Briefing Book For Maracaibo Venezuela

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BRIEFING BOOK

ISLA SANTA RITA
DE LOS NIÑOS DEL MUNDO
MARACAIBO, VENEZUELA

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Section 1

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Included in this section of the briefing book are these materials:


- A background paper on Venezuela by Hilary Branch.

- A background paper published by the U.S. Department of State, November 1990.

- Orientation map of Venezuela.

- Population and median age data for Venezuela prepared by Ecoplan (Population 1990 - 19.7 million, Median age 20 years, Annual growth rate of population in the 80's was a compounded 2.2%).

- An economic and tourism background section on Venezuela prepared by Ecoplan.


- The HPC proposal which includes a work statement for the project.
Geography

Venezuela is situated in the upper northeast corner of South America, with Colombia to the West and Brazil to the South. With more than 3,700 kilometers of coastline, washed by the Caribbean and the Atlantic, Venezuela is the country with the longest coastline in the Caribbean and a natural gateway for South American trade and for travel to North America, Europe and Asia.

Venezuela offers geographic contrasts not found in many other countries: pristine beaches with an ideal climate year round; immense plains covered with vegetation and watered by enormous rivers; virgin forests and mountains with high, cold peaks covered in perpetual snow.

These zones can be divided into five topographical regions:

- The central and eastern coastal zone is a narrow strip, trimmed with sandy tropical beaches, that runs between the sea and the northern mountain chain. Although it comprises only 10% of the national territory, the coastal zone is bustling with most of the nation’s population (64%), three major cities (Caracas, Maracay and Valencia), the majority of the country’s heavy industries and manufacturing as well as agriculture and fishing. The extensive coast line generates an exclusive economic zone of more than 500,000 square kilometers which makes Venezuela a neighbor to the United States, the Dominican Republic, Dominica, Santa Lucia, Grenada and Saint Vincent, besides Colombia, the Netherland Antilles, Guyana and Trinidad-Tobago. Venezuela’s 72 islands are off the coast of this region. These include the islands of Margarita, by far the largest, Coche, Cubagua, the Archipelago of Las Aves de Barlovento y Sotavento, the Archipelago of Los Roques, La Orchila, La Blanquilla, La Tortuga, the Archipelago of Los Monjes; the smaller Islands of Centinela, La Sola, Los Hermanos, Los Frailes, the Archipelago of Los Testigos, Patos and Isla Aves.

- The Maracaibo basin, a hot, humid region of fertile valleys surrounding Lake Maracaibo, the largest lake in South America. Enormous petroleum reserves make this a region of vital economic importance. Maracaibo, the nation’s second largest city, with an estimated population of two million, is the commercial hub of western Venezuela, located near the most important petroleum fields and rich agricultural areas.

- The Andean Mountain range, which extends into Venezuela south of Lake Maracaibo, is a region of fertile mountain valleys and snow-covered peaks. It is rich in coffee plantations. The highest aerial cable car in the world is located in the city of Mérida.

- The plains, or “llanos,” cover roughly a fourth of Venezuela’s territory, extending from the Colombian border to the Gulf of Paria in the Atlantic. Despite such vastness, only 16.6% of the population lives in this area of flat grasslands. This region contains extensive grazing lands and is agriculturally rich; it also offers abundant hunting and fishing possibilities. The llanos are irrigated by the Orinoco basin’s numerous rivers. The Orinoco is South America’s third largest river.

- The Guayana highlands comprise half of Venezuela’s territory but are the least populated, with only 5% of the population. The region is still partially unexplored but shows evidence of huge
potential. All of Venezuela's processed iron ore, cast iron, steel, bauxite, gold and diamonds are produced in the State of Bolivar, and large mineral, hydro and timber resources remain untapped. Guayana is home to the world's highest waterfall, Angel Falls, and to its second most powerful dam, the Raúl Leoni Dam, a 10,000 megawatt dam completed in 1986, which provides 70% of Venezuela's electricity. Venezuela's Amazon territory lies to the southwest of the Guayana highlands, bordering Brazil and Colombia. The territory's rain forest is crossed by numerous rivers.

**Major cities**

**Caracas**

The nation's capital and largest city. With a population of approximately 2.7 million, the city of Caracas is Venezuela's center not only politically but also in terms of commerce, finance, communications, transportation and culture.

LOCATION: Upper northeast corner of South America, just above the Equator; entirely within the Northern Hemisphere.

BORDERS: North, the Caribbean Sea; East, the Atlantic Ocean and the Republic of Guyana; South, Brazil; West, Colombia.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA: 916,445 Km². Slightly more than twice the size of California, 3,700 Km of coastline.

CAPITAL: Caracas.


NATURAL RESOURCES: Crude oil, natural gas, iron ore, gold, bauxite, other minerals, hydropower.

GEOGRAPHICAL HIGHLIGHTS:

- The largest lake in South America: Lake Maracaibo
- The world's highest waterfall: Angel Falls
- The third largest river in South America: the Orinoco
- Unique rock masses known as “Tepuis” in the State of Bolivar.

Caracas sits in a valley at an altitude of 900 meters (3,000 feet) above sea level with an average year-round temperature of 23°C (74°F).

**Maracaibo**

The nation's second largest city with an estimated population of 1.3 million, Maracaibo is the capital of Zulia State and the commercial hub of western Venezuela. It is located near Venezuela's most important oil fields and richest agricultural areas.

**Puerto Cabello**

The site of Venezuela's largest cargo port, Puerto Cabello is both an industrial center and a fishing port. It is the maritime gateway to the agricultural valleys surrounding the cities of Maracay and Valencia, where a significant part of Venezuela's manufacturing and processing industries are also found.

**Ciudad Guayana**

A relatively new city of almost 400,000, Ciudad Guayana straddles the Orinoco River at the Caroni River's outlet. It services the steel, aluminum and hydroelectric generation industries, as well as the mining activities that make the State of Bolivar, Venezuela's largest, one of the most dynamic economic development poles of the country.

**Ciudad Bolívar**

The capital of Bolivar State, Ciudad Bolivar is the commercial center for the Orinoco River system and its tributaries.

**Other cities**

- Valencia (population 1.03 million)
Barquisimeto (population 745,444)
Maracay (population 799,884)
Mérida (population 237,576)
San Cristóbal (population 336,100)

These cities are important agricultural and manufacturing centers. Valencia and Maracay, considered a single industrial complex, are the site of many U.S. subsidiary operations.

**Climate**

Although the entire country lies in the tropical zone, temperatures vary with the altitude. The lowland coastal area is hot and humid, as are the inland river valleys. The highlands generally are warm during the day and cool at night. In the higher altitudes of the Andean region, the cold temperatures result in permanently snow-capped peaks. For most of the country, the rainy season is from May through November; the rest of the year is dry, with slightly cooler temperatures.

![Beach in Anzoátegui State](image)

**INDEPENDENCE:** July 5, 1811.

**LEGAL SYSTEM:** based on the system of civil law; judicial review of legislative acts in Cassation Court only; dual state and federal court system.

**GOVERNMENT:** Executive (president); Legislative (bicameral National Congress: Senate, Chamber of Deputies); Judicial (Supreme Court)

**PRESIDENT:** Carlos Andrés Pérez, elected for the period 1989-1994.

**ELECTIONS:** Every five years by universal and secret ballot; last held December 1988; next national election for president and bicameral legislature scheduled for December 1993; municipal and gubernatorial elections held in 1989.

**MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES AND LEADERS:** Social Christian Party (COPEI), Hilarión Carbozo, president, and Eduardo Fernández, secretary general; Democratic Action (AD), Gonzalo Barrios, president, and Humberto Celli, secretary general; Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), Argelia Layna, president, and Freddy Muñoz, secretary general.

**ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS:** 21 states, 1 territory, 1 federal district and the federal dependencies: Amazonas, Anzoátegui, Apure, Aragua, Barinas, Bolívar, Carabobo, Cojedes, Delta Amacuro, Distrito Federal, Falcón, Guárico, Lara, Mérida, Miranda, Monagas, Nueva Esparta, Portuguesa, Sucre, Táchira, Trujillo, Yaracuy, Zulia. *(Note: The federal dependencies consist of 11 federally controlled island groups with a total of 72 individual islands)*

**FLAG:** Three equal horizontal bands of yellow (top), blue, and red with the coat of arms on the hoist side of the yellow band and an arc of seven white five-pointed stars centered in the blue band.
Population and Social Patterns

Population is estimated at approximately 19 million, with a birth rate of 28.3 per thousand and a low mortality rate of 4.7 per thousand. In spite of its growth, there is still a low population density. With only 9 inhabitants per square kilometer, Venezuela is one of the least densely populated countries in the Western Hemisphere.

The population is very young; 70 percent is under the age of 40. The urban population is about 80 percent of the total, but is unevenly distributed throughout the country.

The Federal District and the State of Miranda, which are the areas with the greatest commercial and financial activity, have a population of 6.9 million inhabitants. The States of Aragua, Carabobo and Lara are industrial and agricultural centers with a total of approximately 4 million inhabitants. Zulia, the major cattle raising and oil producing state, has a population of over 2 million inhabitants. Guayana, the region with the most important mineral reserves in the State of Bolivar, has a population of a little more than 800,000 inhabitants.

The tri-ethnic character of Venezuela’s people results from the mingling of European, Amerindian and African cultures. Traditionally a haven for people of all origins, Venezuela received large waves of immigration from Europe following the Second World War and from other Latin American and Caribbean nations during the 1970’s.

Of its native Indian population, the largest groups inhabit the western section of the Lake Maracaibo basin and the plateaus and valleys south and east of the Orinoco River.

Language

The official language is Spanish. English is widely understood and spoken by the business community. Caracas is a cosmopolitan city.

Religion

Most Venezuelans are Roman Catholic. The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion. All faiths have churches and people may worship freely.

Education

Education in Venezuela is free, universal and compulsory. Approximately 20% of the national budget is assigned to education, one of the highest percentages in the world. Education and manpower training are very important in a society where half the population is under the age of 18. The literacy rate is 89.5%. Through the Ministry of Education, the Venezuelan government provides education at all levels. There are nine years of elementary school, two to three years of secondary school, and three to five years of university and technological studies.

Private schools operate with a license from the Ministry of Education. In the main cities, international schools pursue, independently or combined with the Venezuelan curriculum, the study curriculum of other countries, such as the United States, Great Britain and France. Approximately 9 percent of the labor force is university-trained. There are 17 universities, both national and private, and over 74 institutes of higher learning, colleges and polytechnic institutes where students can pursue over 180 different fields or professions.
Economy

The Venezuelan economy is a market economy, based on the system of free enterprise wherein the public and private sectors both play relevant roles. Up to the beginning of this century, the economy was based on traditional agricultural export crops (coffee and cocoa) and on livestock. In the early years of the 20th Century, petroleum became the economy's basic commodity and a strong stimulus to development during the 1950's and 1960's. The oil and mining industries became the largest contributors to the gross national product and the main sources of foreign exchange. Manufacturing and a more diversified agricultural output have also become significant as economic development has allowed for these sectors' increased share of the economy. The service sector is also well developed and provides a major source of employment.

Recent developments

Venezuela's economic development received a strong impetus during the 1970's. Developments in the international oil markets insured higher revenues for Venezuelan exports. Major economic and social investment projects were launched. Among them, high priority was given to industrial expansion and to the nationalization of extractive industries such as petroleum and iron ore, which are at the basis of the Venezuelan economy. Per capita income and standards of living increased substantially during this period.

During the 1980's, the Venezuelan economy experienced considerable instability. Fluctuating and depressed export revenues and servicing of the foreign debt combined to cause fiscal and balance of payment disequilibria. Strong economic reform and adjustment processes were introduced in 1989-1990 by the Administration of President Carlos Andrés Pérez so as to reinstate a sound basis for Venezuela's economic growth and future development.

The comprehensive economic reform program presently underway aims to achieve sustained growth, restore international competitiveness to the economy and eliminate macroeconomic disequilibria. On the basis of a two-stage approach - short-term macroeconomic stabilization and medium-term structural reform- the economic reform program is directed at:

1. Reducing the role of the state in the economy through extensive privatization;
2. Deregulating to achieve greater efficiency and competition;
3. Opening the economy to increase international trade and foreign investment;
4. Diversifying exports to decrease reliance on petroleum;
5. Lessening Venezuela's external debt service.

The stabilization program implemented in 1989 and 1990 included reforms in the areas of fiscal and monetary policy, domestic prices and the external sector. Of major importance were the establishment of a unified, market determined exchange rate; the adoption of a flexible interest rate policy which allowed positive real interest rates, and the restoration of normal relations with creditors through a comprehensive 19.5 billion dollars debt financing package reducing interest and rescheduling principal payments. On March 15, 1990 Venezuela finalized a comprehensive financing package with its external commercial creditors based on a voluntary market approach.
giving banks a menu of options to flexibly manage their Venezuelan exposure. Coupled with multilateral support to Venezuela's economic program, this financial strategy has allowed for renewed investor confidence. It has equally allowed the Venezuelan economy to overcome the "debt overhang" which distorted its public finances and economic prospects.

The results of the stabilization program were extremely satisfactory in restoring external and internal balance, as reflected in the turnaround from a current account deficit of 5.8 billion dollars in 1988 to surpluses of a 2.2 billion dollars in 1989 and 8.2 billion in 1990; an increase in international reserves to a level of 11.6 billion dollars in 1990; a turnaround in public sector finances from a 1988's 9.4% of GDP deficit to a 1% surplus in 1990; and GDP growth of 5.3% in 1990. The brunt of the adjustment costs was borne during 1989 with a GDP contraction of 8.6% and an inflation rate of 81% after a one time general increase in price levels to adapt the economy to the newly adjusted exchange rate and the phasing out of controls over prices. In 1990 the inflation rate fell to 36.5% and is expected to continue its downward trend. The average free exchange rate (bolivars/ dollars) was in the range of Bs.55/$ at mid year 1991.

The stabilization program is being complemented and reinforced with structural reforms focused on increased reliance on the market, opening the economy to trade and foreign investment to encourage export activities, and modernizing and restructuring the public sector to reduce unnecessary regulations. Major opportunities are thereby being established for the expansion of private economic activity. To take account of the strong impact of the adjustment process a restructuring of social policies has equally been undertaken, focusing on the most vulnerable sectors of society.

The structural reform program proposes major changes that will affect virtually all sectors of the economy. The new emphasis on exports is a critical part of the program. From a relatively closed economy, product of development policies that favored import substitution, Venezuela has rapidly evolved into an increasingly open economy. The maturity of basic industries (such as aluminum, steel, chemicals and metal manufacturing), combined with the need to address inefficiencies in the domestic market derived from the absence of external competition have induced the need to open the economy and to gear private sector efforts to international markets. Trade reform policies include a substantial reduction of tariff levels and the elimination of most quantitative and import duty restrictions. Average import tariffs declined from 35% in 1988 to 13.5% in 1990 and tariffs were consolidated into only four categories, thereby greatly simplifying the tariff structure. Venezuela's new trade policy commitments are embodied in its recent accession to the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT).

As a result of these reforms non-traditional exports are gaining momentum. During 1989 and 1990 non traditional exports grew at rates of 48.3% and 14.6%, representing an increasing share of total exports. Exports originating in the private sector increased at rates of 77.9% and 26.2% during these two years, reflecting the very
positive reaction of Venezuelan private industry to the challenge of conquering external markets. Such results were obtained notwithstanding the protectionist environment affecting Venezuelan exports in their traditional markets. A consolidation of these results is actively pursued through bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations.

The foreign investment reforms have opened virtually all sectors of the economy to foreign investments; removed restrictions on dividends and transfers abroad; permitted unrestricted contracting of technology; eliminated prior authorization for investment and expansion; entered Venezuela into bilateral and multilateral international agreements to insure investment risks, and implemented a debt-for-equity conversion program to promote projects in the major industrial and service sectors, including aluminum, petrochemicals and tourism. Personal and corporate income tax reform laws have been introduced in Congress.

Other major areas of reform are: the public sector, wherein a restructuring of public enterprises and privatization program in the financial, communications, transportation, manufacturing and tourism sectors is successfully underway; the financial sector, with reforms geared to increase competitiveness and reduce the government's role in financial intermediation; and the agriculture and social sectors. In support of its economic reforms Venezuela has secured an important financing program from multilateral financial institutions.

**Mining and Energy**

The Guayana area in southeastern Venezuela has become the powerhouse behind Venezuela's drive to industrialize and diversify its economy away from oil dependency. The development of this region's natural resources is in the hands of the Corporación Venezolana de Guayana (CVG), an autonomous state-owned entity created in 1960. CVG oversees the mining operations for iron ore, bauxite, gold, zinc and other minerals, as well as the production of steel, primarily aluminum, electricity and cement in a region that covers almost half of Venezuela. CVG is Venezuela's second largest industrial group, after the nationalized oil sector. In 1989, CVG exports, mainly aluminum, steel and iron ore, totalled 1.1 billion dollars.

Aluminum is the second largest export earner after petroleum and will assume even greater importance in coming years. CVG anticipates increasing production from the current output of
600,000 metric tons to two million tons annually by the year 2000. CVG affiliates Alcasa and Venalum do most of Venezuela's processing. Venalum is the largest primary aluminum producer in the western world.

A young industry, aluminum production using imported raw materials began in 1968. In 1977, bauxite, the key raw material, was found. The CVG subsidiary Bauxiven mines bauxite from the Pijiguaos region in south-central Venezuela, while the subsidiary Interalumina prepares the bauxite to be processed by Alcasa and Venalum.

Currently, Venezuela produces only 2.9% of the world's aluminum, but this share is expected to grow to 10.4% by the year 2000, making Venezuela one of the top three producers of that metal in the world.

Iron and Steel activities in Guayana are run by the three CVG companies: Ferrominera Orinoco; C.A.; Sidor (Siderúrgica del Orinoco); and Fesilven (Venezolana de Ferrosilicio). Plans are underway to significantly expand steel production, from the current 2.9 million tons to 4.2 million tons by 1994.

Venezuela's gold potential is in excess of 8,000 tons, 5,000 of which are at surface level, suitable for open-cut mining. This potential represents about 12% of the world's proven reserves. In 1989, Venezuela exported more than 169 million dollars in non-monetary gold, making gold the nation's second most important non-traditional export after aluminum. Gold exports are expected to sextuple before the year 2000.

CVG companies are in charge of gold development in the Guayana region, research for joint ventures in large-scale projects and organization of the 16,000 active prospectors in the region who are responsible for undeclared gold production estimated to be double the declared production figures.

Venezuela's impressive hydroelectric capacity is based in Guayana. The enormous Guri Dam supplies 70% of Venezuela's electricity and saves 300,000 barrels of oil a day. The CVG subsidiary Edelca (Electrificación del Caroni, C.A.) plans to build three more hydroelectric stations on the Caroni River before the year 2000, to boost output to 17,500 megawatts.

Agriculture

Venezuela has good natural climatic conditions and land appropriate for agriculture, especially for rice, corn, coffee, cocoa, cotton, sesame seed, tobacco and plantains, as well as for cattle rising. As much as 30% of its land is said to be cultivable. Its vast coastline gives access to immense fishing resources.

Agriculture represented 5.9% of GDP in 1989. Total agroindustrial exports during that year were 280.4 million dollars, with non-processed agricultural products accounting for 69 million dollars. Despite the fact that between 1984 and 1988 the agricultural output expanded by nearly a quarter, Venezuela is not yet self sufficient in agriculture.

Petroleum

Venezuela holds the largest oil reserves in the Western Hemisphere and is the only producer with long term export potential outside the Middle East and the Soviet Union.
Proven oil reserves are estimated to be almost 60 billion barrels, enough to maintain current production for over 90 years. Gas reserves are the eighth largest in the world, estimated at 3.42 billion cubic meters.

The traditional center of the country’s oil industry is Lake Maracaibo. However, significant reserves are also found throughout other regions of the country. The Orinoco Belt holds immense deposits of bitumen or extra-heavy crude oil, estimated at 1.3 trillion barrels, of which 22%, or 270 billion barrels are retrievable.

Venezuela is heavily dependent on petroleum revenues. In 1990 petroleum accounted for approximately 30% of GDP, 86% of foreign exchange income and about 83% of export earnings. Gross income from hydrocarbon sales reached 23.1 billion dollars; oil industry consolidated net earnings were 3.8 billion dollars.

Crude production capacity stands at 2.7 million barrels per day, with actual production around 2.7 million barrels per day. Also, 151,000 barrels of condensates and liquid natural gas were produced. Venezuela exported an average of 1.9 million barrels of oil per day in 1990.

Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA) is the holding company for the Venezuelan oil industry, with over 15 subsidiaries and over 50,000 employees. PDVSA coordinates the activities of the nation’s oil, gas, petrochemicals, coal and bitumen industries.

Over the past years, PDVSA has pursued an international downstream investment program to enhance its vertical integration in the world oil market. The program, which strengthens PDVSA’s role as a secure and reliable supplier of energy to final consumers in the United States and Europe, is aimed at securing market outlets for products derived from Venezuelan crudes.

PDVSA has significantly increased its domestic and overseas refining capacity and has been transformed into a seller of products rather than of crude. Joint ventures overseas include Ruhr Oel GmbH in West Germany (with VEBA OEL AG), AB Nynas Petroleum in Sweden (with Finland’s Es Neste OY) and The Uno-Ven Company in the USA (with Unocal Corporation). PDVSA also owns the total equity of Citgo and Champlin in the United States.

Currently one of PDVSA’s major projects is the promotion of its trademark Orimulsion (a blend of 70% bitumen and 30% water). This fuel comes from the Orinoco heavy oil belt and can be burned in power plants as an alternative to coal or to heavy fuel oil No. 6, after a plant has been modified. Recent industrial scale tests have proved Orimulsion’s potential for future use in significant volumes. Its price is very competitive with that of heavy fuel oil and of coal to which it offers advantages in terms of handling and cleaner burning.

The exploitation of Venezuela’s oil by foreign interests began immediately after World War I, when changing patterns of energy consumption in the developed countries stimulated a scramble for control of overseas petroleum. British corporations were the first to make major investments, but American capitalists soon followed, backed energetically by the U.S. government. Once begun, oil development proceeded rapidly. Petroleum appeared in Venezuelan export statistics for the first time in 1918; by 1927 it was the country’s principal export; and by 1929 Venezuela was the largest oil exporter in the world.

Franklin Tugwell

*The Politics of Oil in Venezuela*
Economic Indicators

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<tr>
<td>Price and Economic Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Real GDP (percent change)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>(6.6)</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation (end of year CPI)</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>36.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance of Payments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Account</td>
<td>(1.4)</td>
<td>(5.6)</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(billion dollars)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross International Reserves</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at Central Bank (billion dollars)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiscal Accounts</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidated Public Sector Surplus (Deficit)</td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
<td>(9.4)</td>
<td>(1.3)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>(percent of GDP)</td>
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PDVSA is negotiating with international clients for the placing of the product, especially in the United Kingdom, Japan and Sweden. Two new companies have been established to expand the marketing network for this new non-conventional fuel. BP Bitor, in partnership with British Petroleum and Bitor America Corporation, a subsidiary of Bitumenes Orinoco (Bitor), the PDVSA subsidiary in charge of marketing orimulsion.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing in Venezuela has retained a relatively smaller share of total output due to the weight of the oil industry in the economy as a whole. The share of industry in GDP was 38% in 1988, while the share of manufacturing was 20 percent.

The manufacturing sector grew at an average of 3.9% between 1975 and 1988, due to large public investments, import protection and targeted incentives. These policy instruments are being abandoned by the new Pérez administration whose economic policy is aimed rather at giving greater prominence to market-based incentives and decisions.

The top industries are chemicals and petrochemical products; food, beverages and tobacco; metal products and machinery equipments; basic metal industries. Together they accounted for 24% of non-petroleum output in 1988. Other major industries are textiles, apparel and leather, paper and paper products and non-metallic mineral products.

Services

The share of services in the GDP is higher than that of industry and agriculture together. In 1988 services accounted for almost 50% of the country's GDP. This sector also originates the highest number of jobs compared to all other sectors of the economy: 56.6% in 1987.

The major service industries are transportation, communications and financial services. The financial sector has registered the highest growth rate. Commercial banks are the most important financial institutions in Venezuela. There are 40 commercial banks, of which 32 are private and 8 are run with government participation.

The Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance's Superintendent of Banks exercise control over the financial system, although savings and loan associations are controlled by the Superintendent of Savings and Loan Associations and the National Savings and Loan Bank (BANAP). The monetary system is controlled by the Central Bank of Venezuela, established in 1940. While the Finance Ministry traditionally sets economic policy, the Central Bank has enjoyed considerable autonomy in monetary affairs.

Trade

Foreign trade is of central importance in Venezuela's economy. During the period 1983-88 exports accounted for 25% of the GDP. In 1988 exports reached a total value of 10.2 billion dol-
lars. Petroleum and petroleum products accounted for 87.5% of all exports between 1983 and 1988. Imports on the other hand, represented during that period 14% of GDP and were mostly raw materials (39%), machinery and transportation equipment (24%).

The United States is Venezuela’s major trading partner. In 1988 41.7% of all of Venezuela’s imports and 43.8% of all exports were coming from or going to the United States. Other major trading partners are Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada and Colombia.

Non-Traditional exports (all exports other than oil, iron, coffee and cocoa) are gaining momentum. At the end of the 1970’s non-traditional exports were less than 4% of total exports, and by the end of 1989 they had grown to 22%. In 1989 alone, non-traditional exports grew 53%. In 1980 70% of non-traditional exports were aimed at the United States (22%), Japan (20.6%), Switzerland (11.9%), Colombia (8.15%) and the Netherlands (7.8%). The bulk of the exports to the United States were agricultural and industrial products, while Japan bought mostly primary aluminum.

Venezuela’s tremendous natural and human resources are a competitive advantage in the export of primary metal and manufactured metal products, chemicals, pulp and paper processing, leather goods, food products, textiles and fruit. The development of down-stream industries to exploit these resources and diversify the export economy is a priority in Venezuela.

Transportation

Aviation has played a vital role in Venezuela, especially in opening up the vast regions of its interior, making them more accessible. There are 11 international, 36 national and 290 private or municipal airports throughout the country.

Venezuela's national airline, VIASA, flies to 21 cities in North and South America and Europe. Founded in 1960, the company has a modern fleet of aircraft and offers cargo service.

AVENSA, a private Venezuelan airline, serves both international and domestic destinations, while Aeropostal airlines provides a network of commercial transportation serving approximately 40 cities in Venezuela, as well as many Caribbean destinations.

Pan Am, and American Airlines are the U.S. carriers currently operating in Venezuela. Delta is expected to participate in the traffic in the near future. Virtually all the major European international airlines provide service to Venezuela, including Air France, British Airways, KLM, Lufthansa, Swissair, Alitalia, Iberia and Air Portugal. Venezuela is linked with all major cities in Latin America by the main Caribbean, Central American and South American airlines.

