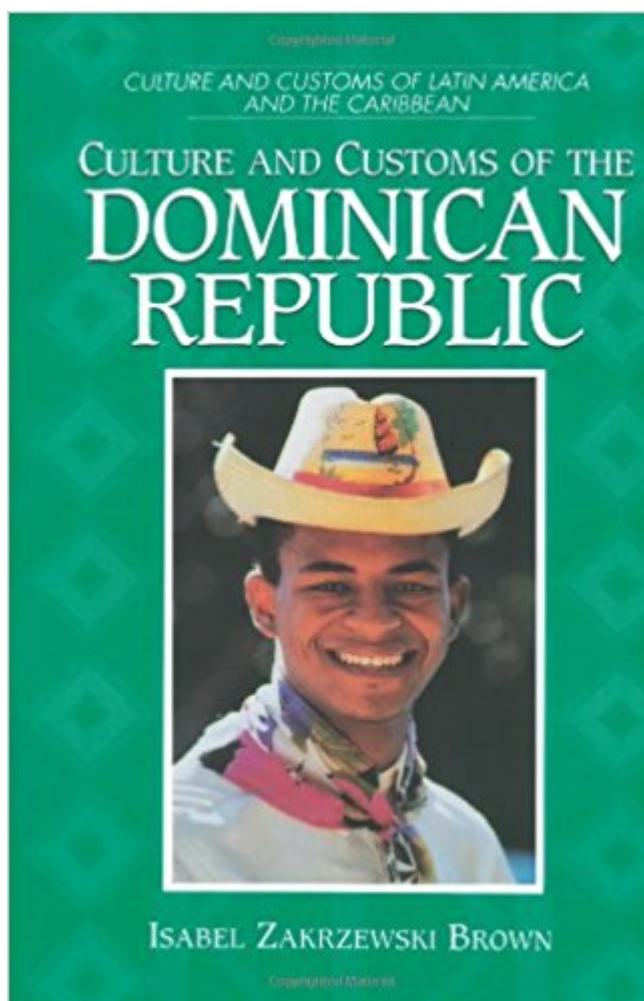


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# Culture And Customs Of The Dominican Republic (Cultures And Customs Of The World)



## Synopsis

The Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, has a rich history beginning with the first inhabitants, the Taíno Indians, to the Spanish conquistadors, African slaves, and numerous waves of immigrants. *Culture and Customs of the Dominican Republic* is the first book to encompass the vibrancy of the land, its people, and their cultures and customs. It surveys the daily lives of average Dominicans and also the unusual folk practices of the rural populace. Attention is also given to the thriving Dominican community in New York City, the Dominican Americans. Students and interested readers will be intrigued by this insider's affectionate portrait of the Dominicans. This little-known culture is illuminated with chapters on the land, its history, and people; religions; social customs; media and film; literature; performing arts; architecture, art, sculpture, and photography. *Culture and Customs of the Dominican Republic* is a major contribution to the understanding of the developing Caribbean and Hispanic peoples.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"...the volume is a useful and informative resource appropriate for the general reader, and a source of many unique and interesting details for the more specialized researcher." - ARBA  
"...an excellent resource." - Pennsylvania School Librarian's Association

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I enjoy this book. As crazy as it may seem, but the one word to describe it is: cute. The language, the intricate descriptions of our customs, are simply described in the cutest manner. I will be using it with my students, as I'm sure they will debate and laugh at the different things this author highlights that is typical of my people. For instance, Dominicans in the countryside often hire people to cry at funerals. I know this one cultural descriptor will have my students rolling on the ground due to the intense laughter.

Originally purchased this as a source for a paper I was writing in an anthropology class. Very interesting and informative. Solid facts and statistics, as well as intriguing histories that corrected some of what I had heard or believed. Thank you for such a good book, keeping it in my collection even after graduating. :)

This is a well-written overview and introduction to a complex, yet fascinating Caribbean country. The author's unique approach betrays first hand familiarity with the subject matter as well as great affection for it.

This book provides a good general overview of the history, politics, religion and art of the Dominican Republic. The DR is a vibrant, unique and fascinating nation which relatively little has been written about. I read this book during a recent visit to the country and found it to be a useful source of information which enriched my travelling experience. But I did find a few shortcomings. For one almost half the book is devoted to the creative arts, with a particular focus on the so-called "high arts" such as theater, sculpture, ballet and opera. I think a more reasonable distribution would have included more on economics, anthropology and social issues, with about 1/4 of the book devoted to creative endeavors. Also in this artistic section more should have been written about the popular forms of music and dance, such as merengue, bachata and mambo. These performing arts are, by far, the most important to the majority of the Dominican people. They, especially merengue, are also hugely popular and influential throughout Latin America. In terms of social topics, Brown does best when discussing the complex issue of race in the Dominican Republic. Brown emphasizes the extent to which Dominicans have gone to emphasize their white European heritage and to downplay their black African heritage. This has been increased by the fact that the DR shares the island of

Hispaniola with Haiti. Haiti and the DR have a long history of political and military conflict, including a Haitian invasion and conquest of the DR in the early 1800's. Most Dominicans are mulato. But Brown says many darker skinned people prefer to call themselves "indios" rather than identify as black. This despite the fact that the indigenous Tainos were practically wiped out a relatively short time after the arrival of Colombus and the Spanish. My sense is that this is gradually changing, as young people seem less concerned than their elders about skin complexion. But, truthfully, I didn't discuss this topic with enough Dominicans to develop a well informed opinion. In terms of gender roles Brown has a rather extreme perspective, saying that "Dominican men treat Dominican women abysmally." However, she may not be far off the mark as practically every Dominican woman I talked to referred to Dominican men as "machista" (sexist). On the other hand, the tourist zones were full of young white women, mostly European, who had hooked up with Dominican boyfriends while on vacation. A very common social problem that Brown doesn't address is the extremely high percentage of single mothers in the country. This often involves young women who have several children at a young age and then are abandoned, along with the kids, by the boyfriend or husband. Of course, this helps continue the cycle of poverty and leads many women into prostitution and other desperate efforts to provide for their offspring. There are a few other areas which I found myself disagreeing with Brown's analysis. But for those seeking to learn more about the DR this is one of the few useful sources available and worthwhile picking up from the library though I wouldn't pay the price listed on .

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