two Colombians, **Pedro Nel Gómez** and **Santiago Martínez Delgado**.

Popular handicrafts in South America

South America has an abundance of different traditional handicrafts that have developed over time and although there are regional variations, many have flourished right across the continent. The distinctive crafts often show a mixture of indigenous, European and later also African influences.

Textiles and weaving

Textiles and weaving have been of utmost importance throughout South America from an economic, as well as a social and spiritual-religious perspective. The materials used in producing textiles have included fibres from trees, plants and shrubs, hemp, hides, bird feathers, human hair, horsehair and cotton, as well as the wool from llamas, alpacas, vicuñas and sheep. Traditional weaving goes a long way back, with cultures such as the Incas inheriting 3000 years of weaving skills. These skills were to be exploited in colonial times, in large-scale *mitas*, textile workshops, and the Spaniards were soon exporting cloth to Europe. For the native population, however, textiles, apart from their utilitarian functions, were also used for rituals and ceremonies. These items often had intricate designs and patterns, such as those of the Aymara people of the islands of Lake Titicaca, who have carried on their traditions to this day. Different communities wear different traditional outfits, some introduced by the *conquistadores*, some of more ancient origin. You can often tell by what a person is wearing where they are from and what indigenous culture they belong to, although these days Western dress is increasingly popular. The use of materials, designs and motifs varies widely, with llama, alpaca, vicuña or sheep's wool mostly used in the Andean countries and the Southern Cone, the latter sometimes using hides in weaving. Knitting is also particularly popular in the colder climes of the Andes. The one area where textiles and weaving have far less importance is the Amazon and the Guianas, with their tropical climate. Otherwise there are many areas that are rich in weaving, knitting and embroidery traditions, making everything from tapestries and decorative blankets, to every item of clothing imaginable.

Jewellery and metalwork

These are also traditions with several thousand years of history. Copper, gold and platinum were all mined before the arrival of the Spaniards and although many of the objects of the early civilizations were functional in nature, intricately ornate jewellery and ceremonial knives have been found at archaeological sites, particularly in Peru. Precious and semi-precious stones were often used in ceremonial costumes and at burials, since metal objects on their own were not considered of worth. The *conquistadores* were amazed by the wealth they saw and this seemingly endless thirst for gold and silver led to some of the most appalling exploitations of the local population. Although much was plundered

and sent to Europe, one of the world's best gold museums, Museo de Oro, displaying pieces from the third century BC until the 16th century, can be found in Bogotá. Ironwork was introduced to South America after the conquest and many skilled Spaniards and Italians, in particular, arrived to develop new metalworking techniques. Silverwork came to be strongly associated with the gaucho culture across Uruguay, parts of northern Argentina and southern Brazil and many riding accessories are forged from silver, along with the obligatory maté gourd with silver inlays. After the introduction of silver coins in the 18th century, the Mapuche of southern Chile became very well known for their skills as silversmiths. The longstanding traditions of jewellery-making are carried on across the continent with many modern day artisans using precious and semi-precious stones together with metals in their designs. Inspired by old, traditional, native methods they are blending modern and ancient to create new and different motifs.

Basketry and fibre crafts

Basketry, hat-making and bag-making are very common across the vast area of the Amazon, where the raw materials are abundant. Woven bags are household items in many parts of the continent and shopping bags are as likely to be made from natural materials, as they are from plastic. Hats, fans, mats and boxes are also common items found in many South American homes. Reeds, palm fibre, bamboo, horsehair, maguay and cane are just some of the many different materials used. Similarly to other crafts that developed, the objects were originally of a purely utilitarian nature and many still are. In Huanchaco in northern Peru, as well as on Lake Titicaca, the communities use reeds to make boats for fishing and transportation. In Colombia and Venezuela, plant fibre is used for the walls and roofs of houses, as well as in hammock-making. One of the most famous South American items produced is the Panama hat, thus named as it was shipped from Panama to Europe, although actually made in Ecuador and also southern Colombia. Its original home is the Ecuadorean village of Jipijapa, a name now sometimes used for both the fibres and the hats themselves. The southern Colombian state of Nariño became a centre for basketry and fibre crafts early on and today Boyacá, further north is particularly well known for its fine baskets. Another area for both basket- and hammock-making is El Chaco of Paraguay and in Brazil basketry is mostly found up in the northeast of the country around the states of Bahia, Pernambuco and Paraíba.

Pottery

Pottery is perhaps the oldest craft in South America with extensive ceramic archaeological findings in, for example, Nazca (Peru). Pre-Columbian pottery often carried religious or magical symbolism and although many objects were functional in nature, others carried highly spiritual significance. The Nazca, Moche and Inca cultures all used such ceramic objects and the prehispanic techniques survive and remain in use. Communities often mix ancient and modern pottery production processes. So-called blackware is one example of traditional, rural pottery that can be found in different parts of the continent from as far south as

Chillán in Chile to Tolima in Colombia. Terracotta ware is another popular version in many parts. Black pottery can be found in Cafayate in Argentina and the skilled artisans of Paraguay mix ceramic tiles with woodcarving.

Other popular crafts

The art of making wind musical instruments and drums goes back to pre-Columbian times, while the Spaniards introduced stringed instruments to the continent. Materials used include ceramic, wood and gourds, as well as bamboo, particularly for the wind instruments.

Large parts of South America are forested and woodcrafts are widespread. The woods used differ from area to area; in the Amazon and along the Pacific Colombian coast wooden materials include laurel, mahogany and cedar; nogal, naranjilla and increasingly also eucalyptus are used in the Andean Highlands, while pine is popular in southern Chile and Argentina. Originally wood was used for everything from the very practical such as bows and arrows, to ceremonial, ritualistic objects such as masks. These ceremonial and festive traditions live on in many parts and wooden masks are still made and used in local fiestas. Wooden healing sticks, made by the Cholo people of Colombia, are another example of wooden objects used in ritual. During the colonial period woodcarving became popular, in particular when decorating churches. While Peru and Chile make beautiful wooden furniture, San Antonio de Ibarra in Ecuador is a well-known centre for woodcarving. Religious figurines, influenced by the Jesuits, hail from Paraguay, northern Argentina and southern Brazil. Many of the wooden objects are beautifully dyed with resin or painted in bright colours.

Other popular crafts include gourd-making, especially in Uruguay, *retablo*-making and gourd-carving from Peru and bread dough craft from Ecuador, lace from Pernambuco in Brazil and beadwork from Colombia.

Credits

Footprint credits

Editor: Felicity Laughton

Production and layout: Emma Bryers

Publisher: John Sadler

Marketing: Kirsty Holmes

Photography credits

Front cover: Jess Kraft/Shutterstock.com

Publishing information

Footprint South American Handbook

Background Information

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August 2018

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Published by Footprint
5 Riverside Court
Lower Bristol Road
Bath BA2 3DZ, UK
T +44 (0)1225 469141
footprinttravelguides.com

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