Serving Caracas is Simón Bolívar International Airport (Maquetín), with a modern terminal inaugurated in 1978. Adjacent to the international airport is the Maiquetía National Airport, inaugurated in 1983, which has made airport transfers substantially easier.

Venezuela has nine seaports that handle commercial cargo traffic. The principal ports are La Guaira, Maracaibo and Puerto Cabello, which together handle 80% of the country's imports and exports. Venezuela also has 33 petroleum ports, which serve as outlet for the all important oil industry, and two special ports for iron shipments.

Venezuela's primary road system is considered among the best in South America. With over 1.5 million vehicles, Venezuela has 62,440 Km of highways, of which 29,000 Km are paved. All of the country's principal cities are linked by highways.
VENEZUELA

Where the Andes Meet the Caribbean

By

HILARY BRANCH

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In store for travelers to Venezuela is a land as rich and exciting in natural beauty as in cultural contrasts. The country rewards bold spirits with discovery and delight, from the arid Guajira Peninsula in the west where tribesmen raise cattle and weave bright tapestries, to the eastern Orinoco Delta where Warao craftsmen carve wooden animals and dugout canoes, and from the southern forests of Amazonas Territory peopled by the Stone-Age Yanomami, to the steel and aluminum mills of Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela’s capital of heavy industry on the great Orinoco River.

Three destinations top most tours. Charter flights direct from the United States and Canada bring tourists the easy way to Margarita Island’s beaches; in Mérida the world’s longest and highest cablecar system makes scaling the snowy Andes swift and unforgettable; and for many passengers on the daily jet to Canaima, a view of Angel Falls is the high point of Venezuelan adventure. But for travelers who want to get off the beaten track, the interior of this country of 352,143 square miles unfolds fascinating panoramas. A dozen new specialty travel agencies are filling the demand
for adventure treks and photo safaris. They provide the private flights, permits, and equipment that enable outsiders to go places normally inaccessible, such as the Orinoco headwaters, Los Roques Archipelago, or the Llanos (pronounced Yah-nos), vast plains which are home to millions of birds and animals, comparing favorably to Africa in variety and quantity of fauna, if not in big game.

Cloud forests, coral islands, rivers, mountains, jungles, and caves make up 35 national parks covering 9.5 percent of the country. Most of this area of 30,800 square miles is virgin, undeveloped. The largest park, Canaima, is the size of Belgium and stretches from the diamond-strewn Caroni River to Brazil and Guyana; the borders of the three nations meet atop Mt. Roraima, a giant mesa that inspired Conan Doyle’s fantastic tale of *The Lost World*.

No longer on the list of most expensive destinations, the country is combating economic recession in a number of ways, not the least of which is tourism promotion. With the currency devalued many times, luxury hotels in the capital are a bargain at $65 a night, while a cablecar trip to the top of Mt. Avila offers superb vistas of the capital and the sea for under $2 and a ride on the modern Metro halfway across Caracas costs less than $0.50. The low cost of gasoline, subsidized at less than 50 cents a gallon, and the excellent network of freeways that crisscross the country help to make Venezuelans among the most mobile people in Latin America. Since the opening of a road to Amazonas Territory, branch highways now link every part of Venezuela.

Oil still brings Venezuela a multibillion-dollar income and prosperity is seen in lavish restaurants and nightclubs, in four-story shopping pyramids, and in glass and concrete office blocks, topped by the fifty-six-floor Parque Central towers. And, of course, in the spic-and-span new Metro whose efficiency seems little less than miraculous to delighted Caraqueños.

Generous and usually relaxed people, there is nothing stuffy about Venezuelans. Irrepressible in their love for repartee, quick to anger and just as quick to smile, they approach life with optimism and casualness in everything except three matters: motherhood, democracy, and honor—a slur implying lack of respect can lead to big problems, especially if it is an official’s character that is in question. Since 1958, favored by a relatively high standard of living, the nation has enjoyed one of the most stable democracies in Latin America, where over 80 percent of the eligible population votes (as the law requires).

Venezuela has welcomed wave after wave of immigrants: refugees from war-torn Europe, political exiles from dictatorships in Spain and later Argentina, Chile, and Haiti, and landless peasants from Colombia, Portugal, and Spain. As many as 10 percent of the country’s 20 million inhabitants are foreign-born. Illegal immigration by Colombians has resulted in certain problems at the border crossing for tourists not equipped with return fares.

**Indian Heritage**

And what of Venezuela’s original inhabitants? The Carib- and Arawak-speaking Indian groups today are a small minority. Numbering only 140,000 in some twenty-eight ethnic groups, they live in the remoter parts of the country, protected to some extent by the inaccessible or inhospitable nature of the Orinoco’s delta, the rain forests spreading south to Brazil and west to Colombia, and the semi-desert home of the partly acculturated Guajiro Indians on the Guajira Peninsula. The Motilones or Bari, who
defended their hills west of Lake Maracaibo with lethal aim for 450 years, are now "tame."

While it is true that no tribe in Venezuela built stone temples, Indian culture has contributed much to the country’s social makeup, folklore, food, and art. An Indian fertility goddess, Maria Leonza, is still worshiped with a pantheon of lesser notables in the hills near Chivacoa (between Valencia and Barquisimeto) in a mixture of Catholic and pagan rites. In Caracas, her followers heap flowers on the pedestal of her statue on one of the busiest freeways near the Central University. Riding a tapir and carrying a man’s pelvis aloft, the naked Indian Princess is an astonishing sight.

But it is in the practical arts that the surviving tribes contribute most to Venezuelan culture. Dugout canoes, skillfully hollowed from single tree trunks, some as long as 36 feet, are as yet unsurpassed as river craft. The hammock is an Indian invention and no Venezuelan beach-goer, hunter, or hiker travels without one. They come in many sizes and materials and the best are made by Indian women starting with palm leaf fiber or wild cotton. And no Venezuelan woman raises her family without cornmeal cakes or arepas, a word taken from the Cumanagoto for maize. In the less fertile jungles, casabe, or flat cakes made of manioc meal (yuca), continue to be the best and simplest way of conserving food, a difficult thing to do in the hot country. Then again, Christmas is not Christmas in Venezuela without the tamale-style auyaca in its Indian banana-leaf wrapping.

The Indians’ knowledge of plants, such as the Strychnos lianas used in making curare, has led to valuable medical applications. Curarine is employed as a muscle relaxant in surgery today.

The Conquest

Indian houses built on stilts along Lake Maracaibo gave rise to Venezuela’s name when mapmaker Amerigo Vespucci was reminded of “Little Venice” and its canals. Vespucci sailed to the New World with Alonso de Ojeda in 1499, the year after Columbus had claimed Venezuela for Spain on his third voyage. In the years that followed, the conquistadors made incredible explorations overland and upriver in fruitless searches for gold. To pay his debts, Charles V mortgaged Venezuela to the German banking house of Welser in 1528, but the German fortune hunters had no better luck. Sir Walter Raleigh, the piratical favorite of England’s Queen Elizabeth I, also forayed up the Orinoco in the vain hope of finding El Dorado.

With no treasure to plunder, the Spaniards eventually turned to the land, subjugating the Indians as slave labor for large haciendas. Francisco Fajardo, the son of a Spanish nobleman and a Guayqueri Indian, was given men and arms by the governor of Margarita to settle the coast of Caracas in 1559. He was a natural choice for cementing peaceful Indian relations and was able to establish a farm in the valley of the Caracas Indians, where eight years later Diego de Losada founded the town of Caracas. Today only the names of the resisting tribes remain—the Caracas, Teques, Marich, Cumanagotos, Tamanacos, and their slain heroes Guaicaiupuro, Manare, and Mara. Even Fajardo was betrayed and executed.

By the end of the sixteenth century, twenty towns had been established. But the cost in Indian lives was appalling. From Cumaná to Maracaibo along the Venezuelan “slave coast,” which was heavily settled by Carib tribes, the entire native population of several million was wiped out. (South America had about fifty million inhabitants in the fifteenth century; of these, scarcely two million survived the Conquest.) The landowners then imported Negro slaves to work cacao and tobacco. The Africans intermin-
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gled early with the Spanish Creoles and surviving Indians, producing a racial fusion that is apparent in two-thirds of today’s population.

Independence and Bolivar

The Venezuelans developed independent habits early on. The provincial government in Caracas, administered from Spain, ran its affairs pretty much as it pleased, as did the six other Venezuelan provinces. Attempts to bring the colony to heel only encouraged resistance to Spanish economic and political controls, and there were uprisings in 1749, 1797, and 1806. In 1810, when Spain was invaded by Napoleon, the Creoles in Caracas took advantage to depose the governor and, with patriot leaders from the provinces, set up a National Congress. On July 5, 1811, independence was declared; the day is still celebrated as Venezuelan Independence Day, although the patriots’ struggle had just begun.

After the collapse of the first republic, leadership of the revolution passed to Simón Bolivar, who was to liberate Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela. Simón Bolivar was born in Caracas of wealthy Venezuelan parents in 1783. Orphaned at an early age, he spent many years studying and traveling in Europe, where he was inspired with a mission to free his people from Spanish rule.

Bolivar played an active role in the 1811 independence movement and was second in command to Francisco de Miranda under the short-lived first republic. Then followed ten years as war leader before the Venezuelan patriots finally trounced the Spanish forces on June 24, 1821, at the Battle of Carabobo. Although Bolivar went on to greater glories, his dream of uniting Venezuela, Ecuador, and Colombia into “Gran Colombia” was a failure. Regionalism triumphed with the determination of the local elite to rule their own countries. Hounded by jealousies, ill with tuberculosis, and almost penniless, Bolivar retreated to private life. Ironically, it was a Spaniard in Santa Marta, Colombia, who gave him refuge. He died on December 17, 1830, a disillusioned man. In 1842 his remains were transferred to Caracas, where today they repose in the National Pantheon.

Foundations of Modern Democracy

Venezuelans, however, did not achieve real economic or social independence for another 125 years, as a succession of unsavory dictators and a small, landed aristocracy ruled during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From 1908 to 1935, power was held by the most brutal dictator of them all, Juan Vicente Gómez, a semi-literate bandido. It was during the Gómez tyranny that the first generation of modern leaders, known as the “generation of 1928,” rebelled. Jailed and then exiled, these young rebels returned to Venezuela after Gómez’s death to become an important political force during the transitional period under Eleazar López Contreras and Isías Medina Angarita. Rómulo Betancourt, founder of Acción Democrática (AD), one of the two leading political parties, headed a popular revolution in 1945 with a group of young military officers. In 1948, novelist Rómulo Gallegos (author of “Doña Bárbara”) of AD became the first democratically elected president.

But the military had not lost its taste for power; within nine months the government fell to yet another dictator, Major Marcos Pérez Jiménez. A spendthrift who used oil wealth to build some of the continent’s flashiest public works—including a hippodrome and mountaintop hotel—Pérez Jiménez jailed or exiled most of the country’s democratic leaders. His rule
lasted until he was overthrown on January 23, 1958. Venezuela was at last able to undertake a series of far-reaching reforms.

Elected president, Rómulo Betancourt completed a five-year term and in 1964 turned his sash over to another AD leader, Raúl Leoni, in the country's first democratic change of government. Alternating in power, the Social Christian party (COPEI) ascended with Rafael Caldera who was president from 1969 to 1974. Succeeding Caldera was Carlos Andrés Pérez of AD, who served 1974–1979. After an absence of two terms (decreed by law), in which office was held by Pres. Luis Herrera of COPEI and Pres. Jaime Lusinchi of AD, Pérez returned to the presidency in 1989.

Social Problems

Adding to the fact that 90 percent of the country's inhabitants are crowded into one tenth of the land (the northern Andean and coastal belt) is a yearly population growth of 3 percent and massive migration from rural to urban areas.

Four of every five Venezuelans today reside in cities. In the Federal District of Caracas, more than half the population live in the poverty belt of ranchos, or huts, which rings the capital. Although many of these communities, called barrios, have water, roads, electricity, and schools, a rising crime rate accompanies the large floating population and high index of broken or incomplete families.

All these factors contribute to the overstraining of public services. Many problems can be traced to the long reign of dictators who had no thought for schools or hospitals even as late as the 1950s. For example, in 1948 there were only 20,000 high school students, a figure which today has increased 20 fold. Because four of every 10 Venezuelans are under 15 years old, pressure is enormous on the state educational system. Some schools work in two shifts, morning and afternoon. Low teaching standards, early dropouts, and an illiteracy rate of 10.5 percent are all problems.

Public hospitals have long waiting lines and sometimes no sheets. Policemen and judges are underpaid. The prison system is overburdened and four-fifths of all prisoners await sentencing, sometimes for years. Virtually all prisoners are from underprivileged groups and crime is on the rise, reflecting the problem of unemployment. Officially the jobless rate is around 10 percent (1989), but union estimates put the figure at 20 percent, and over half the population must support itself by 'under-ground' or informal economic activities. Of those who do have jobs, one in every four works for some state enterprise, ministry, or government bureau.

Economic Concerns

The 1990s should mark the turning point for an economy which shrank steadily during the previous decade, ending with 80 percent inflation and riots. Trouble started with the collapse of oil prices and Venezuela’s inability to pay heavy foreign debts to the tune of $36 billion. In 1983 the bolivar stood at Bs.4.29 to the U.S. dollar; by 1989 it had been devalued to Bs.43 to the U.S. dollar.

A severe adjustment program introduced by the Pérez administration caused the gross domestic product (non-oil) to fall 10 percent in 1989. Construction and tourism dropped 30 percent, and the car industry came to a near standstill. On the positive side, some state controls were dismantled, international reserves were increased, the balance of payments deficit was practically eliminated, and non-oil exports rose a healthy 38 percent.
Boosted by government credits and fertilizer subsidies, agriculture has played a vigorous role in the economic upturn, increasing production over six percent in 1986 and 4 percent in 1987. Farm and food imports, once as high as 74 percent of consumption, have shrunk to 20 percent.

Big new finds of light crudes and a "conservative" revaluation of oil reserves have raised Venezuela to fourth place in world crude terms (after Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the USSR), with proven reserves now standing at over 58 billion barrels. This does not count the Orinoco tar belt, which contains 44 percent of the world's extra-heavy crude reserves, which are too costly to extract at present.

One of the United States's oldest oil suppliers, Venezuela enjoyed a positive trade balance with the U.S. in 1988. The state company (oil was nationalized in 1975) has 50 percent participation in four refineries abroad and places half its exports (currently some 1.5 million barrels a day) through these joint ventures.

The government is expanding state petrochemical, iron (nationalized in 1975), steel, and aluminum output. An enviable combination of huge bauxite reserves, plentiful gas, and cheap hydroelectricity may soon propel Venezuela into the world's top producer of primary aluminum. Goals are to double the 1990 output of some 650,000 tons (est.) by the year 1997. Bauxite comes from Los Pijiguaoos mine, 600 kilometers up the Orinoco River from Ciudad Guayana. Discovered in 1977, these deposits contain some 500 million tons of high grade ore. Production is slated to reach eight million tons in 1997.

Venezuela also boasts a giant hydroelectric complex at Guri Dam on the Caroni River. When completed in 1986, it was the world's largest, with 10,300,000 KW (Itaipu in Brazil/Paraguay will have 12,600,000 KW), which oustrips by far the Coulee Dam's 6,490,000 KW. Guri supplies three-quarters of Venezuela's electricity needs, besides powering steel, aluminum, and other heavy industries in Ciudad Guayana.

Coal deposits in Guasare, Zulia State, are estimated to yield easily 350 million tons through open cast mining. The state has built a railroad and seaport to facilitate exports, and production is expected to reach 6.5 million tons by the mid-1990s, making Venezuela one of the world's top coal exporters.
SOUTH AMERICA

dad Bolivar to Sta. Elena in a circle over the fabulous "tepui" country of the Gran Sabana. Flying from Aeropuerto Caracas in Charallave, CAVE (02-724-312) serves Margarita, Calabozo, and Valle La Pascua.

Plane rentals. In a country where ranchers, prospectors, and missionaries fly to remote strips, air taxis are a standard service at the airports of Ciudad Bolivar and Puerto Ayacucho (see area information). With offices in Caracas, CAVE, Aerotax, and Aerointer are three of many air services which offer national (and international) charters. Some others are: Charter Ejecutivo (02-924-002), Rent-a-charter (02-261-7480, radio contact 335 at 283-6055), and Aerழservicios Waica (02-918042, telex 27996 ASCARVO). Depending on the destination, from a coral reef to a jungle strip, such companies can provide turbo props, jets, helicopters, and 4-seaters.

By bus. The hub of Venezuela's extensive network of long distance and express buses which run day and night in the Nuevo Circo Terminal at Av. Fuerzas Armadas and Av. Bolivar in Caracas (La Hoyada metro station). The many lines which serve major destinations including Margarita and the Colombian border are supplemented by "por puesto" cars (pay by the seat) which leave as soon as they are full. Bus tickets, bought at the booths of some 40 lines, are cheap (Caracas to Maracaibo costs $11) and should be bought 2 days in advance, especially during national holidays, when there is an enormous crush of passengers (you should also beware of pickpockets). By publication time, the new Terminal de Oriente on the Petare-Guarenas highway should be in service for all routes east of Caracas.

By car. Excellent roads are accompanied by good road maps issued by oil subsidiaries, such as Lagoven and Maraven, sold at gas stations. Driving requirements for foreigners: valid license from country of origin, medical certificate obtained from Colegio de Médicos offices (Bs.50), and third party insurance for the vehicle. For more information and documents needed to import a car temporarily, ask the Touring & Automóviles Club de Venezuela, planta baja, Centro Integral Santa Rosa de Lima, Av. Principal con Calle A, Santa Rosa de Lima, Caracas (02-910639 and 914448).

Car rental. Major companies, with branches around the country are: Aco (02-918511); Avis (02-263-2444); Budget (02-283-4333); Briauto-Ford (02-262-0769); Puesta El Rinal (02-951-3616); Hertz (02-715332, telex 21283); National (02-239-1134, fax 239-4119). Although most charge by the day, plus a kilometer rate and insurance, some offer special monthly and weekly rates. The daily base rate is about $40. Most companies require hirers to be over 25 and hold credit cards.

SPORTS. Three "BV's" are big in Venezuela: baseball, basketball, and boxing. The national sport is baseball; the kid's league, Los Criollitos, draws over 200,000 boys aged 5 to 18. The best go on to play professionally for teams such as the Caracas Liones, La Guaira Sharks, and Zulia Eagles. The champion of these teams defends Venezuela in the Caribbean Series. Greater glory crowns the half dozen Venezuelans stars in the U.S. big leagues: shortstop David Concepción, home run champion Tony Armas, rookie of the year for 1985 Ozzie Guillén, utility man Luis Salazar, fielder Manny Trillo, and newcomers Andy Gaffranga and Urbano Lugo.

Horse racing. A fourth "BV"— betting— rates No. 1 for racing addicts. There are racetracks in Ciudad Bolivar, Maracaibo, Punto Fijo, and Barquisimeto, as well as the heavily attended tracks of Valencia and Caracas.

Cockfighting, pelea de gallo, is a betting sport, and is popular in the smaller towns. Enthusiasts risk large sums to acquire and train birds for a fight which may last no more than 3 minutes. In the plains, toro caledos or bulldogging competitions enliven periodic fairs, in the aim being to throw the bull to the ground by twisting its tail. Bullfighting in the Spanish tradition has its season from Nov. through Mar. with corridas led by the world's best matadors. Tickets for the sunny bleachers at bullfights in Caracas, Valencia, Mérida, and San Cristóbal start at $5.

Some of the best deep-sea fishing in the world, particularly white marlin, is recorded off the central coast of Venezuela. Foreign fishermen may enter several local tournaments: in Feb. sailfish off Puerto Cabello, in Sept. white marlin off Macuto, and in Nov. kingfish off Falcon—some of these fish have been known to jump as high as 16 feet. In one year (1978) six different world records were registered—for white and blue marlin, sailfish, barracuda, and tarpon. Day-long sportfishing costs about $500 (max. 5 people) in a 42' vessel with all equipment, bait, meals, and beer. For rental of yachts, sailboats, and houseboats, contact Linda Sonderman at Alpi
Tour (see below), who represents fully crewed charter craft, including sailboats and yachts up to 80 feet for as many as 10 passengers, at costs ranging from $500 to $1,500 a day, including meals and excursions. Also, leaving from the central coast are crewed fishing yachts at about $400 a day for four fishermen, organized by Yachting Tours (031–944300, ext. 188, fax 031–944314). Intervaces, based in the Melia Hotel (031–9655555), has boats for various budgets and destinations as far as Margarita, Aruba, or Grenada.

Scuba diving and snorkeling along coasts and reefs provide endless underwater sport. Three national parks conserve maritime environments: Los Roques, 90 miles north of La Guaira, Morrocoy Park on the western coast, and Mochima Park on the eastern coast; in each, fishing boats can be hired for a day's sport. (Spearfishing is prohibited.) For information on scuba services, write Mike Osborn, Submatur, Apartado 68512, Caracas 1062A (02–782–2946 or 042–84082).

**TREKS AND ADVENTURE TOURS.** Venezuela is blossoming into a major destination for bold travelers who want to explore remote rain forests and "Lost World" mesas, tropical rivers and coral islands, and who are fit enough to hike and camp. The dry season peak, Jan. to the first rains in May, is the best time for hiking and bird-watching. Rain forests are most impressive in the wet season, June to Oct., and this is a good time for river travel since waters are high. But avoid the Llanos during the wet season, because these low plains may be flooded. (The simplest way to fend off insects is to wear a long-sleeved shirt and tuck trouser legs into socks.) In the tropics a hat is a must on walks and boat trips. Other standard equipment: plastic rain cape, track shoes, jersey, windbreaker, acrylic blanket or sleeping bag for cool jungle nights, flashlight, repellent, and sun block.

Reached by a spectacular river route from Canaima in well-organized treks, Angel Falls tops the list of adventure destinations. Veteran guide Rudy Truffino pioneered expeditions 30 years ago. By motorized dugout, Rudy's 4-day river trips, from July to November when the falls are full, are offered at about $550 a person for groups of 4, but can be tailored for more days or for fewer people (no children under 12). All equipment is provided. More difficult treks to the top of Auyantepui can also be planned. Truffino, Apartado 61879, Caracas 1060A (02–663–9153). If you speak Spanish, more economical group treks to Angel Falls, Camarata Mission, and Kavak Cave are offered by local outfitters such as the Kamarracoto Indian guides of Excursionner Charuma–Fenai (information 02–7312034) and Excursionner Canaima (reservations 02–545–7920 or write Brigida Contreras, piso 11, Pinero a Dr. Diaz, Caracas). These outfitters offer trips from May through Oct. at a cost of about $250 a person, for groups of 6 or more.

Alpi Tour, Torre Centro, Parque Boyacá, Los Dos Caminos, Caracas (02–283–1433/6677), telex 243534; fax 284–7098. U.S. mail to: Sonderman M-491, Jet Cargo, Box 020010, Miami, FL 33102–0010. Amazonas wilderness camps by charter plane: Yutaje (exc. August); new camp at Caño Santo, Bolivar State, Hato Las Nieves; Caura River excursion and hike to Para Falls. Bass fishing in the Cinaruco River; bone fishing and scuba diving in Los Roques atoll. Pilot Linda Sonderman, makes light plane trips (min. 3 passengers for single engine, 4 for twin engine) at a cost of around $150 per hour per person. She also has air charters to Los Roques for a day's sailing at $140, a 3-bedroom house in Morrocoy National Park with full service and boat for $85 per day per person. Alpi Tour charters planes from 4 to 30 seats, has a fleet of sailboats, houseboats, and yachts for hire, based along the coast from Morrocoy to Mochima.

Candes Turismo, Edif. Rorsima, Av. Miranda, Campo Alegre, Caracas (02–263–3033, telex 23330 CANDE). Special adventures for nature lovers include a bird-watching tour; a 3-day horseback trip to Tisura Parano in the Andes; and rainy or dry season sojourns in Hato Altamira, a ranch abounding in waterfowl, monkeys, capybara, and cayman. Candes lists over three dozen tours, from Coro in the west to the Orinoco Delta in the East, at prices averaging $100 a day.

**Happy Tours,** Hotel Inter-Continental Guaya, Ciudad Guayaquil, Estado Bolívar (066–227748, fax 223257, telex 86238). Leaving from the hotel's Casoni dock, river trips to Llovizna Falls (1½ hrs.). One-day trips to Spanish Forts on the Orinoco, for $50 with barbecue; 4-day trip by launch to Curiapo and the Indian missions in the Orinoco Delta, sleeping in hammocks, $200 a person (min. 6). Angel Falls flight by charter or commercial flight.
Lost World Adventures, with an office in Atlanta (U.S. toll-free 1-800-999-0558), is an American outfit whose directors combine 30 years field experience in Venezuela. The company offers comfortable tours and strenuous treks: relaxing in a Caribbean hideaway, mountain biking in the Andes, and trekking through the Roraima formation. Also, world-class deep-sea and freshwater fishing; bird watching. Costs average $135 a day per person, all inclusive. Bilingual guides.

Montaña, Apartado Postal 645, Mérida (074-431740). Providing all equipment for tenting and climbing, this American-run agency shows backpackers the high altitude páramos, lagoons, and glaciers of beautiful Sierra Nevada National Park. Walks, horseback trails, 2-4 days; Mérida, Macuchies, and a scent of Mount Bolívar, 9 days. Costs average $100 per day from Mérida, all inclusive. Bilingual guides throughout.

Morgan Tours, Edif. Roraima, Av. Miranda, Campo Alegre, Caracas (02-261-7217, telex 23516 MORGVNC, fax 261-9265). Morgan tailor itineraries for ‘tough’ or ‘soft’ adventure, from Roraima to leisure beaches. Bird watching in the Andes, Henri Pittier National Park, and the plains. Photo safari on the 250,000-acre reserve of Pátero Ranch where protected habitats harbor tapirs, tayras, bowler monkeys, giant otters, ocelots, foxes, and an amazing variety of birds. Reserve well in advance for ‘tough’ expeditions such as Humboldt’s Orinoco passage by dugout (13 days), or the hike-and-dugout crossing from El Dorado to Angel Falls (11 days); these require special preparations. Costs from $80 to $175 a day per person, all inclusive from hotel pick-up.

Selva Tours, Edif. Mayupa, Av. Bolívia, Puerto Ordaz, Estado Bolívar (086-225537, telex 86171), Hotel Rio Orinoco, Ciudad Bolívar (085-48743, fax 42844), or Puerto Ayacucho (048-221122). Jungle tours in the Amazonas Territory, 1 to 7 days, by dugout or jeep run from $75 a day. A popular “Lost World” route explores the Gran Sabana by jeep, returning by plane from Sta. Elena de Uairén. River trips to Angel Falls with English-speaking guide run from May-October for about $300.

Tobogau Tours, Av. Río Negro, Puerto Ayacucho, T.E. Amazonas (048-21700). River travel by powered dugoutas, curiass or falas, some over 30 feet long, is exciting, fun, and leisurely. For a first adventure, Pepe Jaimés recommends 4 days (3 nights in a hammock) to the foot of Mt. Autana by way of the Orinoco and Sipapo rivers. Costs about $70 per day per person in groups of 7 to 12, from Puerto Ayacucho.

Turismo Colotama. Local # 53, Centro Com. Bello Campo, Caracas (02-261-7732, fax 262-1818). 4-day jeep tour through the Gran Sabana, famous for its waterfalls and tablemountains, for $324. Daily flights from Caracas for Amazonas Territory to travel up the Orinoco and see Puerto Ayacucho and local Indian communities, 3 days for $239 including air fare. Beach excursions include Los Roques Archipelago, Paris Peninsula, or Morrocoy.

Turves Tropical Travel Services, Iado Cine Broadway, Calle Real de Sabana Grande, Chacao, Caracas (02-951-1372; telex 212131, fax 951-1176). From San Fernando de Apure, charters whisk guests to Hato El Cedral deep in the Llanos for ranch-style music and food as well as a spectacular array of dry-season birds. Or, go into Las Nieves camp in southern Bolívar State for hiking. Fly over Angel Falls on your way to Camarata Mission, then hike up to Kavak canyon and river. $125 a day includes flights.

Venezuela Autentica, Edif. Galerías Bolívar, Of. 22A, Sabana Grande Blvd., Caracas (02-717328, fax 725030). Discover the eastern coast near Paris Peninsula, where pelicans nest on cliffs and cottages nestle by idyllic Medina Beach. Great base for jeep rides to water buffalo ranch, cacao and coffee plantations, and Guácharo Caves. Or, by river craft, seek the wildlife on the carons or creeks of the Gulf of Paria. About $60 a day per person from Caripano.

Venguides, piso 7-Oficina A, Edificio Galipan “A”, Av. Francisco Miranda, El Rosal; write Aptdo. 80372, Caracas (02-951-6211, fax 951-6544, telex 24714 IVENC-VC). Tailoring services for upscale travelers, Venguides offers door-to-door itineraries from hotel pick-up to jungle landing. Explore Caribbean caves, cloud forests, a ranch on the vast plains (great for bird and animal watching, Oct. through May), bass fishing in Guri Lake, or camping by one of the remote, dark rivers of Amazonas Territory. Costs vary with air charter and destination.
Official Name: Republic of Venezuela

PROFILE

Geography
Area: 912,060 sq. km. (353,143 sq. mi.); about the size of Texas and Oklahoma combined. Cities: Capital—Caracas (metropolitan area population est. 4.5 million). Other major cities—Maracaibo, Valencia. Terrain: Varied. Climate: Varies from tropical to temperate, depending on elevation.

People

Ethnic groups: Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Arab, German, Amerindian, African. Religions: Roman Catholic 96%. Languages: Spanish (official), Indian dialects spoken by some of the 200,000 Amerindians in the remote interior. Education: Years compulsory—9. Literacy—88.4%. Health: Infant mortality rate—27.3/1,000. Life expectancy—70 yrs. Work force (about 6.8 million): Agriculture—6%. Industry and commerce—35%. Services—26%. Other—33%.

Government
Branches: Executive—president (head of government and chief of state); 26-member Council of Ministers (cabinet). Legislative—bicameral congress (201-member Chamber of Deputies, 49-member Senate). Judicial—18-member Supreme Court.
Subdivisions: 20 states, 2 federal territories, one federal district, and 1 federal dependency (72 islands).
Political parties: Democratic Action (Acción Democrática—AD), Social Christian (Comité Organizador Político por Elecciones Independientes—COPEI) and the Movement to Socialism (Movimiento al Socialismo—MAS) are the major parties in the Venezuelan congress. Nine smaller parties are also represented in the legislature.
Flag: Three horizontal bands—yellow, blue, and red, with a crest in a corner of the yellow band and a semicircle of seven stars in the middle of the blue band. The colors come from the banner flown by Simon Bolívar; the stars represent the 7 provinces.

Economy
Natural resources: Petroleum, natural gas, coal, iron ore, gold, other minerals, hydroelectric power, bauxite.
Agriculture (6% of GDP): Products—rice, coffee, corn, sugar, bananas, and dairy, meat, and poultry products.
Industry (17% of GDP): Types—petrochemicals, oil refining, iron and steel, paper products, aluminum, textiles, transport equipment, consumer products.
There is no official exchange rate. In February 1988, Venezuela eliminated a multi-tiered exchange rate system adopted in 1983; the bolivar floats against the dollar.
Fiscal year: Calendar year.

Membership in International Organizations
UN and some of its specialized and related agencies; Organization of American States (OAS); International Coffee Agreement; Andean Pact; Rio Pact; Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries; Non-aligned Movement; Rio Group (informal group of Latin American states which deals with multilateral regional issues).
PEOPLE
Most Venezuelans are of European, Amerindian, and/or African descent. The most recent period of European immigration dates to the early 1950s, when many Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese immigrants arrived. The 1981 census showed that 94% of the people are native born; of foreign born, most came from Spain, Italy, Portugal, Africa, and Colombia.

Venezuela is sparsely populated. Most of the population is concentrated in the Andes and along the coast. Although almost half of the land area lies south and east of the Orinoco River, that area contains only 4% of the population.

HISTORY
The indigenous peoples of Venezuela ranged from sophisticated agriculturalists—the Timotes, who used irrigation and terracing—to primitive groups living on islands offshore. Coastal Carib tribes, especially the Teques and the Caracas, proved formidable enemies to the Spanish who followed Columbus after his 1498 visit. Carib leader Guaricaipuro mobilized as many as 10,000 warriors to resist Spanish settlement. The first permanent Spanish settlement in South America—Nuevo Toledo—was established in Venezuela in 1522.

Spanish explorers noted natives using a black, oily liquid—petroleum—in their daily chores and took some of it to Spain as a curiosity in 1500. The Spanish were interested in yellow, rather than black, gold, however, and looked for treasure elsewhere in their colonial empire. Even Venezuela’s agricultural potential was not appreciated by the Spanish. Other Europeans, especially English adventurers and Dutch and French traders took an interest in the region and developed important commercial connections there. Eventual efforts by Spain to limit these inroads and develop the colony proved counterproductive, and Venezuelans began to grow restive under colonial control.

Armed uprisings broke out in 1796, 1797, and 1799. In 1806, Francisco de Miranda—a Venezuelan aristocrat who was also a lieutenant general in the French Revolution and an acquaintance of Washington, Hamilton, Adams, and Paine—launched an unsuccessful rebellion. Independence was not achieved until 1821 and then under the leadership of Simon Bolivar, Venezuela’s native son and continental hero. Venezuela, along with what are now Colombia, Panama,
and Ecuador, was part of the Republic of Gran Colombia until 1830, when it separated and became a sovereign country.

Venezuela's 19th-century history is characterized by frequent periods of political instability, dictatorial rule, and revolutionary turbulence. The 20th century has been marked by long periods of authoritarianism: dictatorships of Gen. Juan Vicente Gomez (1908-35) and Gen. Marcos Perez Jimenez (1950-58), and a democratic interlude between 1945 and 1948. Since the overthrow of Perez Jimenez on January 23, 1958, democratic elections have been held every 5 years, and democratic institutions are flourishing. Action DemocratIca (AD) won five of these elections (1958, 1963, 1973, 1983, 1988), and the Social Christian (COPEI) Party won two (1968 and 1978).

GOVERNMENT
Venezuela's history of periodic competition for political power based on free and open elections has earned Venezuela a reputation as one of the more stable democracies in Latin America.

In December 1989, governors in 20 states and mayors in 269 municipalities were elected for the first time in the country's history. This election was the first to use a system allowing the voter to choose individual candidates by name, rather than selecting only among party slates. Opposition parties won nine gubernatorial contests.

As Venezuela pursues political and economic reform, it maintains an influential role in foreign affairs. Venezuela, joined by Colombia, Mexico, and Panama, sought a regional solution to Central America's problems through the Contadora process. Venezuela's political parties played a prominent role in helping Nicaragua organize its own elections in 1990. Caracas has hosted peace talks between the El Salvador and the rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front. Venezuela also is active in international fora such as the Non-aligned Movement.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS
After a 10-year, constitutionally mandated hiatus from power, Carlos Andres Perez took office again as president on February 2, 1989, for an unprecedented second 5-year term. He has abandoned economic nationalism, import substitution, and state intervention, the trademarks of his first term (1974-79). The decline of oil prices in the mid-1980s and changes in policy have forced austerity on consumers accustomed to subsidies. Perez is trying to diminish the role of the state in economic affairs and the country's dependence on oil exports. To reduce the scope of public sector intervention in the economy, authorities have moved to a floating exchange rate and eliminated many interest rate and price controls, as well as the level of subsidies for consumer goods. This adjustment is likely to be painful in the short term and already has resulted in inflation and economic contraction.

Economic hardship and the austerity program sparked violence in February 1989. On February 27-28, crowds, reacting to a sharp increase in bus fares, began burning buses. The violence grew when mobs, frustrated by reduced food supplies, began widespread looting of groceries and other businesses. When police no longer could maintain order, the government temporarily suspended some constitutional rights and used military force to restore order and to feed the population.

ECONOMY
Rich in oil and other mineral resources, Venezuela has the highest per capita income in Latin America. More than 80% of its citizens live in cities along the coast, where most industry is concentrated. The economy is dominated by the petroleum industry, which accounts for 80% of exports and more than 50% of government revenue. Other resources, such as iron ore, coal, bauxite, and gold are in various stages of development. The Guasare coal field is one of the larger undeveloped fields in the Americas, and the government hopes to produce 10 million metric tons a year by the mid-1990s, making Venezuela a leading exporter of coal. Venezuela discovered large bauxite deposits near its eastern border in 1977 and is rapidly developing an aluminum industry; seven smelters are planned. As projects come on line over the next 5 years, mineral exports are expected to at least double in volume.

Agriculture accounts for only 6% of GDP, 12% of the labor force, and 20% of the land area. The sector is highly inefficient and depends on a network of subsidies and trade barriers. Venezuela's main export crops are coffee and cocoa. The staple crops are maize and sorghum; most of Venezuela's wheat is imported.

Venezuela manufactures and exports petrochemicals, steel, aluminum, textiles, apparel, beverages, and foodstuffs. It also produces cement, tires, paper, and fertilizers, and assembles cars for the domestic market. Manufacturing accounts for 17% of GDP but is highly inefficient, having been protected by high tariff walls and import quotas.

Small and undercapitalized, the financial sector has been declining as a percentage of GDP in recent years because of unrealistic exchange rates and negative domestic interest rates. Total banking assets at the end of 1989 were the equivalent of $18 billion, of which the public sector controls 25% through 8 mixed or public banks. Three of the smaller banks are targeted for privatization this year. Of the 41 commercial banks, 6 hold more than 50% of commercial bank assets.

Venezuela has an extensive road system. With the exception of air service, transportation and communications have failed to keep pace with the country's needs. Caracas has a modern subway, but only one functioning rail line serves the rest of the country.

The labor force of about 6.8 million is growing at more than 3% a year. High demand for labor in the 1970s ensured near full employment and attracted large numbers of immigrant workers, particularly from Colombia. Unemployment rose from 5.9% in 1980 to more than 12% in 1989. The informal sector's participation in total employment rose to an estimated 38% in 1988, reflecting rising underemployment. The public sector employs 19% of the work force, while less than 1% work in the capital intensive oil industry. The labor force is 35% unionized.

The government hopes to get more than $16 billion in new multilateral financing (excluding commercial bank lending) for the next 5 years. Venezuela has se-
cured $4.7 billion in International Monetary Fund (IMF) and $750 million in World Bank financing and hopes that Japan will match the IMF's 3-year extended fund facility.

For more economic information, write the US Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, Publications, Sales & Distribution Room 1617M, Washington, DC 20230, to obtain the semiannual Foreign Economic Trends report. For additional commercial information, call 202-377-4303.

DEFENSE
The armed forces total 58,000 personnel in four service branches—army, navy (including the marine corps), air force, and the Armed Forces of Cooperation (FAC), commonly known as the national guard, whose primary mission is to enforce internal security. Since 1959, the armed forces have come to reject a direct role in national politics. In general, civil-military relations in Venezuela are good.

FOREIGN RELATIONS
The government traditionally has said that its international conduct will be governed by:

- respect for human rights;
- the right of all peoples to self-determination;
- non-intervention in the internal affairs of other nations;
- peaceful settlement of disputes between nations, including border disputes;
- the right of all peoples to peace and security;
- support for the elimination of colonialism; and
- higher export prices for developing countries' primary products.

Venezuela has numerous border disputes with its neighbors but seeks to resolve them peacefully. Relations with Guyana are complicated by Venezuela's claim to the area up to the Essequibo River, more than half the area of Guyana. With the concurrence of both parties, the border issue was referred to the UN Secretary General for a determination of suitable means for settlement in 1967. Since 1970, Venezuela and Colombia have held sporadic talks about the maritime border in the Gulf of Venezuela. Bilateral mediation efforts were recently reinvigorated by the presidents of both nations. A maritime boundary settlement with Trinidad and Tobago has been submitted to the legislatures of both countries for approval.

Despite economic challenges, Perez has remained active on the international stage. Venezuela has joined the Non-aligned Movement. In the Western Hemisphere, he helped monitor preparations for elections in Nicaragua and tried to rally hemispheric support behind a plan to oust former Panamanian military strongman General Manuel Noriega.

US-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS
The United States and Venezuela have similar global views—of strengthening democratic institutions around the world; furthering human rights; accelerating sound economic, social, and cultural development through orderly and progressive change within the framework of a free society; and cooperating in the defense and security of the Western Hemisphere against aggression or subversion.

Venezuela not only endorses the theoretical goals of democracy but also works with the United States to promote democracy and human rights. For example, Venezuela has adopted the American Convention on Human Rights and supports the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Along with the United States, Venezuela supports the goals of nuclear non-proliferation in the hemisphere, conventional arms restraint, anti-terrorism, and the promotion of hemispheric economic development. Venezuela and the United States have similar views on the importance of democratization as a key element in a solution to the long-term problems of Central America.

President Perez made a state visit to the United States in April 1990, at which time he and President Bush continued their frequent discussions on a broad range of issues.

The United States is Venezuela's most important trading partner, representing more than 45% of its international trade. The United States exports machinery, transportation equipment, agricultural commodities and auto parts in exchange for oil and other natural resources.

The United States budgeted $700,000 in fiscal year 1990 for anti-narcotics assistance to Venezuela, which also receives $125,000 in International Military Educational Training (IMET) funds.

Principal US Officials
Ambassador—Michael M. Skol
Deputy Chief of Mission—Robert C. Fedler
Political Counselor—William W. Millan
Economic Counselor—Frank S. Park
Commercial Attaché—Kenneth Moorfield
Labor Attaché—Robert A. Millsbaugh
Consul General—Daniel R. Welter
Administrative Counselor—Michael A. Boorstein
Regional Security Officer—Kevin M. Barry
Public Affairs Counselor—Stephen M. Chaplin

The US Embassy is on Avenida de Miranda and Avenida Principal de la Floresta, Caracas (tel. 58-2-285-2222). Office hours are 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. The consulate in Maracaibo is in Edificio Sofimara, Piso 3, Calle 77 con Avenida 13 (tel. 58-61-84253/84254). Office hours are 8 am to noon and 2 pm to 4 pm, Monday through Friday.

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Department of State Publication 7749

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3.1.3.- Población.

Su población, se sitúa para 1990 en aproximadamente 19,7 millones de habitantes, con una tasa de crecimiento promedio de 2,5 % desde 1981. Esto significa que en un intervalo de nueve (9) años, el país aumentó su población en más de 3,6 millones de habitantes; para el año 2000 superará los 24 millones de habitantes. Puede considerarse que Venezuela es un país de gente joven, ya que más del 68 % de su población no alcanza los 30 años de edad. (Ver Cuadro No. 3 - 1)

3.1.4.- Organización Política.
CUADRO No. 3 - 1
VENEZUELA
POBLACION SEGUN GRUPOS DE EDADES
PERIODO 1985 - 1990

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FUENTE: O.C.E.I. - ANUARIO ESTADISTICO DE VENEZUELA, 1.989
ECOPLAN
FECHA: DICIEMBRE, 1.991
3.1.6.- Economía.

Venezuela ha realizado en los últimos años notables avances en su desarrollo económico, que la han llevado a constituirse en uno de los países de mayor crecimiento en Latinoamérica. La expansión se basó en la explotación del petróleo, que durante muchos años ha sido el eje de la economía nacional y la fuente fundamental para la generación de divisas. En este sentido la tasa de crecimiento global de la economía durante el período 1960-1986 fue del 3,8 %, para el año 1991 el crecimiento fue de 9,2 %.

La crisis económica mundial generada durante la década de los ochenta y fundamentalmente la posterior caída de los precios del petróleo, interrumpió, al igual que ha sucedido en la mayoría de
los países en desarrollo, el proceso de crecimiento acelerado que se venía registrando. Dichas circunstancias motivaron que el estado venezolano se haya visto obligado a redimensionar todo su proceso económico, eliminar su excesivo paternalismo estatal, para entrar en un proceso de creación de riquezas propias fundamentados en la libre competencia y en el ejercicio amplio de las relaciones económicas internacionales. A nivel de aspectos macroeconómicos y según los cálculos del Banco Central de Venezuela, 1990 concluyó con una inflación acumulada del 36,5 % frente a un 81,0 % en 1989; para 1991 la inflación acumulada se situó en 30,7 % decreciendo en comparación con 1990, mientras la tasa de crecimiento de la economía para 1991 se ubicó en 9,2 %, la más alta de América Latina.

3.1.7.- Turismo.

El turismo sigue siendo el factor de crecimiento más importante para muchos países del área del Caribe, entre los que se encuentra Venezuela.
A pesar de su proximidad a los Estados Unidos y Canadá y de su gran diversidad de paisajes naturales, entre los cuales se destacan sus excelentes recursos turísticos de sol y de playa, Venezuela no inició el desarrollo de sus atractivos hasta comienzos de los años 80.
El turismo ha asumido en los últimos años una importancia creciente en la economía del país. El número de visitantes ha pasado de 200,038 en 1,981 a 524,533 en 1,990.
Con este crecimiento el turismo se sitúa después del petróleo y del aluminio, como una de las fuentes más importantes de divisas para el país, habiendo generado en 1990 un ingreso estimado en 415 millones de dólares.

Entre las medidas adoptadas que han favorecido el turismo se destaca la liberación del mercado de cambio, que ha permitido la libre cotización del bolívar de acuerdo a las circunstancias actuales de la economía. Es decir, una tasa de cambio competitiva, factor central para el estímulo permanente de la inversión extranjera. Complementariamente, el Estado Venezolano ha promovido desde el año 1985 programas de financiamiento para el desarrollo de la hotelería y servicios conexos, que han permitido la consolidación de la planta turística y la generación de múltiples actividades comerciales relacionadas con el sector.

Hoy el desarrollo del turismo en el país, ha dado origen a fuertes expectativas sobre el potencial económico de esta actividad, principalmente como generadora de empleo y divisas, y no existen indicios para que a corto plazo, las tendencias del consumo desmejoren, por el contrario, las perspectivas son amplias sobre todo en materia de turismo internacional, verificados por diversas encuestas, donde cabe mencionar la Encuesta Financiera realizada en noviembre de 1990, por el Consejo Nacional de Comercio y los Servicios (CONSECOMERCIO), titulada ¿Dónde están Invirtiendo los Venezolanos? en la cual el 20,4 % considera el área de turismo como un área de inversión importante.

Con miras futuristas, el turismo continúa siendo una de las
posibilidades más efectivas del país, a corto y mediano plazo, para dinamizar la actividad económica nacional.

En definitiva el territorio venezolano cuenta con una riqueza de recursos naturales de gran jerarquía, presenta áreas con fisonomía geográfica propia, relativas a cuatro (4) grandes conjuntos:

Costas e Islas: nuestras costas se extienden a lo largo de 8.726 Kms., de los cuales 1.700 son playas arenosas, con abundante sol durante todo el año; de aguas templadas y cristalinas, así como en el estado Zulia cabe mencionar, el Lago de Maracaibo, el reservorio de agua dulce más grande de América del Sur.

En el Mar Caribe venezolano se encuentran 72 islas, siendo las más conocidas el Archipiélago de los Roques y la Isla de Margarita.

Montañas: La Cordillera de los Andes Venezolanos, la Caribe Central y la Caribe Oriental, conforman la región montañosa del país, donde se asientan importantes parques nacionales como el de la Sierra Nevada en Mérida, con montañas de hasta 5.000 metros de altura y el teleférico más grande del mundo.

Selvas y Sabanas: Las selvas constituyen una basta extensión de las regiones del país, con más de 430 mil kilómetros cuadrados, sus colosales dimensiones, así como la variedad de relieves y vegetación le dan una diversidad de paisajes, atravesada por grandes ríos que producen numerosas cataratas, dentro de los cuales destacan el " Salto Angel ", que es el más alto del mundo, con una caída libre de 1.000 metros, en el Parque Nacional Canaima.
Llanos: La Región de los Llanos con sus 300.000 kilómetros cuadrados, se extiende desde el gran arco montañoso nor-occidental y de la costa, hasta el majestuoso río Orinoco. Todo estos atractivos y escenarios naturales conforman un patrimonio susceptible de ser puesto en valor, tanto para el mercado nacional como para el internacional, mediante la promoción de inversiones turísticas y el equipamiento urbano adecuado.
CAPITULO No. II 
OBJETIVOS
II.- OBJETIVOS DEL PROYECTO

La actual estrategia de desarrollo económico y social de Venezuela, está sustentada en el VIII Plan de la Nación, el cual regirá las políticas y acciones del gobierno nacional. El turismo es considerado en el plan como una actividad prioritaria por su capacidad de generar divisas y ser promotora del desarrollo y equilibrio regional; de allí que el proyecto Santa Rita la Isla de los Niños del Mundo se enmarca en el contexto del VIII Plan, y persigue objetivos generales y específicos, los cuales se señalan a continuación.

2.1.- OBJETIVOS GENERALES

2.1.1.- Estimular e Incentivar el Desarrollo Potencial del Turismo en el Territorio Nacional.

En materia turística y recreacional, nuestro país presenta una situación que en cierta forma es contradictoria. En un país con grandes potencialidades, subutilizadas en casi todos los casos, se encuentra una excesiva concentración de la oferta, frente a instituciones que han realizado poco esfuerzo para satisfacer las necesidades que plantea el turismo nacional. Aun cuando se haya experimentado cierta evolución en lo que a turismo se refiere, la actividad se ha visto condicionada en lo relativo a su planificación y a factores socioeconómicos.
2.1.2.- Desarrollo y Consolidación de un Complejo Turístico, 
Capaz de Incrementar la Captación de Turistas Nacionales e Internacionales.

El turismo y la recreación deben considerarse siempre como actividades permanentes y medios que contribuyan al fortalecimiento de la actividad económica, orientándolas principalmente hacia el turismo interno y transformándolas en generadoras del flujo turístico del exterior, por constituir este último en la captación de recursos, uno de los flujos más importante para cualquier país turístico.

2.1.3.- Brindar al Zulia y al País un Lugar que Permita
Diversificar la Actividad Turística Nacional.

En el Zulia y en el país no existen en la actualidad parques turísticos de las características del presente proyecto, por cuanto el turismo que se realiza en Venezuela, es básicamente de playa y montaña, y últimamente el ecoturismo que se basa en el turismo de flora y fauna, teniendo una captación poblacional de baja densidad, por ser un turismo dirigido a personas o instituciones especializadas, sin embargo, este tipo de turismo genera recursos financieros importantes.

2.1.4.- Desarrollar una Isla que en la Actualidad no es
Aprovechable, para la Acción Recreativa y Cultural de los Niños.

Los niños constituyen el porvenir del mundo y es obligación de
los que hoy conducen los destinos de la sociedad, crear en ellos un espíritu orientado hacia la formación y desarrollo integral. El proyecto dentro de su concepción tiende a que los niños, y en general la población, logren desarrollar los aspectos culturales y espirituales de su ser, al brindar espectáculos dirigidos a fortalecer los conocimientos científicos, históricos y culturales.

2.1.5.- Lograr el Relevamiento como Valor de Características de Hito Regional y Nacional del Lago de Maracaibo.

El Lago de Maracaibo ha sido para el Zulia y Venezuela en general, desde el tiempo de la colonización hasta la actualidad, un área de singular importancia histórica, económica y estratégica, que merece por parte del Estado Venezolano la mayor atención para su conservación y desarrollo.

2.1.6.- Incrementar la Producción de Bienes y Servicios a nivel Regional y Nacional.

Como todo proyecto de inversión intensiva, Santa Rita la Isla de los Niños del Mundo generará un impacto en el resto de la actividad económica regional y nacional. El efecto multiplicador de la inversión logrará incrementar el valor agregado tanto regional como nacional, al participar directamente en la construcción, y prestación de servicios posterior en la etapa de operación.

2-3
2.2.- OBJETIVOS ESPECÍFICOS

2.2.1.- Disminuir el Desempleo en el Estado Zulia y en el País, 
Mediante la la Creación de Nuevos Puestos de Trabajo.

En efecto, durante el período de construcción se estimulará la 
demanda de trabajo, con lo cual se generará un apreciable volumen 
de empleos directos e indirectos; sin duda que el impacto del 
proyecto en el empleo, constituye un factor que refuerza la 
viabilidad del mismo, cuando se mide a través de la relación 
beneficio-costo.

2.2.2.- Formación del Talento Humano en el Area de Turismo.

El proyecto persigue el fortalecimiento de la mano de obra 
turística especializada mediante la realización de convenios con 
centros educacionales, para la obtención del personal con el 
perfil curricular necesario, que permita cumplir a cabalidad con 
sus funciones laborales, dentro de Santa Rita la Isla de los 
Niños del Mundo.

2.2.3.- Ahorro y Generación de Divisas.

La implantación de un complejo turístico de las características 
del presente, contribuirá a un importante ahorro de divisas, 
producto de la alternativa que se le presenta a la población 
venezolana que viaja al exterior. Así mismo, una significativa
generación de divisas, por concepto de la captación de turistas extranjeros.
Este enfoque conduce al proyecto una trascendencia e importancia vital al considerar la actual situación económica que atraviesa el país.
Por otra parte, la instalación de este complejo turístico, contribuirá definitivamente a diversificar el aparato productivo regional, y establece las bases para una posible complementariedad con otras regiones del país, aprovechando las ventajas comparativas que ofrece Venezuela.

2.2.4.- Lograr la Ejecución del Proyecto, Logrando un Rentabilidad Social y Económica.

En un mundo acicateado por los estímulos consumistas de la economía de mercado, donde el hombre viviendo en sociedad se mide generalmente en términos del beneficio económico, el proyecto Santa Rita la Isla de los Niños del Mundo, se orienta hacia el beneficio social, en la medida que atiende al tiempo libre del hombre y su grupo familiar, a sabiendas del beneficio económico que generan, sin lugar a dudas, este tipo de actividad.
April 9, 1992

Mr. Luis® Avila Soto
Mr. Jose Perez Gil

Subject: Proposal for Park Planning Services, Isla de Los Ninos del Mundo,
Maracaibo, Venezuela

VIA FAX: 213-736-5038 (Days Inn)

In connection with the proposed Isla de Los Ninos del Mundo project we are pleased
to offer the following economic master planning services.

Phase 1

Step 1 - Field Visit

Field visit in Maracaibo to collect data on the market, visit the site and obtain
orientation on the project goals and objectives. Data obtained will be used in steps 2
and 3.

Step 2 - Charrette

Carry out a two-day charrette (brainstorm) on the project. Probable participants;
Harrison Price of HPC, Alvaro Villa and Tom Reidenbach or Grady Larkins. The
charrette would be held in Torrance, California. The purpose of the brainstorm
process is to structure an action program and identify its content, priorities, and
strategies.

The procedure for the charrette is outlined as follows:

1. Harrison A. Price will chair the process.

2. An appropriate mix of experts is assembled according to the needs of the
problem; this includes, among others, the field of feasibility analysis, park
design and planning, project development, and so forth.

3. Rules of order are maintained. The agenda is prepared in advance and
maintained within reason.
4. Briefing materials are prepared in advance and distributed to all participants. These include maps, project descriptions, economic base evaluations and appropriate demographics, prior studies relating to the area, and so forth. A field visit to the site area is carried out in step 1 to prepare for the briefing.

5. Proceedings will be carried out in a businesslike setting away from ordinary business. Telephone interruptions are limited to breaks as much as possible. We have generally used conveniently located business clubs and hotels with meeting rooms and food service.

6. Consensus on concept and program is usually achieved - with any strong minority opinion noted.

7. HPC will prepare a memorandum report of findings summarizing the charrette discussion and conclusions. This report will serve as the basic program for ongoing work.

Step 3 - Economic Feasibility Report

The economic feasibility report is a formal report of expected performance of the project defined in step 2. It will contain the following elements:

1. A preliminary concept statement for the park as defined by the client group and the charrette.

2. Analysis of the size, profile and demography of primary and secondary resident markets.

3. Analysis of the size and composition of the tourist market including size.

4. Detail of tourist infrastructure (hotels, campgrounds, transportation facilities, etc.)

5. Discussion of factors affecting growth in resident and tourist markets.

6. Inventory and character of any other leisure time and cultural attractions including museums, specialty attractions and amusement facilities operating in Maracaibo.

7. Discussion of any potential government incentives for building and operating a major park in Maracaibo.
8. Reactions to the island site, its access and other factors.


10. Projection of revenue, expense, operating income (earnings before depreciation, interest and taxes) and supportable capital investment.

At the conclusion of Phase I work you will be ready to undertake Phase II schematic master planning and after its completion and when financing is in place, Phase III work for working drawings and Phase IV construction supervision and pre-opening planning.
Section II

THE SITE

The site is the entirety of the flat island of Santa Rita in Maracaibo Bay. It contains 45 hectares (112.5 acres) as shown in the map following. The island is 2.7 kilometers from the east shore at its closest connection to the bay bridge and 5.2 kilometers from the west bank in the Maracaibo City Center. The east bank is connected to the west bank by the General Rafael Urdaneta Bridge which scales off at 7.7 kilometers in length.

There is a shorter route from the island to the east bank of 1.7 kilometers but it is only reached by a circle route from the bridge which doubles the distance to the west shore of Maracaibo to 32 kilometers and 30 minutes driving time.

The site is owned in its entirety by the client. A detailed description prepared by Ecoplan is included in the section.

The site is centrally located in the City of Maracaibo. A description of the City and its attractions from the Fomento brochure “Introducing Venezuela” is included in the section.
VENEZUELA

CANAL DE MARACAIBO

TRAMO INTERIOR

MARACAIBO - LA SALINA

Levantamiento Batimétrico efectuado por el Instituto Nacional de Canalizaciones 1969.

Restitución Aero-Fotográfica de la Dirección de Cartografía Nacional (MOP) 1962.

SONDEOS EN METROS

Media Mínima Mensual

ALTITUDES EN METROS

PROYECCIÓN MERCATOR

ESCALA 1 : 50.000 EN LAT. 10° 28' 00''

Millas Náuticas

Kilómetros
3.3.- DESCRIPCION DEL AREA DE LOCALIZACION DEL PROYECTO

En este punto se reseñarán las áreas donde estará ubicado el Proyecto sin profundizar al respecto, por cuanto en el capítulo referente a la localización se abordará ampliamente todo lo referente al mismo.

El Proyecto Santa Rita la Isla de los Niños del Mundo, se desarrollará en la isla denominada "Providencia" y en el "Islote de Pájaros", otorgadas en comodato por la Alcaldía del municipio Santa Rita al Instituto Arquidiocesano Niños Cantores del Zulia, con una duración de cincuenta (50) años prorrogables. La isla de Providencia, se encuentra ubicada en el Lago de Maracaibo, dista dos mil setecientos (2,700) metros del sector Palmarejo, parroquia del municipio Santa Rita del estado Zulia, según lo establecido en el artículo noveno (90.), ordinal quince (15) de la Ley de División Político Territorial del Estado Zulia.

La Isla de Providencia abarca una superficie total de cuarenta y siete hectáreas con nueve mil veintidós metros cuadrados y será el área principal donde se asienten las diferentes atracciones que tendrá el Proyecto.

El Islote de Pájaros, ubicado en el Lago de Maracaibo a una distancia de 1,220 metros del sector Palmarejo; tiene una superficie total de una hectárea con setecientos cuarenta y cinco metros cuadrados.

Es importante señalar que en ambas zonas no existe población alguna en la actualidad, lo que facilita su desarrollo integral.
MARACAIBO

343 kms. (213 miles) from Barquisimeto, on the shore of Lake Maracaibo lies the city of Maracaibo (pop. 621,109; mean temperature 86°F), capital of the State of Zulia, second largest city in Venezuela and one of her important commercial and industrial centers. Maracaibo, founded by Alonso Pacheco in 1568, was sacked by the English privateer Sir Francis Drake and later by Sir William Morgan and Gramont. It is the site of a modern university and birthplace of the historian Rafael María Baraja and General Rafael Urdaneta, a hero of the War of Independence.

Maracaibo's main attraction is the Lake (formerly known as Lago de Coquivacoa) of great historical significance because of the naval battle which helped Venezuelan independence. Today it is spanned by a 5½-mile long, 57-foot wide General Rafael Urdaneta Bridge of reinforced concrete—largest of its kind in the world. Its surface bristles with a forest of oil derricks and is plied by huge oil tankers and contrasting "pilas" (Indian canoes). It has many good spots for fishing, volleyball, and other water sports.

Maracaibo also has an international airport, a racetrack and bull ring worth visiting. At the market you can buy colorful handicraft products made by the local Ziruma Indians. Also of great tourist interest is the Chiquirá Fair, dedicated to the Virgin of Chiquinquirá (patron saint of the city) which takes place in November.

Among the picturesque spots near the city is the town of Ziruma where the Guajira Indians don typical costumes and dance the "La Chichamaya" in their cere and festivals, while in several towns around the lake—such as Bobures, Gibraltar, La Rita and Ceuta, the feast of San Benito is celebrated with colorful cere where the rhythm of Congo drums mark time to the "gaitas" parades. Also typical of this region is the dancing "gaita" at Christmas time.

The best hotels in Maracaibo are "Hotel de Oro" Hotel Caribe, "Hotel Astor" and "Hotel Detroit". Their dishes are "conejo en coco" and "maduro relleno".

Going north from Maracaibo, beyond San Rafael, you will come upon Sinamaica Lake where an Indian town built on stilts. A little further is Paraíso Beach.
Section III

CLIMATE

Climate data presented includes:

- Number of Days of Rain 82-86
- Annual Rainfall 640-866 mm 25.1" - 34.1"
- Average Daily Temperature Range 25.7°C-29.2°C 78°F-84.6°F
- Average Daily Maximum Temperature 33.8°C 92.8°F
- Average Daily Minimum Temperature 23.5°C 74.3°F
- Annual Hours of Sunshine 1988 (6.8 x 365) 2482 hours
- Average Wind Velocity 12.3-12.9 KMS/HRS
- Average Relative Humidity 74%-75%

It is a hot tropical climate with moderate rainfall and quite a lot of cloud cover.
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FUENTE: 1.- ANUARIOS ESTADÍSTICOS DE VENEZUELA OCEI, AÑOS 1985-1988
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ESTADO ZULÍA
NUMERO DE DIAS DE LLUVIAS APRECIABLES Y PRECIPITACION TOTAL
MÁXIMA EN 24 HORAS POR MES
SEGÚN ESTACIÓN METEOROLÓGICA
PERIODO 1985-1988

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CUADRO A.7
ESTADO ZULIA
TEMPERATURA PROMEDIO DEL AIRE POR MES
SEGÚN ESTACIÓN METEOROLÓGICA
PERIODO 1985-1988

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FUENTE: ANUARIOS ESTADÍSTICOS DE VENEZUELA, OCEI. AÑOS 1985-1988
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ESTADO ZULIA
DURACIÓN DIARIA DE INSOLACIÓN PROMEDIO POR MES
SEGÚN ESTACIÓN MÉTÉOROLÓGICA
INSOLACIÓN MEDIA PROMEDIO
PERIODO 1985-1988

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CUADRO A.3
ESTADO ZULIA
PROMEDIO DE VELOCIDAD
DEL VIENTO POR AÑOS
SEGUN ESTACION METEOROLÓGICA
PERIODO 1985-1988

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CUADRO A.
ESTADO ZULIA
PRECIPITACION TOTAL
COMPARADA CON VALORES PROMEDIOS
SEGUN ESTACION METEOROLÓGICA
PERIODO 1985-1988

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CUADRO A.2
ESTADO ZULIA
PROMEDIO DE HUMEDAD RELATIVA DEL AIRE POR AÑOS SEGÚN ESTACIÓN METEOROLÓGICA
PERIODO 1985-1988

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1990

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<th>F° Medium Temp</th>
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<th>F° Maximum</th>
<th>MINIMA C°</th>
<th>F° Minimum</th>
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Fuente (Source): Corpoturismo
Section IV

THE RESIDENT MARKET

This section deals with the size of the market and its demography.

To indicate the resident market, 150 and 200 kilometer radial rings are shown. The 150 kilometer ring includes most of the states of Zulia and portions of Falcon and Lara in Venezuela and the state of La Guajira in Colombia. The 200 kilometer ring increases the containment in Falcon, Lara and La Guajira and adds portions of Merida in Venezuela and Cesar in Colombia.

Population in the 200 kilometer ring as of 1990 is approximated as follows:

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<th>State</th>
<th>Approximate Containment</th>
<th>Approximate Population</th>
<th>State Population (MM)</th>
<th>Contained Market (MM)</th>
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Population in the 150 Kilometer ring is approximated as follows:

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<th>State</th>
<th>Approximate Containment Population</th>
<th>State Population (MM)</th>
<th>Contained Market (MM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zulia</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>2.2353</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falcon</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0.5992</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lara</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1.1932</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trujillo</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>0.4939</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cesar</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0.6000</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Guajira</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0.1300</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Driving distances between major cities and Maracaibo all shown in an enclosed mileage chart. Important segments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maracaibo to:</th>
<th>Caracas</th>
<th>706 km</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Merida</td>
<td>472 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>San Cristobal</td>
<td>437 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barquisimeto</td>
<td>354 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coro</td>
<td>260 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carora</td>
<td>252 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trujillo</td>
<td>243 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valera</td>
<td>232 km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Literacy of the population is high; 91.4% in Zulia, 90.7% in Venezuela.

The relative level of the economy is indicated by the following data:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Gross Domestic Product}^* & = 454,327 \\
\text{Population} & = 19,734,967 \\
\text{Venezuela} & = 23,021 \\
\text{(in 1984 Bolivares)} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

As a comparison, per capita gross domestic profit in the USA in 1990 was:

\[
\frac{\$5,5138 \text{ Trillion}}{248.71 \text{ Million Population}} = \$22,170 \text{ in current 1990 dollars}
\]

Per capita GDP for Venezuela in 1989 in U.S. dollars was:

\[
\frac{\$38,900,000,000}{19,245,552} = \$2021 \text{ in 1989 dollars}
\]

A positive aspect of the domestic economy is shown by the net balance of payments which was positive in 1989, 1990 and 1991.

* Billions of 1984 Bolivares
DISTANCIAS EN Kms.
ENTRE CIUDADES PRINCIPALES

POR LAS VÍAS DE CIRCULACIÓN RÁPIDA

Las distancias indicadas corresponden a la ruta con menor tiempo de recorrido por carreteras pavimentadas.
### Tabla (Table) 13

**Producto Interno Bruto (Millones de Bolívares Constantes de 1984)**

**Gross Domestic Product (Millions of 1984 Constant Bolivars)**

**1986 - 1991**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oil Sector:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil &amp; Gas</td>
<td>63,750</td>
<td>68,556</td>
<td>70,135</td>
<td>70,754</td>
<td>71,179</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>86,866</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refining</td>
<td>22,392</td>
<td>21,716</td>
<td>23,789</td>
<td>24,003</td>
<td>24,267</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>24,153</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Oil (Bs.)</td>
<td>86,142</td>
<td>86,272</td>
<td>93,924</td>
<td>94,757</td>
<td>95,446</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>111,019</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<td><strong>Goods Producing Sectors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>25,127</td>
<td>26,126</td>
<td>25,338</td>
<td>25,770</td>
<td>26,311</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>27,125</td>
<td>4.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>2,482</td>
<td>3,116</td>
<td>3,939</td>
<td>3,402</td>
<td>3,623</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4,165</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>79,100</td>
<td>84,159</td>
<td>87,047</td>
<td>76,206</td>
<td>79,622</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>84,886</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tradeable Goods (ex-oil)</td>
<td>106,709</td>
<td>113,401</td>
<td>118,324</td>
<td>105,438</td>
<td>109,556</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>116,197</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electricity &amp; Water</td>
<td>6,726</td>
<td>7,086</td>
<td>7,612</td>
<td>7,693</td>
<td>7,908</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>8,244</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>26,977</td>
<td>27,822</td>
<td>30,019</td>
<td>20,986</td>
<td>21,511</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>25,494</td>
<td>9.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Goods (Bs.)</td>
<td>140,142</td>
<td>148,309</td>
<td>155,955</td>
<td>134,117</td>
<td>138,975</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>149,935</td>
<td>7.9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Service Sectors:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce, Rest &amp; Hotels</td>
<td>68,665</td>
<td>71,664</td>
<td>75,525</td>
<td>63,887</td>
<td>64,206</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>67,829</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Communications</td>
<td>23,073</td>
<td>24,380</td>
<td>27,015</td>
<td>25,461</td>
<td>26,123</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>26,940</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate, Finance &amp; Others</td>
<td>61,014</td>
<td>64,912</td>
<td>69,203</td>
<td>64,402</td>
<td>65,239</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>69,352</td>
<td>6.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Personal</td>
<td>19,962</td>
<td>21,135</td>
<td>22,081</td>
<td>22,773</td>
<td>22,955</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>25,255</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>36,467</td>
<td>37,365</td>
<td>39,095</td>
<td>39,684</td>
<td>40,001</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>44,577</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Profit Services</td>
<td>5,692</td>
<td>6,094</td>
<td>6,306</td>
<td>5,051</td>
<td>4,990</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>6,756</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Less) Interest (Bs.)</td>
<td>(8,599)</td>
<td>(8,577)</td>
<td>(9,023)</td>
<td>(7,225)</td>
<td>(7,680)</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>(7,035)</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Services (Bs.)</td>
<td>206,174</td>
<td>217,553</td>
<td>230,802</td>
<td>214,033</td>
<td>215,836</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>233,673</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-oil GDP (Bs.)</strong></td>
<td>346,586</td>
<td>365,862</td>
<td>386,757</td>
<td>348,150</td>
<td>354,811</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>383,607</td>
<td>5.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Import Duties</td>
<td>4,876</td>
<td>4,546</td>
<td>5,785</td>
<td>3,681</td>
<td>4,071</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>3,913</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total GDP (Bs.)</td>
<td>437,608</td>
<td>457,353</td>
<td>486,466</td>
<td>446,588</td>
<td>454,327</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>498,539</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimado (Estimated)*

**Fuente (Source):** Banco Central de Venezuela y VenEconomy (Central Bank & VenEconomy)
### Tabla (Table) 11
**Balance de Pagos 1987 - 1992**
**Balance of Payments**
(Millones - Millions of Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Oil Exports:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil &amp; Gas</td>
<td>8,927</td>
<td>6,023</td>
<td>9,862</td>
<td>13,780</td>
<td>12,609</td>
<td>13,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>1,696</td>
<td>1,339</td>
<td>1,376</td>
<td>1,238</td>
<td>1,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>1,714</td>
<td>2,122</td>
<td>1,592</td>
<td>1,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Non-Oil Exports</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>2,059</td>
<td>3,053</td>
<td>3,498</td>
<td>2,830</td>
<td>3,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Exports:</strong></td>
<td>10,437</td>
<td>10,082</td>
<td>12,915</td>
<td>17,278</td>
<td>15,439</td>
<td>17,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imports:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Goods</td>
<td>1,242</td>
<td>1,293</td>
<td>1,085</td>
<td>1,006</td>
<td>1,612</td>
<td>1,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Goods</td>
<td>3,575</td>
<td>5,211</td>
<td>2,852</td>
<td>2,454</td>
<td>3,680</td>
<td>5,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Imports</td>
<td>8,870</td>
<td>12,080</td>
<td>7,283</td>
<td>6,543</td>
<td>10,193</td>
<td>12,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRADE BALANCE:</strong></td>
<td>1,567</td>
<td>(1,998)</td>
<td>5,632</td>
<td>10,735</td>
<td>5,246</td>
<td>4,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services Net:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freight &amp; Insurance</td>
<td>(766)</td>
<td>(1,061)</td>
<td>(369)</td>
<td>(452)</td>
<td>(768)</td>
<td>(949)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>(93)</td>
<td>(218)</td>
<td>(251)</td>
<td>(586)</td>
<td>(725)</td>
<td>(650)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income on Investments</td>
<td>(2,515)</td>
<td>(2,857)</td>
<td>(3,474)</td>
<td>(2,370)</td>
<td>(2,263)</td>
<td>(2,401)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pvt. Sector Imputed Interest</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>(1,094)</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>1,051</td>
<td>1,019</td>
<td>989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>(395)</td>
<td>(622)</td>
<td>(296)</td>
<td>(160)</td>
<td>(469)</td>
<td>(579)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET SERVICES:</strong></td>
<td>(2,666)</td>
<td>(3,664)</td>
<td>(3,284)</td>
<td>(2,517)</td>
<td>(3,205)</td>
<td>(3,590)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilateral Transfers</td>
<td>(91)</td>
<td>(147)</td>
<td>(187)</td>
<td>(258)</td>
<td>(264)</td>
<td>(312)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT ACCOUNT BALANCE:</strong></td>
<td>(1,390)</td>
<td>(5,809)</td>
<td>2,161</td>
<td>7,960</td>
<td>1,757</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital Account:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Public Capital Flow</td>
<td>(126)</td>
<td>(267)</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>(3,054)</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>(520)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Private Capital Flow</td>
<td>1,738</td>
<td>(650)</td>
<td>(2,886)</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>1,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterpart Interest</td>
<td>(903)</td>
<td>(1,094)</td>
<td>(1,106)</td>
<td>(1,051)</td>
<td>(1,019)</td>
<td>(989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNT:</strong></td>
<td>707</td>
<td>(2,011)</td>
<td>(3,414)</td>
<td>(3,796)</td>
<td>(55)</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
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<td>Errors and Omissions</td>
<td>(411)</td>
<td>3,038</td>
<td>2,050</td>
<td>(1,851)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Official Creation of Reserves</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>(113)</td>
<td>(731)</td>
<td>(114)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET BALANCE OF PAYMENTS:</strong></td>
<td>(926)</td>
<td>(4,895)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2,199</td>
<td>1,702</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
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</table>

* Estimado (Estimated)
CUADRO T.7
ZULIA Y VENEZUELA
POBLACION DE 15 AÑOS Y MAS
SEGUN NIVEL EDUCATIVO ALCANZADO
PERIODO 1985-1989

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>ZULIA</td>
<td>1.229.626</td>
<td>1.261.842</td>
<td>1.294.608</td>
<td>1.327.676</td>
<td>1.360.913</td>
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<td>115.450</td>
<td>121.882</td>
<td>116.845</td>
<td>118.319</td>
<td>117.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIN NIVEL</td>
<td>32.625</td>
<td>42.151</td>
<td>24.856</td>
<td>26.552</td>
<td>28.123</td>
</tr>
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<td>PRIMARIA</td>
<td>506.296</td>
<td>520.730</td>
<td>543.636</td>
<td>545.910</td>
<td>556.670</td>
</tr>
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<td>MEDIA</td>
<td>462.213</td>
<td>455.960</td>
<td>477.512</td>
<td>504.847</td>
<td>525.026</td>
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<td>SECUNDARIA</td>
<td>397.551</td>
<td>402.592</td>
<td>427.163</td>
<td>448.311</td>
<td>470.701</td>
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<tr>
<td>1ro a 3er AÑO</td>
<td>229.851</td>
<td>226.905</td>
<td>236.110</td>
<td>246.233</td>
<td>255.947</td>
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<td>4to AÑO y MAS</td>
<td>167.700</td>
<td>175.687</td>
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<td>202.078</td>
<td>214.754</td>
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<td>40.649</td>
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<td>29.672</td>
<td>35.230</td>
<td>35.457</td>
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<td>OTRAS RAMAS</td>
<td>2.541</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>2.029</td>
<td>1.715</td>
<td>1.232</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPERIOR</td>
<td>112.388</td>
<td>119.830</td>
<td>130.902</td>
<td>130.707</td>
<td>132.466</td>
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<td>NO DECLARADO</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>1.289</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>1.341</td>
<td>1.109</td>
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<tr>
<td>VENEZUELA</td>
<td>10.553.980</td>
<td>10.886.308</td>
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<td>11.571.517</td>
<td>11.918.368</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANALFABETAS</td>
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<td>1.197.211</td>
<td>1.170.883</td>
<td>1.142.679</td>
<td>1.104.470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIN NIVEL</td>
<td>222.182</td>
<td>225.823</td>
<td>218.659</td>
<td>232.671</td>
<td>234.291</td>
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<td>4.710.840</td>
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<td>2.311.824</td>
<td>2.398.150</td>
<td>2.485.777</td>
<td>2.580.312</td>
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<tr>
<td>4to AÑO y MAS</td>
<td>1.299.440</td>
<td>1.380.252</td>
<td>1.494.220</td>
<td>1.631.694</td>
<td>1.749.947</td>
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<tr>
<td>TECNICA</td>
<td>162.744</td>
<td>149.495</td>
<td>166.613</td>
<td>177.531</td>
<td>171.065</td>
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<td>NORMAL</td>
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<td>128.420</td>
<td>128.741</td>
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<td>139.359</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPERIOR</td>
<td>851.750</td>
<td>912.281</td>
<td>990.993</td>
<td>1.074.763</td>
<td>1.209.021</td>
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POBLACION VENEZOLANA
OCIDENTE DEL PAIS
ANO 1990

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FUENTE: OFICINA CENTRAL DE ESTADISTICA E INFORMATICA (O.C.E.I.)
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FUENTE: OFICINA CENTRAL DE ESTADISTICA E INFORMATICA (O.C.E.I.)
CENSO 1990
FECHA: MAYO, 1992
Section V

THE TOURIST MARKET

At present, the main domestic and foreign tourist destinations are the beach resorts (eastern), the Andean high country (western), the Selva, Orinoco and Angel Falls (southern), and the beautiful city of Caracas (central). These destinations are described in the Avensa Brochure attached.

Specific destinations are described in detail in the Hilary Branch travel article, pages 571-609 and an extensive list of national parks and monuments is identified in Appendix E1.

Ecoplan data shows a median trip length of 2.9 days on domestic tourism for recreation purposes. The peak period is October - February which accounts for 70% of the year.

Domestic travel in Venezuela totaled 3.64 million persons in 1990/91 of which 77.2% was for pleasure and family visits.

Hotels account for a small percent of domestic tourist accommodations (9.62%).

Foreign tourism in 1990 totaled 524K. The big pieces; North America at 56.5%, Europe at 41.4%. Monthly arrivals show dominant activity in January, February and December which account for 34% of the year. It is a relatively even seasonality during the year with two peaks (See D1 and Table 5-14), one in winter and one in summer. It is dual season tourism like Florida.

Venezuela shares in a world tourism market which aggregates 3% in South America (See Figure 1).

Promotion expenditures are modest in Venezuela ($2.0 million per year), exceeded by ten Carribean countries (See Table 5).
The trend of tourism is shown in Figure 3. It shows a compound growth rate of 13.3% per year for the 6 years 1984-1990 which is a dramatic gain from a low base. Principal sources of tourism by city are shown in Table B5. Miami and New York City account for 30% of the total. Median visit is 7.7 days (See Table 2-14).

Venezuelan hotel occupancy in 1990 was 40%, supply of rooms 27,765, and percent staying in hotels 72.1%. Zulia hotel rooms total 4,667; Maracaibo, 1,465.

Projections of Venezuelan tourism for different growth rates are calculated as follows (See Figure 10):

<table>
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<th>Annual Growth Rate</th>
<th>Year 1997</th>
<th>Year 2002</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>640K</td>
<td>781K</td>
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<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>707K</td>
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<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>781K</td>
<td>1,163K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>862K</td>
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</table>
Rise. With the help of the highest cable car in the world. Prepare yourself in Merida, Caracas where history sleeps in the shadow of skyscrapers,

WESTERN

to rise 16,450 feet to Espejo Peak. Admire the sturdy frailejones, a unique flower that grows only above the tree line. Breathe that clean mountain air on top of the world, where the Andes are capped with snow year-round. And those clear fresh water lakes are speckled with trout. Relax in a mountain inn, like Los Frailes. Explore the rustic beauty of native Indian villages, visit the museum in Trujillo, then bring back some memories of our culture, in precious metal, cloth or wood. Find Jaji, the town where even time stands still. As it does in the dunes of Coro. Salute the majesty of Lake Maracaibo, with its seven-mile bridge, and a forest of black oil wells growing on its surface. Choose from four and nine-day packages.

makes it all come true. In the daylight hours, ride the cable-car to Mt. Avila for sightseeing, or cheer the thoroughbreds at Rinconada. Entertain yourself with soccer or baseball. Capitalize on the great exchange rate by shopping at CCT, a city of shops, take a trip around the zoo, or crane your neck at the Planetarium. Leave some room for history by visiting the cathedrals and museums. When the sun sets, put on your dancing shoes. Caracas is alight with night clubs, piano bars, gourmet restaurants, spontaneous street shows, and concerts. Or spend a quiet evening at the theatre or the ballet. It's all yours, in four, five and eight-day packages.
Daydream. In a sun-soaked region where the temperature floats between 75° and 85°.

Wonder. At the vision that is Caroni Falls (above) or Angel Falls, world's highest cascade.

EASTERN

Languish on the resort beaches of Margarita/Portlar (save an afternoon for inspired shopping in the free port). Dive or snorkel for sheer delight in the neon of Caribbean reef fish. Cruise the canals of Higuerote, drifting between plantations of mangrove trees. Or explore the Castle of San Antonio at Cumana, or Araya, at Las Salinas. Discover the underground world of Guarcharo Cave in Caripita. Salute the sunset on the bay at Juan Griego, or the sudden flight of the nearly extinct scarlet ibis at La Restinga Laguna. Take it all in from the seaside cafes at Puerto La Cruz. Wherever you go in the Eastern Region, you'll find the sun, and lush green mountains. Drift for four, five, or eight days by the Caribbean Sea.

SOUTHERN

rising 3300 feet from the primal jungle floor. [Pictured on the cover.] Make the journey by 10-man canoe up the Carrao. Or by jeep, if you want to see the virgin jungle close up. Either way, the Falls that American adventurer Jimmy Angel discovered in 1937 will cast their spell. Return, to reflect at Camp Canaima, where Nature is a respected friend. Our comfortable cabins are a touch of civilization in a leafy world of wildly colored birds and flowering trees. Dine out of doors on fresh fish and barbeque. Browse the open-air gift shops and select some Indian crafts to make the journey home with you. Then sit by the calm tea-colored lagoon, and breathe in the peace of the Tepuy Mountains. You'll be serenaded by the seven waterfalls of La Hacha. The mighty Orinoco River, which flows the length of Venezuela, provides percussion.

Choose your package; two, three, or five days of wonder.
EXCURSIONS FROM CARACAS

La Guaira

Ten minutes from Caracas’s international airport at Maiquetía is the busy port of La Guaira, a colonial delight steeped in history. Plaza Vargas, with its statue of José María Vargas, a Guaireño who was Venezuela’s third president, is a good place from which to begin explorations. Plaza Vargas is bounded by Calle Bolívar running between the shore road and the mountain. Lined by the cool and cavernous warehouses of another century’s trade and by one- and two-story houses with their colonial windows and red-tiled roofs, the street funnels the sea breezes like voices from a more gracious age. One of the most important old buildings is the Casa Guipuzcoana, on the main shore road. Built in 1734, it was the largest civic structure of the colony, housing first the Basque company which held a trading monopoly for 50 years, then the Customs. Restored as a cultural center, it is now the Vargas District Town Hall.

The Boulton Museum (031-25921), a tall house with an ample wooden balcony, stands behind the Casa Guipuzcoana. Inside is a treasury of maps, paintings, pistols, documents, and miscellanea collected by the family of John Boulton, which has occupied the house for over 140 years. The young Englishman who came to Venezuela in 1826 at age 20 soon became a leading exporter of coffee, cacao, tobacco, and indigo, bringing in return flour, oil, brandy, and china. Open Tuesday through Friday 9:30 A.M. to 1 P.M. and 3 to 6 P.M., Saturday and Sunday, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M.

Macuto

Macuto has been the seaside town favored by presidents since Guzmán Blanco had a railway built from Caracas in the 1880s (not even the track remains today). The presidential residence, La Guzmanía, is on Plaza Andrés Mata, named for the writer who brought the doves here. Closed to traffic, the Paseo Macuto is a tree-shaded walk where beach-goers enjoy their ease and eating (lovely on weekdays).

The Reverón Museum (Tuesday through Saturday 8 A.M. to noon and 2 to 5 P.M., Sunday, 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.), beside the Quince Letras Hotel, preserves the seaside refuge of Macuto’s wild genius Armando Reverón (1889–1954) whose light-filled paintings hang in the National Gallery. He made not only stuffed dolls for use as models, but also benches, spoons, and painting tools.

Beaches

Breakwaters, changing rooms, and lifeguards are essentials at the half-dozen public beaches (open 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. daily) strung along an otherwise rocky coast from Macuto east to Los Caracas. The nicest and least crowded balnearios are also the farthest away. From west to east: Macuto, Camuri Chico, Macuto Sheraton, Naiguatá, and Los Angeles. Swimming is prohibited on all “wild” beaches because of dangerous currents. The coast road, however, with its spectacular succession of mountains and breakers, is a superb drive, again on weekdays only (order a pargo, red snapper, at any of the seaside restaurants). Between Los Caracas, a workers’ vacation
resort, and Higuerote are 50 miles of undeveloped coast with no facilities. Parts of the road are unpaved and there are some streams still without bridges, but lovely panoramas alternate with good beaches in Tadasana, La Sabana, and Chuspa.

Miranda State

Miranda State, curving around the Federal District, covers a large part of metropolitan Caracas. Definitely worth a visit for its charming houses, plaza, church, and craft shops is El Hatillo, once a separate village (like Petare, which has also been restored).

Los Teques, state capital about 15 miles west of Caracas on the Pan American Highway, is now a bedroom city, along with San Antonio de Los Altos. The mountains around Los Teques were once the territory of the Teques Indians, whose heroic chief Guacaipuro, killed by Spaniards in 1568, is portrayed in a bronze statue on Plaza Guacaipuro. If you want to visit the hilly hideout of IVIC, the national scientific research station at Km 21, before Los Teques, and see its archaeology collection and artworks by Soto, Marisol, and Otero, call 746554.

Colonia Tovar

Forty miles west of Caracas over the mountains is a "Black Forest" village. For 100 years after the colony’s founding in 1843, the Bavarian immigrants were isolated on their farms here. Today the route is a pleasant excursion (1½ hours by car) on weekdays, but jammed on Sundays. At 5,860 feet, Colonia Tovar is a cool mountain resort, very popular for its hearty German food, sausages, flowers, vegetable gardens, and homemade jams. Daily por puestos to Colonia Tovar leave Caracas from the terminal at Plaza Catia and also on Av. Lecuna opposite the Nuevo Circo.

San Mateo

A 20-mile paved road winds from Colonia Tovar down to join the Caracas-Valencia highway at La Victoria. A few miles west in the fertile Aragua valley is San Mateo, the centuries-old hacienda of the Bolivar family, where Simón grew up and read with his freethinking tutor. To this sugar plantation he brought his young Spanish bride (Bolivar, 18, never remarried after she died of yellow fever within six months of their wedding). Now restored as the San Mateo Historical Museum and Bolivar Ingenio or sugar mill (Tuesday through Sunday, 8 A.M. to noon and 2 to 5 P.M.), the hacienda is also famous as the site where a young patriot, Antonio Ricaurte, blew up the armory, the enemy, and himself in 1814.

Guatopo

Guatopo, 40 miles south of Caracas on the Santa Teresa-Altogracia road, is Miranda State’s National Park. Heavily forested, Guatopo’s slopes rise to nearly 5,000 feet, giving birth to many streams feeding Guanapito and Lagartijo reservoirs. At Agua Blanca, an old sugar mill, there are shelters, picnic grates, and bathing pools. For bird watchers, botanists, and bug hunters, this is a favorite sanctuary. Information about hikes and camping can be obtained at La Macanilla ranger station, located 25 miles south of Santa Teresa on the highway that crosses the park. The park guards will issue permits and direct you to nature trails.
MARGARITA AND LOS ROQUES ARCHIPELAGO

Now a major target for international sun-seekers, Margarita Island (373 square miles) has long been a favorite resort of Venezuelans for its lovely beaches, picturesque towns, colonial churches, and forts. Together with the smaller, undeveloped islands of Cubagua and Coche, it forms the state of Nueva Esparta (population 200,000). Another 70 islands, mostly uninhabited, are grouped administratively as Federal Dependencies. The islands closest to Margarita are Los Frailes, Los Testigos, La Blanquilla, Los Hermanos, and La Tortuga. Venezuela even owns a tiny island 300 miles north of Margarita, Isla de Aves, opposite Dominica. Anyone lucky enough to explore the archipelagoes of Los Roques or Las Aves will dream for months of turquoise waters, dazzling beaches, coral reefs...

Margarita (a name which means "pearl" in Greek) was a prized Spanish possession. The year after Columbus landed on the mainland in 1498 and reported Indians wearing pearls, an expedition to Cubagua plundered 80 pounds of pearls. In the "pearl stampede" unleashed by these fortune-seekers from Santo Domingo, Spaniards founded Nueva Cadiz, the first settlement in South America in 1500 on Cubagua. But like the Indians, who were brutally enslaved as pearl divers, Nueva Cadiz was short-lived. Its foundations can still be seen but otherwise the island is barren and Nueva Esparta's pearl beds largely destroyed.

Spanish forts built to protect Margarita from pirates, and colonial churches dating back to 1570, compete for the visitor's time with free port shopping in Porlamar, beaches, water sports, island hopping, and now dog racing at the Magic Isle amusement center near Pampatar.

Exploring Margarita

Old Porlamar, founded in 1536, has been swamped by the boom in shops and commercial hotels since the area became a free port. In the current recession, however, imports have dwindled and the selection is rather poor. Most shops are concentrated between Calle Igualdad and Calle Zamora, higher priced goods on Av. 4 de Mayo and Av. Santiago Mariño. A shopping mall, Boulevard Guevara, links Plaza Bolivar and the market, in itself a lively center for fresh foods and dry goods. Many taxi and por puesto lines start west of the market; also from Plaza Bolivar. Four blocks east of shady Plaza Bolivar is the Francisco Narvaez Contemporary Art Museum, named after the sculptor whose works are found on the shopping mall and in the Bella Vista Hotel grounds.

You should start exploring Margarita from Pampatar. On the way, stop at the sixteenth-century church in Los Robles, home of the golden Virgin of El Pilar. Pampatar bay is dominated by the fort of San Carlos de Borrero, built of coral rock in 1664–84. Opposite it is the colonial church of Santisimo Cristo, with a curious bell tower. The seascapes and views of the coast are splendid from El Vigia Morro past Pampatar.

Near Pampatar a giant amusement park, the Magic Isle, has been built by the national racing institute. A novelty attraction is evening greyhound racing, held Thurs.-Sun. at 8 P.M. Only canidrome in Venezuela, the dog track with its 400 greyhounds and air-conditioned kennels, is managed by a U.S. company. Big daytime draws are a huge Ferris wheel and a giant roller coaster. Cockfights are held at the Galleria Monumental.
SOUTH AMERICA

Just outside Porlamar is El Valle, a site of a great annual pilgrimage on the feast day (Sept. 8) of the Virgin of the Valley. El Valle was Margarita's first capital, founded in 1529. Today it is a sales center for souvenirs and crafts, from hammocks to dolls. From here, take the sierra road 7 miles to La Asunción, capital of Nueva Esparta State. The mountain route climbs into El Copey National Park, giving spectacular views of island, sea, and even the mainland, before dropping down to Castillo Santa Rosa, which dominates La Asunción. The seventeenth-century fort had dungeons and tunnels to the San Francisco Convent, now the Government House, and to the sixteenth-century Cathedral. Even older than Asunción (1565), nearby Santa Ana dates back to 1530. A charming, shady town, it is noted for a very handsome church. Many of its trees are the blue-flowering guayacán or lignum vitae, one of the hardest woods known.

If you rent a car, you can circle Margarita, making side trips to beaches such as Guacuco's, Cardón, and El Tirano. Playa El Agua, near the island's northern tip, is famous for its fine sands, gentle surf, and coconut palms. Head north to Manzanillo, a fishing village and beach, then follow the highway down the southwest coast to wild Guayacán and Puerto Viejo before reaching the picturesque bay of Juangriego.

Oysters abound among the mangroves of La Restinga Lagoon, a national park in the narrow waist which joins Margarita's populous east to the western mountains of Macanáo Peninsula. Boatmen take bathers miles through mangrove canals to the Restinga barrier reef on La Guardia Bay. Dry and hot, Macanáo Peninsula has scattered fishing villages, mostly without tourist facilities. However, a paved road around the peninsula makes an interesting drive.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR MARGARITA ISLAND

GETTING TO MARGARITA. By air, Margarita has an international airport 18 miles southwest of Porlamar. Flights flies direct from New York; foreign charters come from the U.S. and Canada; Aeropostal stops on its Trinidad run. Internal flights, as many as 12 daily by Avensa and Aeropostal, link Margarita with Maiquetía, Cumaná, Carúpano, Guiria, Tucupita, Ciudad Guayana, Maracaibo, Acarigua, Valencia, and Barcelona. Airport taxis to Porlamar ($7) may be scarce, but rental agencies abound.

By bus. Express coaches leave Caracas—some driving through the night to catch the early ferry from Puerto La Cruz to arrive by mid-morning at the Porlamar bus terminal in Centro Comercial Bella Vista. Express Camargui (02-541-0364), recommends purchasing tickets 2 days in advance. Also Union Conductores Margarita (02-545-0124). Fare of $10 includes ferry.

Ferries. Three lines serve Margarita from Puerto La Cruz and Cumaná; all are crowded on long weekends and holidays. Con Ferry makes 6 crossings daily from Puerto La Cruz and 2 from Cumaná with passengers and up to 150 cars per ferry. Reservations should be pre-paid for both ways; return fare for car is about $20, for passengers about $8. In Margarita the Con Ferry office is opposite Bella Vista Hotel (095-616780). In Caracas, Torre Banhioriente, Av. Acacias at Casanova (02-781-6688 and 782-8544); Puerto La Cruz, Los Cocos terminal (081-660468); Cumaná (093-661903). Three Cruces Cruises vessel speed to Margarita from Puerto La Cruz (081-692301) in a little over 2 hours, at 7 A.M. and 1 P.M., carrying up to 350 passengers but no cars. Naviacur (Naviacuri) crosses 4 hours from Cumaná (093-26230), stopping at Araya Peninsula. The two-deck ferries carry 60 cars. No credit cards and no reservations, but you can buy your ticket a day ahead.

GETTING AROUND. Cheap buses and per pueblos go from Porlamar to all towns in the northeastern half of the island where the popular beaches and most hotels are located. To explore the west, Macanáo Peninsula, and La Restinga Lagoon, a car is best. Rentals at airport, from 6:30 A.M. Acción (095-691022); Maracay (095-691113); Hertz (095-691074); Kidsy Motor (095-691128); National Car (095-691171, Budget (095-691047); Radiant Rental (095-691142).
VENEZUELA


PUNTA CARDON. Playa Cardón. Moderate. Bahia del Tirano (095-48242). 2-story wooden hotel built on bluff, 45 rooms with balcony facing sea breeze; short walk to beach; good seafood restaurant; reservations in Caracas (02-333771/3).


RESTAURANTS. For definitions of price categories see "Facts at Your Fingertips." In Margarita, where PORLAMAR's hotels provide the best international menus and disco dancing, many small, inexpensive restaurants serve good fresh fish and local dishes. Some of the better ones are: El Chipí on Calle Cedeno, La Casa de Robles, L'Ete (French), La Lobia (Italian), La Pimienta (Spanish), La Talauquera (steak), and Martín Pescador (seafood)—all on Av. 4 de Mayo.

Nightclubs in PORLAMAR are headed by the Hotel Concorde's Stella Maris. Other spots with live music are: Casa Blanca, Calle Jesús María Páez; and Fandango Tanga, Av. 4 de Mayo. Pimenton, Soho Pub, and Vladimiro's offer food and shows.
COCHE AND CUBAGUA

Coche and Cubagua, south of Margarita, are reached from Punta de Piedras. A ferry goes about 9 miles to San Pedro, Coche’s only town. Fresh water is piped to Coche and Margarita from the mainland. The island which produces fish and salt is hilly and suffered less from the earthquake and tidal wave which wiped out Cubagua in 1541. Excavations on Cubagua revealed Spanish pillars, foundations of Nueva Cadiz, and large, buried pots filled with pearls. Cubagua, 5 miles long, is smaller than Coche and has no water.

LOS FRAILES

Los Frailes Archipelago, off Margarita’s northeast coast, is a group of 8 islands bare of life except for birds. Snorklers and bird watchers go over for the day by fishing boat from Puerto Fermín.

LA BLANQUILLA AND LOS HERMANOS ISLANDS

Some 70 miles north northwest of Margarita, these islands lie in crystal clear waters. Their white coral beaches, coves, and reefs of unspoiled beauty are compared by those who know to the Virgin Islands of 30 years ago. La Blanquilla, inhabited by one or two fishermen, has a landing strip. Morgan Tours and Alpi Tour in Caracas fly visitors in for the day, about 1½ hours from Caracas by twin engine craft. No shelter for overnighting. Motorsailers make the crossing overnight from Puerto La Cruz. Inquire with Yachts, Marina America Vespacio, El Morro Tourist Complex (081-813393); the cost of a 4-day sail to La Blanquilla is $100 a day per passenger (min. 6). Intervac (031-945555, ext. 385 Melia Hotel) runs exploring and fishing trips from Caraballeda on the central coast to Blanquilla. Trips start at three days, and cost from $500 for four people.

LA TORTUGA

About 125 miles northeast of La Guaira, La Tortuga is only one hour’s flight from Caracas by small plane. Pilot Linda Sónderman of Alpi Tour describes La Tortuga in one word: “magnificent.” The price tag for a day on La Tortuga, by air charter from Caracas, is about $150, all-inclusive, per person (group of five).

LOS ROQUES ARCHIPELAGO

Los Roques Archipelago, 90 miles north of La Guaira, curves in a great necklace of coral islands around a central lagoon in what is Venezuela’s largest group of islands—40 with names, 300 coral keys and outcrops unnamed and uninhabited. Los Roques was made a National Park in 1972. Gran Roque, the biggest island, has a pueblo and airstrip. Fishermen depend on their small craft known as peñeros. Well-heeled visitors arrive on their planes or yachts. The archipelago’s wealth of birds, fish, lobster, and turtles has been famous for centuries. Although the lobsters have been overexploited, like the green turtle, they are still available in season, Oct. to Mar. Before the arrival of Europeans, Indians came from the mainland in dugouts to harvest the turtles and their eggs at mating season, the booby chicks at breeding time, and maybe even the fat black lizards which are found only here. These early inhabitants left behind huge mounds of queen conch shells (the Bototos are still a favored food of Roqueños), pottery vessels, and clay deities. Archaeological excavations on Dos Mosquises in 1982–1986 uncovered vessels, pots, shell tools, adornments (and a skeleton) of these early navigators. There is a marine biology station on Dos Mosquises run by the Fundación Científica Los Roques (02–326771).
PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR LOS ROQUES ARCHIPELAGO

GETTING TO LOS ROQUES. Today, through most of the leading tour agencies (see Treks and Adventure Tours in "Facts at Your Fingertips"), a visitor with $100 can get to once-inaccessible keys (and back, reluctantly) on 6-, 8-, or 12-seater private planes. Regular flights are now operated by Aerotuy (02—262—1966, fax 261—8894) on turbo-props departing Maiquetia Tues. through Sun. at 8 a.m and returning at 6 p.m. Besides day-long swimming and snorkeling excursions, the airline can also arrange stays on Gran Roque for $80 per day which includes food, lodging, boat rides, and bonefishing. CAVE, a charter line, operates flights to Los Roques for a day of sunning or boating, Thurs. to Sun., $85. Call Diadema tours (02—724856/8, fax 724556).

Good news for those wishing to stay longer: houseboats and even houses are rented. Consult Linda Sonderman at Alpi (02—284—1344/6677) or Miguel Arjona (02—941—8498, telex 02—29287), who can arrange packages for 4 to 5 people.

THE CARIBBEAN COAST

Along the ribbon of Venezuela’s 1,730-mile seacoast, broad sandy stretches alternate with rocky shores where mountains plunge steeply into the Caribbean, sheltering hideaway bays. Many of these are popular bathing spots; some lack roads even today and so have no visitors. A few, such as Tucacas, Cata, Choroni, Higuerote, and Lecheras, combine picturesque postcard beaches with hotels and good roads. These are very crowded in the high season, from the year-end holidays to Carnival and Easter, when city people take advantage of the dry season and fresh winds to camp out on the beaches. (Belongings and tents are never left unattended to avoid theft.) Below, some of the main points of interest along the coast are reviewed, traveling from west to east.

ZULIA STATE

Maracaibo, capital of Zulia State, is one of the few cities where Indians retaining their culture may be seen. Stoutly independent, western Zulia was long isolated before the Rafael Urdaneta bridge was built in 1962, spanning the five-mile neck of Lake Maracaibo. The waters of the lake, largest in South America (5,400 square miles), grow saltier each year because of dredging done to allow passage of large oil tankers. A forest of oil derricks on the lake is only a small part of Zulia’s network producing 60 percent of Venezuela’s oil and gas. Now, since vast forests and wetlands south of the lake have been converted into farms and dairy pastures, Zulia also leads in milk production. Unfortunately, pesticides, sewage, and oil have contaminated the lake and it is not fit for bathing.

Venezuela’s largest city after Caracas, sprawling Maracaibo has over a million inhabitants, who are called Maracuchos. The city’s distinctive personality comes from a mingling of oil executives, ranchers, and on-the-go merchants, with Italian and Colombian immigrants (many of the latter illegal), fishermen, and nomad Guajirros. Despite the heat (median 86°F), Maracuchos are active and aggressive in business, preferring to make money instead of talking about politics. A thriving cultural life supports a Fine Arts Center, art shows, and music festivals. A week-long Feria in mid-November honors La Chinita, a tiny painted picture of the Virgin of Chiquinquirá which appeared miraculously in 1749 on a bit of driftwood
SOUTH AMERICA

salvaged by a woman who lived at a spot today called El Milagro, by the lake.

Guajira Peninsula

The longest and widest beaches are in the west on the desolate Guajira Peninsula which borders the Gulf of Venezuela. Near the Paraguaipoa road, hard flat sands and shallow waters are playgrounds for the Guajiro Indians who live in both Venezuela and Colombia. Men ride bicycles through the water's edge and children splash with abandon while women in long flowing mantas walk calmly into the waves. The Guajiros not only herd cattle, goats, and sheep in the arid scrubland, but also engage in a certain amount of the smuggling which has long supported border trade with Maicao in Colombia. Today this is a truly dangerous occupation since the growth of cocaine traffic. The "wild west" frontier is not recommended for tourists.

The Guajiro market at Los Filíos, just outside Paraguaipoa, is a fascinating, teeming event held every Monday, well worth the sixty-mile drive from Maracaibo. Hundreds of Indians converge at dawn, arriving by burro and by battered trucks over the rough peninsula trails, to buy meat, plantains, and dry goods and to barter horses and goats. By noon, all trading finished, the stalls are empty. It is possible to buy here some of the brightly woven belts and saddlebags which are the pride of Guajiro men, or straw hats, calabash bowls, hammocks, and other artifacts. The floor-length mantas worn by the women are often made of polyester nowadays instead of cotton. The men, who wear little more than a shirt and loincloth, are excellent weavers and cattlemen. Guajiro society, organized in family clans, is matriarchal; a man may pay many cows to marry the bride of his choice. In the Chichamaya dance, it is the woman who pursues the man and the woman who wears the clan sign painted on her arm.

Quite famous now is Guajiro tapestry artist Luis Montiel, whose biggest piece, considered the most important craftwork in Latin America, is the sixty-six-foot by twenty-two-and-a-half-foot theater curtain for Maracaibo's Centro de Bellas Artes. His workshop, Taller Mali Mai, may be visited from 5 A.M. to 5 P.M., to find it, take a left turn for Yaguasirú some four miles along the Los Filíos-Maicao road.

Sinamaica Lagoon, midway between Maracaibo and Paraguaipoa, has a large community of houses built on stilts. These "palafitos" have scarcely changed in the 500 years since they inspired Spanish geographer Ojeda to baptize the coast "Little Venice" or Venezuela. The lake-dwellers here are Paraujano Indians and mestizos who use reeds to make roofs, room-dividers, and sleeping mats. Boat tours of Sinamaica to El Barro village, where there is a tourist restaurant, leave from Puerto Mara on Rio Limón and from Puerto Cuervito (see the Wednesday morning floating market), south of Sinamaica village.

Maracaibo

The Basílica of Chiquinquirí rises west of the eight-block-long Paseo de Ciencias park filled with sculptures. At the east end is Plaza Bolívar, flanked by the modern Municipal Council, the eighteenth-century Casa Morales where Spain's last general in Venezuela surrendered in 1823 (now seat of the Academy of History, open Mon.-Fri. 8 to 11:45 A.M. and 2:30 to 5:45 P.M.), and the Government House or Palacio de las Aguilas, named for its rooftop eagles. A remnant of old Maracaibo with its narrow streets and low houses in a rainbow of colors survives around Santa Lucia
Church. Close by are the Guajiro crafts stalls on Calle 96 at Av. El Milagro and Turismo del Trópico souvenirs, Av. El Milagro at Calle 93. The old Central Market on Plaza Baralt has been restored as a cultural center while a larger Mercado de las Pulgas (flea market) now spreads several blocks south of Calle 100. From the docks by the market, a ferry service of flechas or launches leaves hourly for the eastern shore of Lake Maracaibo (from 5:30 A.M. to 6 P.M.), crossing in fifteen minutes.

The Centro de Bellas Artes is on Calle 68A in Bella Vista, not far from the Hotel del Lago. It offers something for everyone: a painter's flea market the first Sunday of each month, concerts on Thursdays at 8:30 P.M., plays in English by the Maracaibo Players. The theater curtain donated by the Players is the famous twenty-two-color Guajiro tapestry made by Luis Montiel. More Guajiro weaving, rugs, cushions, as well as fine hammocks and baskets, are sold at the Center's Taller Mali Mai showroom (Mon.-Fri. 9 A.M. to noon and 2 to 6 P.M.; Sat. 9 A.M. to noon).

San Carlos Fortress

San Carlos Fortress, on an island at the entrance to Lake Maracaibo, saw action against foreign ships as recently as 1903, but for most of its 300 years the fort held Venezuelan prisoners. Cells within its double walls were last used in the 1930s by dictator Gómez. The twenty-five-minute trip by ten-passenger launch from El Moján, north of Maracaibo, makes a good excursion. There are no facilities but plenty of sun and sandy beaches and a village on stilts rising over the dry sands on the point.

Machiques and Tukuko Mission

Machiques and Tukuko Mission, west of Lake Maracaibo, formed a double spearhead in the very recent opening of virgin lands fiercely defended by the Motilón and Yucpa tribes until the mid-1950s. Machiques, seventy-seven miles south of Maracaibo, is today a dairy center where a million quarts of milk are processed daily into cheese, butter, and dried milk. Deep in former Yucpa territory, which is now lush, though largely cleared, cattle country, the Capuchin base of Tukuko is reached by a little-traveled road branching from Machiques thirty miles to the southwest. While ranchers fought the Indians with guns, planes, and fire, the priests pacified them with airdrops of food and presents. In the land struggle, however, many of the Indians retreated farther into the Perijá mountains or died. The mission boarding school receives 300 children. Besides a crafts display, there is a shop stocked with baskets, arrows.

From Machiques south to La Fria (150 miles), the route—crossing lands stripped of forest—is hot, empty, and with few services.

No one has been able to explain the cause of almost permanent lightning over the mouth of the Catatumbo River; the noiseless flashes are seen from as far away as Maracaibo and San Antonio.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR ZULIA

HOTELS. For definitions of price categories see "Facts at Your Fingertips." MARACAIBO. Most of Maracaibo's hotels offer efficient, highrise lodgings for businessmen, mainly in the center. Del Lago. Deluxe. Av. El Milagro (061-912022). On the lake shore, 364 well-appointed rooms in the hotel and new tower annex, pool, gym, sauna, jogging path, restaurants, bar, convention-banquet facilities; shops, car rental, travel agency; an Inter-Continental Hotel. Reservations in Caracas (02-208-7243). El Paseo. Deluxe. Av. El Milagro at Av. 2 (061-919744). New 12-story tower with 54 suites each with 3 double beds and divan; small pool, cafete-
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CABIMAS. Cabimas Internacional. Deluxe. Av. Andrés Bello, sector Ambrosio (064–45692). On east shore of lake with great view, a businessman’s haven, 127 rooms and suites, La Terraza restaurant by pool, discotheque, banquet-convention facility for 400, bank, car rental agency; 45 minutes by car from Maracaibo; also, a helicopter service can take you to Maracaibo (8 minutes).

FALCÓN STATE

Colonial Coro

Whitewashed walls sparkle in the sun while in the shady parks of this truly charming colonial town a constant breeze stirs. One of the earliest settlements in South America and first capital of the Province of Venezuela, Coro was founded in 1527 at the base of the Paraguá Peninsula, and its Arawak name means “wind.” East winds continue to form the médanos or dunes which cover the narrow isthmus, now a national park. Here it is common to see camels crossing the sands carrying tourists from Los Médanos Hotel.

When the first gold seekers failed to find El Dorado, Coro nearly died; its aqueduct built in Indian times dried up. But fortunes improved in the 1700s when Coro became chief supplier for Bonaire and Curacao, only sixty-five miles distant. Since trade was reserved for the royal monopoly, all the food, tobacco, hides, and mules which Coro exported were contraband and highly profitable. The goods were shipped from the port of La Vela de Coro, a few miles east. Still standing in the now quiet port is the old customs house, a handsome 2-story building (early 1600s) now occupied by a marine biology school.

Leaving La Vela de Coro at midnight on Mon. and Wed., the 3,000-ton “Almirante Brion” ferry sails for Curacao and Aruba. Drivers wishing to take cars on the ferry should be at Muaco Dock at 6 P.M. Ferrys del Caribe recommends booking a week in advance; consult their offices (weekdays only) about requirements for vehicle insurance and police clearance—Coro (068–510554), La Vela de Coro (068–78328).

The capital of Falcón State, Coro (population 140,000) today prospers on farming, raising onions and melons with irrigation. But the way is being prepared for tourism. Several eighteenth-century houses have been beautifully restored. Most are near the Plaza de San Clemente with its old chapel and a wooden cross made of Cuji so hard it is called ironwood; it is said the cross was used at the first mass held by Amapes in 1527. Santa Ana, now Coro’s Cathedral, was one of the first two churches in Venezuela, along with La Asunción in Margarita, both begun in 1538.

The Casa del Sol, so named for the sun design on its door, at Calle Zamora and Federación (Mon.–Fri. 8 A.M. to noon and 2 to 6 P.M.); opposite, the two-story Arcaya House with its roofed balcony contains a Ceramics Museum exhibiting not only colonial and pre-Columbian pottery but
many dinosaur fossils (Tue. 9 A.M. to noon, Wed.-Fri. 4 to 7 P.M., Sat.-Sun. 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.). Farther down Calle Zamora is the House of the Iron Windows, much photographed for its superb baroque doorway (Sat., Sun., and holidays, 7 to 11 A.M. and 2 to 4 P.M.). Next to it is the Casa del Tesoro, whose name means "treasure house" because beneath it runs one of the secret tunnels where colonists once hid valuables from marauding pirates. The spacious cloisters of a former convent, also on Calle Zamora, now house the fine Diocesan Museum of colonial furniture, art, bells, and religious objects of gold and silver (Tues.-Sun. 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. and 3 to 6 P.M.; admission is Bs. 5).

Santa Ana, Moruy, and Pueblo Nuevo

More colonial houses on the peninsula, conserved by the near-desert climate and by generations of occupants, are located some thirty-five miles north of Coro in the villages of Santa Ana (see the fortress-like church), Moruy, and Pueblo Nuevo—where each house is painted a different color.

From the thorny brush of eastern Paraguana, home to more goats than people, to the modern avenues, supermarkets, and oil refineries on the west coast, the distance is only twenty-five miles, but culturally the gap is more on a scale of light years. In Santa Ana, women still turn goat's milk into cheese and milk fudge, the delicious dulce de leche coriana; in Cardón and Amuay, engineers refine crude in huge cracking towers. None of the gardens and palm trees existed before the oilmen came here forty years ago; Punto Fijo now has 70,000 people. In the north, the peninsula is a wilderness of cactus where sandy tracks lead to dazzling salt beds and to Cape San Román, where pelicans feed off fishermen's nets and shell collectors on rocky shores between cliffs find treasures such as the rare music volute. Shelling is also good on the gentle west coast beaches of Villa Marina and El Pico. On the east coast, bathers head for the beaches of Adiaco, Supí, and Bucucho, protected from the rough sea breakers by coral reefs. These beaches have few facilities.

Morrocoy: Shore and Marine Park

Beach-goers, following a good road east through Falcón State, come next to the fabulous Morrocoy National Park. Some 155 miles from Caracas, Morrocoy is a favorite destination not only for snorkelers, divers, and water skiers, but for bird watchers as well. Here is a naturalist's delight of four ecosystems: the thirty-odd keys and coral reefs; the mangroves which form impenetrable havens for nesting frigate birds and the rare coastal crocodile; a hilly-point with deciduous trees and fauna such as howler monkeys, crab foxes, anteaters, and ocelots; and salt flats nurturing wading birds—scarlet ibis, pink flamingos, crested herons, cormorants, and thousands of ducks. A levee crosses seven miles over the flats to Chichiriviche (five hotels), launching point for the northern keys.

Tucacas, at the park's eastern edge, is an untidy old town. But it boasts a new resort complex, port facilities, and a yacht-ferry. A bridge links Tucacas with camping grounds on Punta Brava island, where there is parking for motor homes. Fishermen with open boats take parties to any one of the keys; passengers pay upon return, about $17 for a group of eight. A professional diving instructor, Mike Osborn, has his headquarters at Submarit, Calle Ayacucho No. 6 (042-84082 and 02-782-2946, fax 781-6773). He rents scuba gear, gives NAUI courses, and leads diving parties. A day's snorkeling, including equipment and lunch, costs about $15 a person in groups of 4 to 20. Beach trippers take ice chests, picnics (no fires
permitted), and hammocks to the keys. Midges (tiny, biting insects) are bothersome in rainy or windless months, August into December, so windward beaches are the most popular. (Avoid "beaching" on public holidays because of large crowds.)

Continuing along the palm-lined coast to the east are sketchily developed balnearios (beaches open for swimming), where for a small fee bathers can use basic facilities and sling hammocks.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR FALCÓN

HOTELS. For definitions of price categories see "Facts at Your Fingertips" earlier in this chapter.


PARAGUANA PENINSULA. Although the Peninsula has wonderful beaches and unflinching sunshine, there is no tourist development. In Adecuado, on the east coast, cottages can be rented from their owners; Ramón Torres offers 7 basic cabins. On the west coast: Motel Caracas. Inexpensive. Av. de la Costa by Miramar Club (069-404095). 30 rooms overlooking the busy gulf with its fishing and tanker traffic; La Casarita restaurant next door. Like Caracas, Punto Fijo is a refinery town; Presidente. Moderate. Av. Peru (069-453710). 4-story hotel with 51 rooms, restaurant-bar open until 2 a.m., room service. Villa Real. Moderate. Av. Coro No. 75 (069-450213). 110 rooms and 34 apartments on 5 floors, cafeteria closes at 3 p.m., bar open until 1 a.m.


TUCACAS. Good news is the first resort in the area, Morrocoy Conjunto Náutico Residencial. Delite. Tucacas-Coro Highway (042-84806; Caracas 02-9590322). A time-sharing resort with 600 suites, the first part of an ambitious plan to transform the area. Low buildings with suites for 2 to 7 people surround dreamy pool; salon for 1200, restaurants; live entertainment; marina for 600 yachts; island excursions. Reservations through tour agencies only.


CARABOBO, LARA, AND ARAGUA STATES

Puerto Cabello

The coast road passes a huge petrochemical complex at Morón, which marks the boundary of Carabobo State, whose many industries are served by Puerto Cabello. The large natural port is often busier than La Guaira. Stroll along the harborside Paseo Malecón, a park with fountains and cannon, and explore the street behind it, named Calle de Los Lanceros for the patriots who won over this Spanish stronghold by way of the mangroves at the rear, carrying only lances and swimming part of the way. The narrow street, closed to traffic, is flanked by balconied colonial houses. The port's colonial San Felipe Fort, built in 1732, is today surrounded by a naval base. The navy runs a launch across the channel to the fort, and visitors may ride over free. The Malecón also gives onto the large new
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Marina del Caribe with space for 250 yachts. For a sailing cruise to Morrocoy, Los Roques, or as far as Curacao, contact Corporación Marina (041-226794). The company has 48-foot craft docked here and at the Carenero Yacht Club near Higuerote, Miranda State.

A road leads from Puerto Cabello around the harbor to the Naval Base, where the guard issues passes to visit San Felipe Fort. Two fine beaches lie three and seven miles east of Puerto Cabello. The long sandy curve of Quizandal, on the way to the Naval Base, is popular on weekends (showers, soda fountain, dance band). But of greater beauty is an island, fifteen minutes away by open boat (less than $1); the ferryman returns to pick up bathers at a set hour. Isla Larga has dazzling beaches, emerald sea, and two underwater wrecks of World War II cargo ships, now coral-encrusted playgrounds for fish and snorkelers. This is a camper's paradise except during the windless months of Dec. and Jan., when "no-see-um" midges bite at night.

At the end of the shore road (the route returns to the coast again in Miranda State) is Patanemo Bay, a wide crescent beach fringed by coconut groves. There are several resort developments planned here but in the meantime bathers and campers are happy with the present spartan facilities.

The Central Axis: Barquisimeto-Valencia-Maracay

To continue east, drivers must go by the Puerto Cabello-Valencia route, which leads by excellent expressways to the industrial parks and agricultural valleys of Lara, Carabobo, and Aragua States. The cities of Barquisimeto, Valencia, and Maracay form the axis of light industry in these central states. After Caracas and Maracaibo, they are the country's largest cities, with populations of 700,000, 1,100,000, and 810,000 respectively.

Venezuela's only public railway takes people and cargo from Puerto Cabello to Barquisimeto, seventy-seven miles, at an average twenty miles an hour. The train leaves Puerto Cabello at 6 A.M. and 4 P.M., stopping at two stations on the coast, El Palito and Morón. Fast-growing capital of Lara State, dubbed the "music capital" for its many singers and folk bands, Barquisimeto has opened a fine cultural center, the Museo de Barquisimeto, in a restored 1918 mansion on Carrera 15. Ten rooms for exhibitions, including an archaeology collection, surround a colonnaded courtyard where an old chapel is the stage for films, music, and folklore events. When in Barquisimeto, relax in the new fifty-acre Bararida Park on Av. Los Abogados, popular for its zoo, gardens, playgrounds, and boating lagoon.

Historic buildings in Valencia are clustered around the colonial center. The Cathedral on Plaza Bolivar was founded in 1580, rebuilt in 1767, and later added to. A block southeast on Calle Páez is the house of José Antonio Páez, first President of Venezuela; the house is open as a museum. On the same Calle Páez, 4 blocks west, is the State Capitol, housed in a former Carmelite convent built in 1772.

Valencia also boasts the Museo de la Cultura, an ambitious glass and concrete structure with four gallery wings around a central core for theater and conference hall. It is built by the Cabriles River in the downtown Parque Metropolitano (open Tuesday through Friday, 9 A.M. to noon and 2 to 5 P.M; Saturday and Sunday, 10 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.). The Ateneo de Valencia, Av. Bolivar (041-53845), with a full program of plays, films, and exhibitions, has long been the city's artistic focus; open daily 9 A.M. to noon and 3 to 6 P.M.

Besides a race track and a monumental bullring, the second largest in the New World after Mexico City's, other points of interest include a trop-
ical Aquarium with a good collection of fresh-water fish and electric eels, anacondas, and river dolphins. The clear water of the dolphin pool allows a close look at these unusual mammals, which inhabit the Orinoco and many turbid rivers of the Llanos. Paseo Cuatrincipenario, via Valencia-Guataparo (041-89222); open Tues. to Sun. 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.

Carabobo Battlefield, twenty miles from Valencia, surrounds an impressive monument to Independence heroes who defeated the royalist troops here. A scale model of the battle and a diorama show what happened here on June 24, 1821. Soldiers dressed in red patriot uniforms guard the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The diorama is open Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday; the park daily 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. except Monday.

When Valencia was founded in 1553, the year after Barquisimeto, Lake Valencia was twice as big as its present twenty-mile length. Paleontologists, who have unearthed fossils of mastodons, prehistoric sloths, armadillos, early horses, and tapirs, estimate that the lake's level was once fifty-six feet higher. As evidence that the area was later home to a thriving Indian culture stands a hill covered with petroglyphs; the track to this Parque Piedras Pintadas turns west off the Guacara-Vigirima road, crosses the Tronconero River, and, near a tiny schoolhouse, veers north through cornfields towards the hills. Because there are no signs, ask a local inhabitant to guide you.

The shrinking lake, which is today the target of earnest conservation efforts because it has no outlet but many inlets contaminated by industries (swimming is not recommended), is best seen from Punta Palmita on Cabrera Peninsula, a mile or so west of Maracay.

Valencia and Maracay offer beach explorers convenient midway hotels. Since there is no road along the coast between Caracas and Puerto Cabello, drivers take two mountain routes from Maracay to reach Choroni or the palm-fringed crescent bays of Cata and Cuyagua. These roads cross the Cordillera de La Costa through luxuriant cloud forest. Here, in some 430 square miles, the Henri Pittier National Park protects an astonishing variety of fauna and flora, including over 400 different bird species. Scientists from all over the world come to study the natural history of the high, cool jungle known as Rancho Grande Cloud Forest.

Cata Bay

The crescent beach bordering an idyllic bay sports a private apartment tower, eight new duplex cabins for hire, and a simple restaurant. Fishermen provide boat rides to the eastern point and Cañita Bay. Campers may sling hammocks between the palms or pitch a tent on the sands. Three miles back from the sea is old Cata village, once part of a cacao plantation; the cacao pods are harvested up the valley. Lovely Cuyagua beach, eight miles to the east, is still "wild." Surfers like the rough water, but swimmers are wise to stay close to shore.

Choroni

Only thirty miles long, the route from Maracay to charming Choroni village is a series of sharpin bends rising through the gorgeous mountain forest of Pittier Park. Until the road was paved in 1979, Choroni's beauty was well guarded (even today the trip takes nearly an hour-and-a-half) and travelers gave thanks for a tiny German-run hostel. Now, without changing the face of the village, first-classlodgings have been made in two walled houses restored by the Cotoperix Club. Fishermen supply fresh red snapper and kingfish for guests' suppers; farmers bring pawpaw, pineapple,
ple, coffee, and chocolate. Since guests come only with advance reservations, the Cotoperix hotel is part of Choroni’s secretive tradition. Playa Grande beach is 400 yards east of the port, Puerto Colombia; its sands are golden, its sea is green. The peace here is disturbed just once yearly, when the Carnival crowds descend.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR LARA, CARABOBO, AND ARAGUA

HOTELS. For definitions of price categories, see “Facts at Your Fingertips” earlier in this chapter.

Lara State


Carabobo State


PUERTO CABELLO. Cumboto. Inexpensive. On the beach before the port (042-69211). 74 rooms in run-down 2-story building (repairs are announced); beach not recommended but there is a pool and open-air restaurant. Caribe Suites. Moderate. Av. Salom (042-5479). 90 modern rooms, air-conditioned, near the airport, restaurant.

LAS TRINCHERAS. Las Trincheras Hotel Spa. Moderate. Half mile from Valencia-Piso, Cabello tollway (041-669795). 58 new rooms at hot springs famous for curative waters; 3 thermal pools open 7 A.M. to 10 P.M. (Bs.40); massages.


Aragua State

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Inexpensive. 27 Av. Bolivar Este (043-24998/9). 38-room business hotel with good Italian restaurant (closed Sun.).


CHORONI, Club Cotoperi. Puerto Colombia; by reservation only, in Caracas (02-951-7741). 2 beautifully restored old houses enclosed within high walls (no sign); 20 comfortable rooms, leafy patio. The price of about $50 a night includes all food and drinks, boat rides to neighboring Chacao bay, barbecue on the beach, and excursion through cacao plantation and Pitter Park. Truly lovely environment, the best of local cuisine, plus folk music, entertainment, some English-speaking staff. Hotel Alemania. Inexpensive. On the main street in Choroni, no phone (reservations in Caracas 02-986-2698). Very modest and clean, 8 rooms, restaurant.


EASTERN COAST: ROUTE OF THE SUN

Venezuelans call the highway which runs for more than 350 miles from Caracas to Cumaná and beyond the Route of the Sun. Major resorts with clubs and hotels are transforming the sweeping sandy shores and mangroves of Higuerote and Puerto La Cruz into holiday centers. But there are three national parks—Tacarigua, Mochima, and Paria—protecting lagoons, islands and peninsulas, as well as many isolated beaches beyond Cumaná still scarcely touched. The highway has all services as it is the major artery not only for coastal cities but also for oil towns in southern Anzoátegui and more distant industries of Bolivar State.

MIRANDA STATE

Marinas and seaside developments are converting Carenero, Higuerote, and Rio Chico into weekend magnets for thousands of Caraquesinos. Mangrove thickets have been cleared and shallows dredged for water-skiers. In Carenero, two yacht clubs and three marinas service a small fleet of pleasure craft. Fishermen run a ferry service to Buje Chico for bathers and campers who are not members of the yacht set. Inland, this lush tropical region of Miranda is known as Bariovento (although it is not marked as such on maps). It is dotted with villages first settled by runaway slaves. Today such communities as Birono and Curiepe generate big crowds with three-day drum festivals celebrating the May Cross, the Feast of St. John on June 22-24, and St. Peter on June 27-29.

The national park of Laguna de Tacarigua protects a great shallow lagoon, habitat of flamingos, pelicans, frigate birds, ibis, and storks. A spit of land with unspoiled beaches separates the lagoon from the sea. Jeeps drive for mile after mile on the hard, damp beach at the waves’ edge, as
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far as the hamlets of Machurucuto and Boca de Uchire at the head of another lagoon, Unare, in Anzoátegui State.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR MIRANDA


TACARIGUA. DE LA LAGUNA. Club Miami. *Inexpensive*. On the long palm-fringed beach, no phone. Its 9 cabins and 6 apartments are an old favorite; rate includes one meal; access by car across the neck of the lagoon is sometimes chancy; there is a ferry (about $4); also a landing strip; information (02-7521771).

ANZOÁTEGUI STATE

Barcelona and Puerto La Cruz

The old fishing port of Píritu, its popular beach, and the solid, seventeenth-century church above the town are well worth exploring. Nearby is the capital of Anzoátegui State, Barcelona, another seventeenth-century town where the past is kept alive in museums and monuments. A statue in the Plaza Boyacá portrays General Anzoátegui, hero of Boyacá battle which decided Colombia’s freedom. (Miranda and Sucre states are also named after independence leaders.) The city’s oldest house stands on one corner of the plaza. Built in 1671, it has been restored as the Museo de la Tradición, and is open every day 8 A.M. to noon and 3 to 6 P.M.

Barcelona and Puerto La Cruz, six miles away, have 400,000 inhabitants. Barcelona’s international airport is the gateway for fun-in-the-sun charter flights bringing thousands of escapees from the winter cold of Canada and the U.S. to luxury hotels such as the Doral Beach in El Morro and the Meliá in Puerto La Cruz.

An ambitious beach resort by any standard, El Morro Tourist Complex is taking shape between Barcelona and Puerto La Cruz. The 2,000-acre tract of canals, marinas, houseboat lots, golf courses, and shopping centers is still unfinished after years of investment adding up to $1 billion. Original plans were for 15,000 hotel rooms and the same again in apartments and houses in two sectors: the sea-level Aquavilla, interlaced with canals, and El Morro, a peninsula overlooking Pozuelos Bay, where a ring of islands forms part of Mochima National Park. It is said that blueprints for the complex inspired Mexican officials in the early 1970s to build Cancun. One hotel, the deluxe Doral Beach Villas, now offers 900 rooms in thirty-two villas (said to be South America’s largest hotel, along with the Caracas Hilton).

Both the Doral Beach and the Meliá Puerto La Cruz are very well set up for water sports and excursions with nearby marinas. Beaches are free of undertow and rough breakers, fabulous reefs on the islands contain thirty-five species of coral, and the Caribbean is crystal clear during the rains (July-November). Rental of craft for deep-sea fishing costs less than $5 an hour per person (group of four); Sunfish cost $12. A day-long outing to an island such as Chimana, Plata, or Borracha in a peñero runs about $60 per boat (bring a picnic).

From the Meliá beach seven miles out to sea, and from El Morro peninsula in the west almost to Cumaná in the east, the sea and all its islands
SOUTH AMERICA

are part of Mochima National Park. Over half the park’s 360 square miles are maritime.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR ANZOATEGUI STATE

HOTELS. For definitions of price categories, see “Facts at Your Fingertips” earlier in this chapter.


BARCELONA. Barcelona. Inexpensive. Av. 5 de Julio (081-771065). 70 rooms in town center.

EL MORRO-LECHERIA. Doral Beach Villas. Expensive-Deluxe (081-812222, telex 81307). Reserve 6–8 weeks in advance during peak periods, Caracas (02-781-1444). An ambitious development with 1,300 rooms and suites with kitchetten in 32 beach villas; pool-side cafeteria, (formal dining) restaurant; among the many facilities of this resort are gym, sauna, Jacuzzi, shops, beauty parlor, car rental, and all water sports; explosub shop (ext. 1206) also rents kayaks, Sunfish, yachts, and snorkeling gear. Pueblo Viejo. Expensive. Complejo Turistico El Morro (081-2812952). Five seaside villas with fully equipped flats for 2 to 6, including kitchen. Rentals by Residente (02-326097). Hosteria El Morro. Moderate. Ave. Américo Vespucio (081-811312). 149 rooms and suites, restaurant, bar, pool, beach.


SUCRE STATE

Along the most beautiful coast in Venezuela, the forty-seven-mile drive from Puerto La Cruz to Cumaná pauses at two gems of beaches, Playa Arapito and Playa Colorada, before rising to the crest of the park, giving spectacular views of the Santa Fe Gulf, jutting peninsulas, and islands set in a sea mirroring the sun’s rays. A short side road dips to Mochima village, launching point for boat trips to the tranquil fjord and beaches of Mochima National Park:

Cumaná to Gúiria

History buffs will enjoy proud Cumaná, capital of Sucre State, where a fortified Spanish castle, museums, churches, and graceful colonial houses recall the heritage of the continent’s first settlement, dating back to 1521. Fort San Antonio commands a panorama over the Gulf of Cariaco, treeless Araya Peninsula, and even distant Margarita Island. But a fort on Araya, Castillo de Santiago, built in 1665, was Venezuela’s most costly and important structure; it was erected to protect valuable salt beds, the world’s biggest at the time of their discovery in 1499.

Launches cross to Araya and its beaches in thirty minutes from Cumaná, but Araya has little else than sun, sand, and salt. Cumaná, like Puerto La Cruz, is a terminal for ferry services to Margarita, the fastest being the “Gran Caicue,” crossing in eighty minutes.
NEAR THE BEACH IN SAN LUÍS DISTRICT IS A NEW CRAFTS CENTER, THE VILLA ARTESANAL, DISPLAING A PROFUSION OF HAMMOCKS, BASKETS, RAG DOLLS, CHAIRS, "CUATRO" OR FOUR-STRING GUITARS, AND OTHER LOCAL INSTRUMENTS. BUT FOR SUCRE'S FAMOUS HANDMADE CIGARS AND LOCAL COFFEE, THE DOWNTOWN MARKET IS THE PLACE TO GO, EVERY DAY FROM 5 A.M. TO NOON.


BEYOND THE SMALL PORT OF RÍO CARIBE, WITH ITS IMPRESSIVE RED-DOMED CHURCH AND FRIENDLY SWALLOWS, THE ROUTE LEAVES THE COAST AND ENTERS VERDANT CACAO COUNTRY WHERE SPANISH MOSS FESTOONS GREAT SHADE TREES. NO ROADS PENETRATE THE HILLS OF PARIA PENINSULA, NOW A NATIONAL PARK. HOWEVER, THERE IS A 5-MILE SIDE ROAD (PUIPUY) TO MEDINA BEACH, A HALF-MOON BAY OF FINE SAND ON THE NORTH COAST.

BEFORE ENDING AT GIÚRIA, THE ROUTE PASSES WETLANDS OCCUPIED BY WATER BUFFALO FARMS. BEYOND GIÚRIA, THE TOUGHER TRAVELER MAY EXPLORE DISTANT BEACHES USING FISHING BOATS WHICH GO TO MACURO. (WARNING: LACKING IMMIGRATION FACILITIES, THIS IS NOT A LEGAL ROUTE TO TRINIDAD.)

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR SUCRE STATE

HOTELS. FOR DEFINITIONS OF PRICE CATEGORIES SEE "FACTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS" EARLIER IN THIS CHAPTER.

CUMANÁ. CUMANÁ GÓTTO. MODERATE. AV. UNIVERSIDAD (093-653355). PLEASANT 4-STORY HOTEL BUILT AROUND LARGE POOL, 166 ROOMS LOOKING OVER THE SEA, OPEN-AIR RESTAURANT AMONG PALM TREES BETWEEN POOL AND BEACH, INDOOR ROTISSERIE, BAR WITH LIVE MUSIC AT NIGHT; KIDS' POOL AND PLAYGROUND, HORSEBACK RIDING. LOS BORDES. MODERATE. AV. UNIVERSIDAD, ON THE BEACH (093-653622). FAMILY HOTEL OF 115 ROOMS BUILT ON A BREEZY COCONUT PLANTATION, LARGE AND SMALL POOL, RESTAURANT, POOL-SIDE SODA FOUNTAIN, BAR; ALL ROOMS HAVE BALCONIES OVER THE SEA. MIRAMAR. MODERATE. AV. CRISTÓBAL COLÓN (093-6622700). 7-STORY HOTEL WITH 130 ROOMS, SMALL POOL, 2ND STORY RESTAURANT WITH PANORAMA OF CARIACO GULF AND ARAYA PENINSULA. GRAN HOTEL. INEXPENSIVE. AV. UNIVERSIDAD (093-662611). CONVENIENT 41-ROOM HOTEL, A BLOCK FROM LOS UVEROS BEACH; RESTAURANT. VILLAMAR. INEXPENSIVE. AV. UNIVERSIDAD ON PLAYA SAN LUIS (093-221471). 37 MODERATE ROOMS ON 2 FLOORS.

SAN ANTONIO DEL GOLFO. CACHAMAR. INEXPENSIVE. ON GOOD BEACH 30 MILES FROM CUMANÁ (093-93045/662470). A NEW GOVERNMENT-BUILT RESORT WITH 30 PRIVATELY-RUN DOUBLE CABIN UNITS (MAXIMUM 6 PEOPLE EACH), KITCHEN, FRIDGE, RESTAURANT, SODA FOUNTAIN, FOLK MUSIC ON WEEKENDS; ALSO ATTRACTION OF CAMPING AND PICNIC AREAS; MANY FISHING BOATS FOR TRIPS.

CARUPANO. VICTORIA. INEXPENSIVE. FACED THE PORT (094-39776). 45 ROOMS, POOL, RESTAURANT, DISCOTHEQUE, NEAR CONFERRYS OFFICE. LIMA. INEXPENSIVE. NO. 161 AV. 3 (094-393341). 44 ROOMS ON 2 FLOORS IN TOWN, RESTAURANT.

RÍO CARIBE. MAR CARIBE. MODERATE. ON THE COASTAL HIGHWAY (094-61491). CONVENTIONAL-BUILT HOTEL HAS 20 ROOMS, SWIMMING POOL OPEN TO NON-GUESTS (BS. 10), RESTAURANT, SODA FOUNTAIN; FISHING VESSELS CAN BE HIRED FOR UP TO 10 PASSENGERS TO THE BEACHES NEAR AND FAR.

PLAYA MEDINA. HOTEL PLAYA MEDINA. EXPENSIVE. RESERVATIONS FROM VENEZUELA AUTHENTICITY AGENCY IN RÍO CARIBE, CARLE RIVERA 450 (094-61810); CARUPANO (094-38766, FAX 38741); OR CARACAS (02-727234, FAX 725030). TAKE BAT BOAT TO PARRA'S CLIFFS OR JOIN A TOUR TO GUACHARO CAVE. EITHER WAY, 8 CHARMING COTTAGES MAKE A PERFECT HAVEN.
FROM MONAGAS TO THE DELTA

Fascinating Guácharo Cave

No visitor to the Oriente should miss Guácharo Cave with its fascinating oilbirds. The cave has been famous since 1799, when naturalist Baron Alexander von Humboldt reported the existence of thousands of cave-dwelling guácharos—large, night-flying relatives of the nightjar and whippoorwill—and named them Statornis caripensis. Still the largest known colony of these birds, estimated at 10,000, their numbers are far less today than in Humboldt’s time, when every June the nestlings were harvested by Indians and missionaries for their fat, which was then rendered to make lamp oil. Flying out at dusk to eat palm and laurel fruits, the guácharos navigate by echo location, using rapid-fire clicks. They have a wing span of over three feet.

The cave, declared World Sanctuary of the Guácharo, is protected by a 38,000-acre National Park of forested limestone mountains. A small museum and a canteen mark the entrance to the cave, open daily from 7 A.M. to 5 P.M. Each party is assigned a guide (who will expect a tip) for the two-hour tour. Special permission is needed to go farther than 3,300 feet. No cameras, flashlights, or bags of any kind are allowed. Take a jacket because it is quite cool inside.

Described by speleologists as one of the world’s most complete and beautiful caverns, Guácharo Cave has six miles of majestic halls and deep galleries. The first hall, named after Humboldt, is 130 feet high and 1,470 feet long. It is here that the speckled reddish-brown birds live. Besides oilbirds, the complex fauna include pink fish, rodents, spiders, crickets, and centipedes. Geologically, nearly all phenomena found elsewhere in caves are present here. Speleologists say that in the deeper halls crystals form incredible displays.

The nearest hotels to the cave are a few miles down the road in Caripe.

Monagas State

Monagas’s history as an oil state began as early as 1891 when the Guanoco Asphalt Lake was exploited; development of the eastern oilfields came in the 1920s (drillers and rigs were shipped in via the San Juan River on the Gulf of Paria). Today, although vast new deposits are being tapped west of Maturín in El Furrial, agriculture is on the rise.

A new resource, the pine tree, is turning the empty plains of southern Monagas and Anzoátegui into a land of “green gold.” Surprisingly, the Honduras pines adapt well to the hot, semi-arid plains where the government has planted half a million acres since 1969. These industrial plantations are said to be twenty times more valuable for pulp and paper than if they were natural forests. To visit the pine forests in Chaguaramas, call Proforca (02–781–5342); for the plantations near Temblador, call Corp. Forestal Guayamure (02–782–1955).
Maturin

Sixty miles from the Guácharo Cave is Maturin, a pleasant city of 250,000, with many shady trees, boulevards, and modest hotels. Maturin, founded as a mission settlement in 1760, was supplied via the San Juan River from the Gulf of Paria and was long cut off from the rest of the country. A road from El Tigre was opened by oil companies in the 1950s. It is halfway along this route that the village of Aguaay stands out as the home of some of Venezuela's finest hammocks. The famous chinchonillos de curaguai are woven out of lace-like fiber from a bromeliad, a relative of the pineapple plant. The artisans, all women, will sell directly from their homes.

From Maturin to Temblidor and east to Tucupita is a flat run of 130 miles. (Or, by taking a fork south of Chaguaramas to the Orinoco through the pine forests, drivers can cross by ferry to Ciudad Guayana.)

Delta Amacuro

The least visited area of Venezuela, the Delta Amacuro Federal Territory (16,000 square miles), is a world of islands, canals, and jungle where transportation and most communications depend on rivers. The huge fan of the Orinoco's many mouths spreads out from the river's widest point, thirteen-and-a-half miles, near the town of Barrancas. Two main arteries, the Macareo and the Rio Grande, embrace hundreds of cañales or channels which together bear an astounding 1,110 billion cubic meters of water a year into the Atlantic. Silt carried down from the Andes and plains on the Orinoco's 1,300-mile journey to the sea has added some 600 square miles to the Delta in the past century.

The Orinoco's fresh, turbid waters meet the equatorial ocean current coming from Africa in a spectacle few tourists ever see. The first white traveler, Christopher Colombus, was amazed: "Never have I read nor heard of so much sweet water within a salt ocean." His son Ferdinand reported, "A mountain range of waves seized our two ships so that we feared for their safety." The mouth of just one brazo, or arm, the Rio Grande, is over twelve miles wide, and there are seventy others.

The cliffs for which Barrancas is named are made of sediment thrown up during the June to September rains, when the swollen Orinoco rises some eight meters. The state development agency, Corp. Venezolana de Guayana, built a fifty-mile dike in 1968 to close off the Caño Mánamo, reclaiming over two million acres for agriculture.

Tucupita

The levee-top road linking the capital, Tucupita (pop. 50,000), brought new life to the territory. Stock raising, including water buffalo, prospers on reclaimed land and new crops include rice and manaca palms famous for their delectable hearts. Although the dike cuts off navigation upstream to Barrancas, Tucupita is still a river town where most of the action is in the port. Tucupita's one-story houses with interior patios and tin or asbestos-cement roofs keep out little of the steamy heat, averaging nearly 85°F. There are two gas stations and two modest hotels.

For the last sixty years, Capuchin padres have made Tucupita their base for missionary work, setting up schools in remote Delta communities of Warao Indians. Araguaimujo, the closest mission, is eight hours from Barrancas by dugout with outboard motor; other posts are two days away.
Guests may find free lodging at the missions, but should bring their own food since supplies are all shipped in by river.

Natives of the Delta are the Warao Indians, numbering 15,000 of the territory’s 80,000 inhabitants. Skilled navigators, fishermen, and weavers, the Warao build villages on stilts of mofiche palm trunks and use palm fiber for making hammocks and baskets whose beauty has been seen in U.S. exhibitions. White wood carvings of animals, insects, birds, fish, snakes, and freshwater dolphins reveal the rich variety of Delta fauna, the Warao’s “animal brothers.”

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR MONAGAS AND THE DELTA

GETTING THERE. By plane. Avaros turbo props link Tucupita daily with Maiquetia, Guiria, and Porlamar; the airfield has no car rentals but taxis meet all flights. Maturin has 4 daily flights from Maiquetia, others via Porlamar, Ciudad Bolivar, and Puerto Ordaz. By bus, Expresos de la Costa buses leave Caracas at 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. daily for the 11-hour run to Tucupita via Maturin. For puestos charge by the seat and go from Tucupita as far as Ciudad Guayana.

HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS. For definitions of price categories see “Facts at Your Fingertips” earlier in this chapter.

CARIFE. Hotel El Samsa. Inexpensive. Av. Chaumer No. 29 (092–51183). At west end of town, 30 rooms with bath, scrupulously clean; good restaurant open 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Carife. Inexpensive. Calle Guzman Blanco (092–51246). 6 rooms, restaurant, 5 miles from the cave. El Guacharo. Moderate. Av. Principal (092–51218, fax 51501). On 7 acres of land, this remodeled hotel is the area’s largest. Also has a restaurant, convention room, and a pool.


GETTING AROUND THE DELTA. Organized tourism now exists in Tucupita, but with a hammock and mosquito net, plus cash (forget credit cards), those who want to rough it can get a long way into the Delta by paying passage on the bongos which transport produce, finding shelter at villages or missions. Photo hunters and basket buyers hire craft and navigator for river forays. Bargain with any of the dug-out owners near the river gas pump; price, roughly $50 a day, varies with distance and time. Also, ask the padres at the Capuchin Mission to recommend guides. River excursions can be made from La Horqueta, up the road from Tucupita. The hearts of palm canning center here is run by Warao Indians. The journey to Pederales at the mouth of Caño Mánamo takes 8 hours. Pederales (pop. 5,000), some 25 miles from Trinidad, is the center of the Delta’s shrimp and fishing industry. Curiaipo, at the ocean outlet of Rio Grande, is a picturesque village on stilts, once a rubber center.

For travel beyond the Delta, ask at the Trinidad-Tobago consulate, Edif. Antonietta, Calle Mariño 12, Tucupita.

TOURS. The best way to see the Delta’s islands and Indian communities is to go with those who know them. Mánamo Tours, Calle Dallacosta No. 22, Plaza Bolivar, Tucupita (087–21156), organizes 3-day river trips in motorized bongos; you sleep in hammocks in the native community of San Francisco de Guayo and explore as far as Curiaipo. Costs for river travel are about $50 a day, 3-day advance notice. Wck’ta Tours, Hotel Basil, Centro Cívico Puerto Ordaz, Estado Bolivar (086–222723/10, fax 22703), also specializes in Delta travel, flying groups to Tucupita.
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and making 4- to 6-day trips to northern communities in La Barra de Cocuima and Pedernales at the Dragon's Mouth.

CRAFTS. The superb baskets and hammocks of palm fiber and a Noah's ark of curios given away behind souvenir shops throughout Venezuela originate in the Delta. The talented Warao artisans run a row of stalls on a small plaza a few blocks north of Tucupita's cathedral. Also, Foto Rodríguez, 17 Calle Petión, has a good selection.

THE ANDES

The Venezuelan Andes rise directly south of Lake Maracaibo to the snowy heights of the Sierra Nevada de Mérida where four peaks soar over 16,000 feet. The Transandina road winds through Trujillo, Mérida, and Táchira states toward Colombia. From the east, looping in hairpin bends, it climbs spectacularly to the foggy (or snowy) Paso del Aguila at an inhospitable 13,146 feet, where a bronze condor marks the heroic passage of Bolivar's forces on foot and horseback in 1813. The Andean routes in Trujillo State are a succession of lovely vistas, verdant coffee hills, and farming villages, from Biscucuy, Boconó, and Burbusay to Escuque, La Puerta, La Mesa de Esmujaque, and Timotes.

On the way up from subtropical Valera, the changes are swift and fascinating. Tile-roofed hamlets cling to hillside, gardens of begonias and fuchsias give way to azalea and willow trees, brooks rush through cabbage patches, and, at 10,000 feet, stony fields sprout with wheat. Colder and higher still, the treeless mist-veiled páramo is a botanist's dream of wild flowers in red, blue, magenta, and white. The banner of the Andes is the yellow-flowering frailejón of which there are no less than forty-five species in Venezuela. Its furry leaves look like rabbit ears and have been used to stuff mattresses.

Just beyond the pass, the Transandina is joined at Apartaderos by the Barinas-Santo Domingo route from the Llanos. Nearby, the glacial lagoons of Sierra Nevada National Park (760 square miles) attract many hikers and campers. Some hire horses at the park's entrance (where a roadside hostel serves steaming hot chocolate). Deep, dark, and clear, Laguna Mucubaji mirrors the Andean sky, intensely blue at this altitude (11,614 ft.). Afternoons, however, tend to be foggy and walkers to Laguna Negra, an hour higher, would do well to start early. Still farther are Laguna Los Patos and La Canoa. Trout in many high lakes and rivers draw fishermen in the season from March to September.

From Apartaderos, a cluster of souvenir shops and hostels heated against the cold, the road twists steeply down the Chama Valley, pausing at villages with Indian names—Mucuchies, Moconoque, Mucurubá.

Among the charms of the Andes are the quiet, courteous mountain people. Weather-beaten and sturdy, they wrest a hard living from wheat, potatoes, and dairy cows, plowing slopes where even oxen walk precariously. The women knit sweaters, weave woolen blankets and ponchos, here called ruanas, make arepas of wheat, and bake maniécudo cakes. Red-cheeked children sell flowers by the road, or hold up fat puppies for sale. A large white breed, the Mucuchies, is favored locally as a watchdog.

Fervent Catholics, Andinos observe holy days with street processions and songs. In La Punta, the Dance of the Vassals celebrates La Candelaria's day, February 2. In Bailadores, Boconó, Jajo, and other villages dances are performed by costumed men on May 13, the day of San Isidro Labrador. July 16 is the Fiesta del Carmen, observed widely throughout
the Andes. In San Rafael de Mucuchíes, the patron saint’s day is October 24. December is the month of San Benito; dances and processions are held in Mérida City on the 12th, in Timotes, La Mesa de Esmujque from the 15th to the 24th, and in Mucuchíes on the 28th and 29th. The new year opens with the procession of the Christ Child, La Paradela del Niño, on January 1 and 2.

In the heart of the Andes is Mérida, a handsome city founded in 1558 and now spreading up the valley between two high sierras. Merideños call the peaks of the Sierra Nevada the Five White Eagles. They are: La Corona—pairing Humboldt (16,213 feet) and Bonpland (16,020 feet) peaks, La Concha (16,148 feet), La Columna—the name for Bolivar (16,427 feet) and Espejo (15,633 feet) peaks, El Toro (15,600 feet), and El León (15,550 feet) Just 8° north of the equator, snow blankets the highest peaks in July and August. Near their crown, remnants of beautiful glaciers such as Timoncitos persist. The “Eagles” can be seen from Mérida’s Park of the Five Republics. Here is the first monument ever erected to Bolivar (1842), and a bit of soil from each of the countries he liberated.

At 5,332 feet above sea level, Mérida’s climate is benign by day, chilly at night. Capital of Mérida State, this city of 250,000 people lies some 100 miles from Valera (population 185,000) and 160 miles from San Cristóbal (population 340,000). These are the three largest Andean cities. With its panorama of peaks, dignified Cathedral, modern university campus, twenty-one parks, zoo, colonial museum, market, fabulous cablecar, and many hotels, Mérida is the mecca for Andean travelers.

West of Mérida, the route follows the Chama gorge. It drops to Lagunillas and Estanques, hot and low (1,450 feet) before rising for the final switchbacks from Tovar and Bailadores up to chilly Páramo La Negra in Táchira State. Often wrapped in afternoon fog, the moor-like páramo blooms into an Andean flower show in October and November.

The descent to San Cristóbal is through a chain of hamlets and coffee plantations. At a pleasant 2,700 feet above sea level, San Cristóbal is a thriving mountain city twenty-seven miles from the Colombian border. Every January the San Sebastian Fair draws thousands to sports events, cattle shows, horse races, and bullfights. Many of the steep streets are closed for dances and processions. With its Memorial Bull Ring, sports stadium, velodrome, and fair grounds, San Cristóbal is a lively place. Bicycle racing, the local passion, is practiced every weekend at the velodrome. Adding an impressive note of modernity to the old city (founded in 1561) is the double-tower Civic Center and Town Hall opened in 1986 on Parque Bolivar.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR THE ANDES

HOW TO GET THERE. By plane. Daily flights by jet from Maiquetia, Barquisi-
meto, and Maracaibo to Mérida, Valera. San Cristóbal is served by the airport of San Antonio, the border town nearest Colombia; La Fría, a 1½-hour drive north; and the new airport of Santo Domingo, an hour south.

By bus. Although several express coach and por pronto lines go from Caracas’s Nuevo Circo terminal to the Andes, most leave at night. The trip to Mérida takes at least 12 hours. From Mérida on, tickets should be bought 2-3 days in advance. As many as 6 lines serve San Cristóbal’s terminal and San Antonio on the border (some continue through to Cúcuta in Colombia). The following go to Mérida and San Cristóbal, but not on the same itinerary: Expreso Alianza (02-545-0113) also serves Cúcuta, Maracaibo, and Barquisimeto, Expresos Los Llanos (02-545-0428); Expreso Mérida (02-541-1975); Expreso Occidente (02-545-3993); Union Trans-
porte San Cristóbal (02-541-4218).
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HOTELS. For descriptions of price categories see "Facts at Your Fingertips" earlier in this chapter.

Trujillo State


ISNOTU. Albergue Turistico. Inexpensive. Off Plaza Bolivar (071-62336). New hillside complex has 12 rooms with 3 to 6 beds, hot water, restaurant.

LA PUERTA, Guadalope, Inexpensive. At entrance to village (071-83077). A long-established family hotel, 33 rooms, gardens, playground, cabins, good food. Valeralita, Inexpensive. Transandean highway via La Mesa (071-83925). 16 rooms and 8 cabins surrounded by trees (altitude 8,300 ft.), dining room; nearby is a good eating place, Menon Cascada Combocu, by a stream.


Mérida State

SANTO DOMINGO, Morreo, Moderate. On the highway (073-88070). Very attractive chalet-style hotel and cabins in landscaped gardens; 23 rooms, kids' park, horseback riding; good restaurant serves homegrown vegetables. Trucha Azul, Moderate. On main road (no phone). 14 rooms, 4 cabins, well-known for its restaurant. Los Frailes, Moderate (with meals). 15 minutes from Santo Domingo. Reservations in Caracas (Hoturvensa 02-562-3022, fax 02-545-762). The monastery-style buildings are beautifully furnished with brass beds, colonial-style furniture, and real antiques; good food and a good place from which to organize mountain walks on foot or horseback. Santo Domingo, Inexpensive. At east end of town (073-88144). 19 cabins and main building are a family standby; dining room; horseback riding.

TIMOTES, Las Truchas, Inexpensive. On Transandean highway (071-89158). 10 rooms and 26 cabins for 3 to 8 people, no utensils, dining room, no credit cards.


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JAJI. Posada de Jaji. Inexpensive. On main Plaza (no phone). Charming inn with 4 double and triple rooms, good restaurant, live music group on Sun. Fonda Jaguián. Inexpensive. Also on the Plaza. 5 rooms upstairs over the restaurant; no credit cards.


Táchira State

LA GRITA. Hotel de Montañita. Inexpensive. 4 miles above La Grita (077-82938). Busy local resort with 24 rooms in cabins for 2 to 12 people, restaurant, discotheque and live music on weekends.


URENA. Aguas Calientes. Moderate. 4 miles from Ureña (076-86291). A hot springs resort, convenient for travelers to Colombia; each of the 31 rooms has a solarium with 3 kinds of thermal waters; non-guests may use the attractive pool.

SAN JUAN DE COLON. Las Palmeras. Inexpensive. On highway to La Fria (077-93201). 27 rooms and 3 suites, pool (closed Wed.); the restaurant offers the best food between San Cristóbal and Lake Maracaibo.

WHAT TO SEE. All routes in the Andes are scenic and nearly every village has its old church, historic building, or nearby nature spot.

But topping all sights is Mérida’s Teleférico or cablecar ascending to a literally breathtaking 15,633 feet atop Pico Espejo. This is 853 feet higher than Switzerland’s Matterhorn. The ride up takes an hour from Mérida (at 5,174 feet), or longer if visitors snack or rest at the 3 intermediate stations. The top station has a canteen serving sandwiches and hot chocolate. Venezuelans love to see the snow here, and for many this is their only glimpse. But when it is not snowing, very early on a clear day you can see from Pico Espejo to the plains in the south and Sierra de Cocuy in Colombia. To the east, Pico Bolívar, Venezuela’s highest, looms through swirling clouds in all its 16,427-foot grandeur. It is topped by a bronze bust of Bolívar. The Teleférico is in service Wed. to Sun., from 7 A.M. the last car goes up at noon. Plan an early start, not only to get the best photo weather before clouds close in but also to avoid lines. Make reservations as soon as you arrive in Mérida; the Teleférico is tremendously popular, especially during school holidays. For informa-
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tion (074-525080 and 521997). Cost is about $4 for adults, children up to 10, students half price. Jackets and gloves can be rented at the station but don't forget warm shoes. (A note to romantics: there is no skiing on Pico Ezepejo.)

Hikers wishing to climb Pico Bolivar and other peaks should enquire for guides at the Teleferico, or contact Montilla Treks (074-631740) or Casa del Montañista (074-525696), which provides equipment, horses, and English-speaking personnel.

Los Aleros is a make-believe village of the past peopled by Andeans of the present; the old widow and her young bridegroom, the highwayman, the herb curer . . . all are players in a stage set by a local dreamer and antiques collector, Alexis Montilla. On 18 acres near Tabay east of Mérida, Montilla takes sightseers on three ancient buses around his detailed miniature village. Silent films are shown.

8 A.M.—6 P.M. Entrance fee for about $3.

Jaji, a showcase village 22 miles northwest of Mérida on the Azulita road, sparkles with whitewash, varnish, and flowers. The picturesque church and plaza and the surrounding houses and streets were done over by the government as a tourist attraction. A 5-room inn, the Posada de Jaji, is big in value, inexpensive, with good food. The Feast of St. Michael Archangel is celebrated here on Sept. 24.

The 3-domed Observatory of the Astrophysical Institute (CIDA) sits on a granite ridge behind the Paso del Aguila where a hostel, Páramo Aguila, offers lodging, food, and a fire at night. The road to the observatory turns off west, above Apartaderos, and passes Llano del Hato village perched at 11,516 feet. The Observatory conducts daily guided tours for Bs.50 at 10 a.m., 2, 3:30, 7, and 10 P.M. during school holidays (the longest covers 3rd weekend in July through 2nd weekend in Sept.). Otherwise, CIDA is open one Saturday night per month (074-791893).

Trout Lagoons. In Santo Domingo there is a trout hatchery which supplies restaurants as far away as Caracas. But of great beauty in their chilly isolation on the páramo of Mérida State are as many as 200 trout-stocked lakes and lagoons, most near the high peaks. Small and clear, wide and green, or deep and black, all are icy cold. Most are unvisited except by die-hard anglers; wind and near-freezing temperatures when the sun goes in keep most locals away. (Jan. to Mar. is the sunniest time for camping.) Catches in the high lakes are reported at 15 lbs. and over. Guides live in hamlets around Santo Domingo and Los Frailes and nearest to Laguna de los Patos, Laguna Negra, La Cana, and La Carbonera. Three lakes near Pilantú village are reached by jeep track from the Paso del Aguila. Lagunas Say-Say, Pogal, Montón, and Rolall are reached from Mucuchies, 1–2 hours by mule. Yearly licenses for the season Mar. 15 to Sept. 30 can be obtained from the Ministerio de Agricultura y Cria (MAC) in Mérida, Av. Urdaneta opposite Banco Regional Los Andes (074-632576). Hours are 8 A.M. to noon and 1:30 to 5. Bring a Bs.2.50 fiscal stamp.

Trujillo and The Virgin of Peace. Trujillo, its long, one-way streets squeezed in a narrow gorge, is the historic and cultural capital of the mountain state of the same name which is known for its excellent pineapples and coffee. Browse through the Centro Histórico, a colonial house converted into a museum. Here, on June 15, 1813, Bolivar proclaimed "war to the death" to enemies of the struggling republic. Some of the original furnishings are preserved, including the bed Bolivar slept in. Also, paintings, coins, arms (open daily 8 A.M. to noon and 3 to 6 P.M. Sun. until noon).

Southwest of Trujillo, off the Sabaneta road, the gigantic concrete statue of the Virgin Mary was raised in 1983 as a monument to peace. The same height as New York's Statue of Liberty (150 feet), the Virgen de la Paz was designed by Manuel de la Fuente and built on a rocky outcrop 4,300 feet above sea level. Internal stairs and an elevator lead to windows at three levels—knees, waist, and eyes. From the top lookout you can see not only Valera, 10 miles away, but on clear days, Lake Maracaibo and the Andean peaks. On foggy days when mist wraps the statue's feet, the locals like to say the "Virgin is in Heaven."

Valera and Isnotú. Valera is the commercial center of Trujillo State and starting point for the Transandean Highway and for three other interesting mountain routes. Isnotú, 9 miles northwest, is famous as the birthplace of José Gregorio Hernández (1864–1919), a self-denying doctor widely revered as a modern-day saint. Most of his devotees among the poor and middle-class pray to him for cures. Postcards and little statues of the modest doctor in his felt hat are seen throughout Venezuela. Since his death as victim of one of Caracas's first traffic accidents, his reputation...
as a miracle worker has grown. A simple memorial chapel and a small museum in Isnotú draw thousands of pilgrims.

Boconó. For almost 400 years after its founding in 1549 in the mountains of eastern Trujillo, Boconó had no road; its isolation was ended only in 1935. Today a 1½ hour drive from the state capital, this pleasant “garden town” is a center for coffee, vegetable, and flower cultivation and crafts such as weaving, pottery, and basketry. The Sat. market on Calle 5 displays a rich variety of local produce.

When driving north of Boconó, take the 2-mile turnoff to lovely San Miguel Valley to see the renowned church with its yard-thick walls and brightly painted (circa 1760) reliefs of St. Michael and his guardian angels. San Miguel Church (open 9 to 11 A.M. and 2 to 5 P.M., except Tues.) is the center of fiestas celebrated Jan. 4–6, the “Romanitas de los Pastores y Payasos,” when costumed shepherds and masked clowns lead street processions.

A rough road leading from Boconó provides access to a national park covering 100,000 acres of Páramo Guaramacal, refuge of the threatened spectacled bear. Jajó. From Boconó southwest to Niquitao, a steep road leads hardy Andean explorers up the Río Burate Valley, where the 13,000-foot mountain called La Teta (the teat) de Niquitao rises. The road reaches tiny Las Mesitas by a ford, and crosses the Páramo de Tulame to Jajó, a farm village charming in its whitewashed simplicity. Jajó is a few miles from the Transandean Highway and the hotels of La Puerta.

THE LLANOS

One of the great physical features of the continent, the Llanos, or plains, curve in a band some 600 miles long from the Orinoco Delta westward into Colombia. Lying south of the coastal mountains, the plains are crossed by many streams and big rivers, all draining into the Orinoco. This vast interior covers almost a third of Venezuela but is home to only 9 percent of the population. Through irrigation from reservoirs such as the huge Embalse de Guárico, mechanized farming produces most of the nation’s rice, sorghum, cotton, and corn in the upper plains of Barinas, Cojedes, Portuguesa, and Guárico States. Calabozo is a busy agricultural center some 165 miles south of Caracas. Eighty-three miles farther is San Fernando, capital of Apure, the flattest state of all. From here south, cattle range freely on grasslands of huge unfenced hatos, or ranches, which are reached by private plane. Continuing south to a ferry over the Orinoco, today the San Fernando-Puerto Páez road is largely paved.

Parched by merciless sun the first half of the year and flooded by rain-swollen rivers from June to September, the low Llanos are ruled by extremes. In the dry season (December to April), tough Llaneros mount wiry horses to round up cattle for market. As rivers dry up, many cows and other animals in Apure die of thirst while millions of wading birds, ducks, and storks compete for the fish trapped in shrinking ponds. When thunderstorms announce the first rains, the plains burst into new green grass. Like the kiss of the legendary princess, rain brings life to frogs, small reptiles, and even certain species of fish which survive beneath the baked mud in a state of suspended animation called aestivation. Again the Llanero must go out to rescue cattle, but now he poles a boat through flooded lowland.

Rivers such as the San José, Aguaro, and Guárico, and reservoirs such as Las Majaguas, Playa de Piedras, and Camatagua, lead many anglers off the beaten track for some of the best sport fishing on the continent. The famed peacock bass known as parón is found in many Llanos rivers, along with six-foot catfish, laoalo, palometas, cachama, morocota, coperos, curbinata, and the fang-toothed aymara. In clear-running rivers, swimming is safe, but the turbid streams are avoided for their fierce piranhas, here called caribes (which means “meat-eater” and is the root not only
of Caribbean, after the Carib Indians, but also "cannibal"). Other enemies to be feared in slow waters are electric eels and stingrays. Then again, the Orinoco and many tributaries harbor the gentle manatees and rare freshwater dolphins which, like their sea cousins, play in groups.

Like Africa, the plains have an astonishing wealth of wildlife, even after four centuries of ranching and hunting. Probably more different animal and bird species can be seen in one day on a Llanos reserve than anywhere else in the Americas or Africa, except in a zoo. One ranch in the upper Cojedes plains, Hato Piñero, where hunting has been banned since 1950, has classified no less than 300 species of birds, fifty mammals, and twenty reptiles. These include the giant otter, tapir, jaguar, ocelot, monkeys, armadillos, anteaters, porcupine, sloth, deer, fox, peccary, agouti, water opossum, capybara, coatí, crocodile, anaconda, caiman, turtles, and more. The rosters of birds is usually headed by the superb scarlet ibis, followed by pink flamingo, spoonbill, herons, egrets, hoatzin, jabiru stork, toucans, parrots, hummingbirds, kingfishers, trogons, bitterns, crakes, gallinules, anhingas, guans, curassows, and birds of prey such as the harpy eagle.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR THE LLANOS

GETTING THERE. By plane. Daily Avenza or Aeropostal jets link Maiquetía with San Fernando de Apure, Barinas, Guanare, and Acarigua. Other agricultural centers such as Calabozo and Valle de la Pascua are served from the Aeropuerto del Centro (02-574-7713) in Charallave by CAVE (02-724312). The airline runs a bus from Caracas, leaving from the east parking lot of the CCT shopping center (by Cada supermarket) at 6 A.M. and 3 P.M. By road. From Maturín in the east to Saza Cristóbal in the west, 770 miles of highway crosses the upper plains. It carries heavy bus and truck traffic, as well as por puesto cars running between bus terminals at all major points.

HOTELS. Accommodations in the farming and oil towns consist of undistinguished commercial hotels, all air-conditioned, most with restaurant; some motels have swimming pools and are busy on weekends. For definitions of price categories see "Facts at Your Fingertips" earlier in this chapter.

Apure State


Guarico State


Cojedes State

SOUTH AMERICA

Portuguesa State


Barinas State

BARINAS. The growing state capital thrives on farming and cattle. In colonial days Barinas, founded in 1576, was the largest town after Caracas and was a renowned exporter of tobacco and indigo to Europe. Visit Government House, formerly home of the Marqués de Boconó and now the largest surviving colonial home. Best hotels are run by Italians. Bristol. Moderate. Ave. 23 de Enero (073-20698). 69 modern rooms and suites, restaurant, disco, car rental, shops. Valle Honda. Moderate. Ave. 23 de Enero (073-23677). Also new, 6 stories, 92 rooms, restaurant, bar, convention room. Los Guanimitos. Inexpensive. On highway by Santo Domingo bridge (073-24189). Motel with 80 units, pool, steak restaurant, open all night.

NATURE RESERVES. Aguaro-Guairiquito National Park covers 2,300 square miles between 2 tributaries of the Orinoco. Lacking any facilities for visitors, it remains a reserve for the hundreds of thousands of fish, birds, and animals in its marshes, gallery forests, creeks, and pools. The road from Las Mercedes to Cabruta runs along the east border.

Hato El Frío, a private ranch of over 300 square miles, is located near Mantaclal some 80 miles west of San Fernando de Apure. Besides 40,000 head of cattle, the ranch exploits capybara (largest member of the rodent family), whose herds number 30,000. At a biological station one of the studies concerns the Orinoco crocodile, a severely endangered species. To arrange for group visit, call José Ayrazaque, Fund. Científica La Salle (02-782-3319/8711). The fee of Bs.1000 covers 2 days, a biologist guide, and beds for 6 in a rural cottage.

Hato El Piñero in Cojedes State, where animals have bred freely since hunting was banned four decades ago, today teems with an astonishing array of fauna, including endangered animals such as the giant otter, jaguar, and crocodile. Bounded by 4 rivers and the 2,000-foot hills of the Baul Massif, the working ranch maintains a reserve with four ecosystems: grassy plains, deciduous forest, gallery forest, and mountain savanna. At a biological station, visiting scientists study some of the nearly 400 species of animals and birds and 30 species of fish. El Piñero is internationally cited as an example of how man, cattle, and wild fauna can flourish under wise management. Naturalist groups of 2 to 20 are escorted by jeep and on foot along the 300-square-mile ranch. Cost, including all food (no alcohol) and transportation is about $100 day. Groups of 10 to 12 visitors are preferred; call Morgan Tours, Venguide, or Hato Piñero in Caracas (02-916676, 916854).

More and more ranches are remodeling to offer travelers the best of Llanos music (the jarana), food such as 'tamales, roasted veal), and comfort, along with dry season wildlife. Most reservations are taken through tour agencies. (See Treks and Adventure Tours in "Facts at Your Fingertips.") Such nature lodges include Hato Macanillal, Hato El Cedral, Campamento Las Garzas, Hato Buenaventura, and Hato Bayona.
BOLIVAR STATE—THE GUAYANA HIGHLANDS

There's no way to put on paper the magic of the Guayana Highlands of Bolivar State, an ancient plateau stretching down to Brazil. Here, clouds wrap table mountains, and clear waters foam over a myriad of falls in a camper's paradise. Vertical mesas, or tepuis, which tower over the grassy savanna, are remnants of one of the world's oldest geological formations, the Guayana Shield. Part of this area, known as the Gran Sabana, or Great Savannah, forms Canaima National Park, the world's third largest. Its area of 11,500 square miles is greater than New Jersey and Delaware combined.

Mount Roraima, the tallest mesa, inspired Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's fantasy about prehistoric monsters atop a "Lost World," and the name has stuck. Long inaccessible, it was first scaled in 1884 by two English naturalists who traveled two months through British Guiana to reach it. Today a road to Brazil passes near Roraima and many trekkers scale the 9,000-foot mesa in two days.

But the glory of the park is Angel Falls on Auyanepuy, or Devil's Mountain. Angel Falls towers not only as the world's tallest (at 3,212 feet, it's twice as high as the Empire State Building) but as high spot on any air tour of Venezuela. Avensa jets land daily at Canaima camp downstream. Struck by the beauty of more waterfalls, lagoons, and pink beaches, visitors often call Canaima "a corner of Eden." Several guides run river trips to the foot of Angel Falls in a canyon deep in Auyanepuy. The falls were put on the map by an American pilot, Jimmie Angel, who landed on the huge mesa in 1937 looking for gold. His plane may be seen today in a park by the Ciudad Bolivar airport.

Gold and diamonds are found, in fact, in many tributaries of the Caroni and Paragua rivers. Diamond prospecting is a case of every man for himself and the fever is highest in the dry season. At rumors of a new strike thousands of miners converge, setting up primitive towns overnight. The towns which outlive the bulla help to settle new areas of the sparsely populated state—Santa Elena de Uairén in the 1940s following discovery of the 154-carat "Barrabás" stone, Icabarú in the 1950s, Guaniamo in the 1970s. The gold rush centers of the nineteenth century, El Callao and El Dorado, are seeing new exploitation spurred by high gold prices.

The treasure of El Dorado fame eluded Sir Walter Raleigh twice. On a 1595 expedition he was turned back at the Caroni by rains but wrote a best-seller, The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bountiful Empire of Guiana; the second failure in 1618 cost the life of his son to Spanish guns and his own head to King James's wrath.

Ironically, Guayana's true riches do not lie in gold but in iron and bauxite. Not one but three mountains of iron, the most famous being Cerro Bolivar (discovered in 1947), add up to two billion tons of reserves. Bauxite reserves discovered in 1977 at Los Pijiguoas promise 200 million tons. Converting raw materials into national wealth is the job of the regional development agency, Corporación Venezolana de Guayana. CVG's first step in 1961 was to forge the towns of Puerto Ordaz and San Felix at the confluence of the Orinoco and Caroni Rivers into a new city. Ciudad Guayana, today the hub of heavy industry, is now Venezuela's fifth largest city with nearly half a million inhabitants. From docks on the Orinoco, ocean-going ships load iron ore and briquettes, steel pipes and wire, aluminum and ferro-alloys for the world markets. All this is made possible by cheap
SOUTH AMERICA

hydropower from giant Guri Dam, only fifty miles up the Caroni River. The 500-foot-high dam can produce ten million kilowatts of power.

Ciudad Bolívar

The historic trading center of Ciudad Bolívar is the capital of Bolívar State. The 95,200 square miles of the state cover a quarter of Venezuela but have less than 5 percent of the population. Located 270 miles upstream from the sea, Ciudad Bolívar overlooks the Orinoco from a rocky promontory. Its picturesque waterfront was long the starting point for explorers, missionaries, and merchants heading upriver to the vast plains of Apure and forests of the Amazon Territory. Today a city of 250,000, the old port conserves the flavor of colonial roots, independence battles, and export heydays of rubber, chicle, sarrupía, or tonka beans, copaiba oil, palm fiber, hides, and cattle. Although airplanes and jeeps have taken over from riverboats for travel to the interior, “CB” remains the center for gold and diamond prospectors who buy supplies here and sell nuggets and rough stones to international buyers and jewelers.

It was formerly called Angostura (meaning “narrow”) because here the great Orinoco is only two-thirds of a mile wide. But its waters are over eighty feet deep and can rise another thirty-five during the August peak, carrying rains from over two-thirds of Venezuela and a quarter of Colombia. A few miles from Ciudad Bolívar the beautiful Angostura Bridge arches across to Anzoategui State. The name Angostura also identifies the famous bitters, first decoccted here in 1824 from the bark of a tree, used locally against fevers, and later made in Trinidad.

A patriot stronghold, Angostura was capital of the struggling republic from 1817 until the triumph of Independence in 1821. Here Bolívar gathered arms from the Antilles and veterans from England, Ireland, and Germany for his foreign legions. A Scot, Andrew Roderick, printed the republic’s first newspaper, the Correo del Orinoco, or “Orinoco Mail,” in a house on the waterfront which is today one of the city’s several museums.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR BOLÍVAR STATE

HOW TO GET AROUND. By plane, Avensa and Aeropostal jets link Maiquetia with Ciudad Bolívar and Puerto Ordaz (Ciudad Guayana) 6 times a day. From Ciudad Guayana, jets fly out to Porlamar, Barcelona, Maracaibo, and Valencia. From Ciudad Bolívar, Avensa flies to Canaima, Aeropostal to Maturin, and Aerotáy (085-25907) to Cúcuta, Los Pijiguaos, and Puerto Ayacucho. Ciudad Bolívar is the base for Aerotáy’s exciting Gran Sabana route to Santa Elena de Uairén, skimming tablelands and dark rivers on the way to Camarata Mission, Urimá, and Icarami. Ask about Aerotáy’s day excursion to Kavac Canyon to view Angel Falls.

By bus. Interstate pullman lines such as Expresa de Guayana (02-545-4952) and Expresa de Oriente (02-545-3040) go all the way from Caracas to Ciudad Bolívar, Ciudad Guayana, and El Dorado (16 hours). The Ciudad Bolívar bus terminal on Ave. República at Ave. Sucre, like the air terminal, is communications hub for the entire region. A small Turismo office supplies information. For puestos go out of state to Tucupita, El Tigre, and even Margarita, and cover every town in the state to the Brazilian frontier. From Santa Elena de Uairén a Brazilian line goes daily to Boa Vista. From San Félix (Ciudad Guayana), buses cross the Orinoco by ferry for Maturin.

Plane rentals. For a flying visit to Gran Sabana missions of Cavanayen and Camarata, charter an air-taxi at the CB airport: Comererma (085-23255), Aerodín (085-26279), Runaca (085-24010), and Transandina (085-21462). The last 3 give daily service to gold and diamond mines (about ½ hour); a seat may cost $40.

Jeep rentals. 4-wheel-drive vehicles may be rented at Puerto Ordaz airport from Hertz (086-223917); Budget (086-591492); ACO (086-591171); Rail (086-
VENezuela 603

591746); and National Car (086-222225), which also has an airport office in Ciudad Bolivar (085-27090). Advance reservation is essential for jeeps, up to a month ahead during the peak holiday seasons of Dec.—Apr. and Jul.—Aug. Credit card required.

Ciudad Bolivar

HOTELS. For definitions of price categories see "Facts at Your Fingertips" earlier in this chapter. Two new hotels fill a need for first-class facilities.

La Joya Real. Expensive. Av. Jesús Soto opposite airport (085-27911, telex 85112). 12 acres of gardens, pool, convention rooms, terrace soda fountain, restaurant, bar. 73 rooms. Big pool is open to non-guests.

Río Orinoco Venantur. Expensive. 1½ miles from Cd. Bolivar off highway to the Angostura Bridge (085-42011, telex 85266). Caracas fax 02-9781497. New 5-story hotel on the banks of the Orinoco; 125 double rooms, 2 pools, restaurant, bar/disco, shops, jogging path, pedal-boats, on 28 acres of grounds.

Also on the waterfront, right downtown: Gran Hotel Bolivar. Moderate. Paseo Orinoco (085-20100/02). Distinguished old hotel, 70 rooms, good restaurant, nearby parking.


Ciudad Guayana


RESTAURANTS. Downtown spots such as La Cucelira, La Forchetta di Oro, Key Club, Mario’s, El Embajador, and El Churrasco are popular for satisfying fare at moderate prices. La Romanina and Paolo’s, expensive, are posh, with arctic air-conditioning. In Alta Vista, two popular spots are Café Salto Angel and Café Continental.

Guayana Highlands

SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND TOURS. Corp. Venezolana de Guayana, Edificio CVG, Alta Vista, Ciudad Guayana (086-226155). The CVG library and Information Dept. (086-222714) give an overview of tourism facilities as well as CVG industries. Most plants provide tours for the public on weekdays (call for hours—best times are 8 A.M. and 1 P.M.). Sidor, the giant steel complex, has 500 acres of roofed plants and is still expanding. The output of Alcasa (086-222733) and Venalum (086-222977) is being enlarged to 750,000 tons of primary aluminum.
Guri Dam, officially called Represa Raul Leoni, with its artificial lake covering 1,600 square miles, is a major attraction for engineers and tourists, and is located 60 miles south of Ciudad Guayana. Built in stages over 21 years, when completed in 1936 Guri was the world’s second largest dam, with 10 million kilowatt capacity. The dam’s operator, Edelca (086–229411) conducts free bus tours; get a pass at Guri Visitors Center and check tour times. There is a restaurant and a hotel open to visitors. Hotel Guri, at the dam. Expensive. (086–229411). 58 rooms, pool.

Cerro Bolívar, the iron mountain which inspired Puerto Ordaz’s founding in 1952 as an iron port for US Steel, is worked by CVG’s Ferrominera del Orinoco (iron was nationalized in 1975). Passes to visit the terraced 1,800-foot-high iron deposit may be obtained from Ferrominera in Puerto Ordaz (086–221584) or from the mine administration in the company town, Ciudad Piar, 30 miles south of Guri.

**Adventure Tours and Guides.** With more rivers than roads and more mountains than towns, the Guayana region is wide open for treks. A crop of “adventure” firms now makes reaching the top of Roraima or the foot of Angel Falls without hassle a reality for foreigners, who need bring no special equipment. (See Treks and Adventure Tours in “Facts at Your Fingertips” section for addresses and phone numbers.)

Mt. Roraima treks (10–12 days), covering a lot of the Gran Sabana by jeep for $50 to $100 a day according to services and party. *Last World Adventures* organizes hikes to the summits of Roraima or Auyantepui (the “Devil Mountain” of Angel Falls); provides all food and equipment, English-speaking leaders. *Morgan Tours* arranges treks for parties of 2 and up by plane, jeep, or foot, with guide and cook. *Wek to Tours*, (at the Rasil, 086–223405) takes groups of 4 to 8 hiking up Roraima or Auyantepui, or boating on the Yurunari or the Caura (Para Falls). *Happy Tours* in Ciudad Guayana goes camping to Kavanayen Mission by jeep (4 persons, 4-day minimum). A jeep circle of the Gran Sabana’s many waterfalls, with a look-in at gold mines and a return trip by air from Santa Elena, is offered for groups by *Selva Tours*.

Getting on the rivers can be more exciting, if less active. Starting with the *Selva Tours* fishing excursions to Guri Lake, by the day, longer trips can be arranged to go up the dark, swift Paragus River for 3–4 days, stopping at a diamond dredge and Urama rapids.

**WHAT TO SEE.** Ciudad Bolívar. Great view of city and river from small hilltop fort of El Zamuro. The Jesús Soto Modern Art Museum on Ave. Germánia, named after Venezuelan founder of kinetic art, has changing shows. Quinta San Isidro, on Ave. Táchira, is a beautifully conserved colonial country house where Simón Bolívar lived in 1818–19. Surrounding Plaza Bolívar are the restored Cathedral of Nuestra Señora de las Nieves (popular religious festivities are held on Aug. 5), the eighteenth-century Government House, and the colonial school famous as site of the 1819 Angostura Congress. The Correo del Orinoco Museum is on the riverside Pasco Orinoco, a busy street with crowded shopping arcades and old two-story houses. Gold nuggets, or cocahones, and diamonds are worked by craftsmen here into earrings and necklaces. One workshop, the Taller de Diamantes Universal Guayanésa, is in the arcade called Paisaje Guayana. Ask at the old Gran Hotel Bolívar for others.

Ciudad Guayana. Before the dark waters of the Caroni River join the muddy Orinoco they spread 8 miles wide in a series of cataracts around islands. Alongside Cachamay cataracts stretches a pretty park; adjacent Loebling Park has a small zoo of capybaras, giant otters, and deer. Access to lovely Llovizna Falls and Park near Macagua I power plant is by way of San Félix (take the road towards El Pao mine). Hours of 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (no picnicers) also apply to the Spanish ruins of La Concepción Mission, the first (1724) of the Caroni Missions. From the road junction the distance is 20 miles to El Pao. Passes are issued on weekdays for touring the mine, really a mountain of iron. Ore trains from El Pao unload at Palma docks in San Félix.

Los Castillos. One hour down the Orinoco from Puerto Ordaz are two colonial forts. The higher of the two, San Diego de Alcalá, dates from 1747 and, with its star-shaped design, commands land and water. The smaller and lower, Fort San Francisco, was built in 1678–81. The forts controlled all river traffic until 1943. There is a road from San Félix, 25 miles, to the Castillos. Excursions by river (half
day, very sunny) leave from the Inter-Continental’s pier. (See Treks and Adventure Tours in “Facts at Your Fingertips” for agencies and addresses.)

Canaima and Angel Falls. A few minutes downstream from the world’s highest falls, Avena’s jet lands every morning at bewitchingly beautiful Canaima, framed by majestic tepuya, savanna, and forest. The sherry-dark waters of the Carrao here thunder over the Hacha Falls’ seven cataracts into quiet Canaima lagoon, which is ringed with pink sands. Good swimming, boating, and excursions from a few hours to several days, run by the Hermanos Jiménez—the do 4-day river trips for about $150 a person to Angel Falls, minimum group 6. Canaima camp, run by Hoturvensa, accommodates 160 in simple cabins; plentiful food. Avena offers 3 days/2 nights, including boat ride, meals, and flight, for about $350 per couple from Ciudad Bolivar; additional night, $50. Canaima is usually full on holidays and weekends. Reservations for vacation times should be made 2 months in advance through Hoturvensa (02-562-5905), 562-3366, fax 563-0225); in the U.S., through a travel agent or Avena (212-956-8500, 305-381-8001).

Ucayima Camp. Above Hacha Falls is “Jungle Rudy” Truffino’s charming base on the banks of the Carrao. Comfortable cabins, $50 a day with meals. The atmosphere is intimate, guests come from all over the world. Rudy’s mid-week trips to Angel Falls leave early on Mon. (July–Nov.) and cost about $550 a person including pickup from Canaima, 3 nights on excursion (cots), and 2 nights in Ucayima Camp.

Kavak Falls, which lie south of the vast mesa of Ayangotepe, are now on Aeretoey’s turbo-prop route. Leaving from Ciudad Bolivar at 9 A.M. every day except Mon., Aeretoey flies over Angel Falls on the way to Kamarata Valley. An hour’s hike leads into a narrow gorge or cerra with a stream falling from above. Take swim suit, change of shoes and clothes, windbreaker, and plastic bags to protect your camera.

Paragua River. Sixty miles south of Ciudad Fier and the iron mines of Cerro Bolivar is the old river port of La Paragua, founded in 1770. River trips can be arranged to Isla Casabe diamond dredge or to Urama Falls, 4–5 hours upstream. With its private airfield, Hato El Burro is a good base for seeing Guri, Kavak, or the Paragua, guided by multilingual experts (Ackermann 02-782-0797).

On the road to Brazil through the Gran Sabana, credit cards and traveler’s checks are of less use than new tires, spare gas, and food for picnics. Starting from the Caroni ferry crossing at Paso Caruashi (6 A.M. to 6 P.M.), the route winds east through low hills to Upata, founded in 1762 by Capuchin missionaries. A dairy and farming center then and now, Upata grew rich in the nineteenth-century gold rush by means of ox and mule trains to the mines of El Callao. Among inexpensive hostels are the Comerco, Calle Ayacucho No. 25-1 (088-21156), known for good Italian food, and the large Andrea (088-22211), at the Upata exit.

The tiny town of Guasipati was once state capital of the “gold province” called Yuruari during the stampede of 1850–90, and its cemetery holds the graves of many men who met violent deaths. On its main street there is a good coffee house by the plaza, and a new modest motel, the Reina (088-67357). Today gold is mined in El Callao by the state enterprise Minerven, producing some 400 pounds a month. In the old days prospectors poured into every tributary of the Yuruari and Cuyuni, taking out as much as 55 tons of gold during the peak years of 1874–88. As a legacy of the Negro miners who came from Trinidad, English lingers today in the calypson which make El Callao’s Carnival the liveliest in Venezuela. For a look at gold crushers and cyanide flotation process, ask at Minerven office in El Peru (086-691780).

Tumeremo, founded in 1788 as the last of the Caroni missions, still has the air of a frontier town. Here is the last air service (4 Aeropostal flights a week from Ciudad Bolivar), bank, CANTV telephone service, premium gas, spare parts, and ice before Santa Elena de Uairen, 257 miles south. Bus and jeep services to Santa Elena leave every morning, often bypassing El Dorado. An inexpensive hotel on the plaza is the Central (088-71264). The ill fame of sultry El Dorado as a prison town is fading in the light of gold strikes since high prices have re-started old mines. This is the end of the line for buses from Caracas such as Expreso de Oriente which cover the 600 miles in 16 hours. Lodgings can be found at cheap new hotels, and at a riverside tourist camp with garden, Campamento Turistico El Dorado. 8 rooms run by Londoner Richard Coles. The penal colony is actually not in El Dorado but some miles beyond the Cuyuni River bridge.
SOUTH AMERICA

Straight and hot, the road tunnels through the lush Imataca Forest Reserve to km 88, San Isidro, the last gasoline, food, and Santa Elena junct stop, now a gathering place for gold miners including English-speaking Arecuna Indians from Guyana. At La Clarita, km 85, there is a hostel.

The entrance to Canaima National Park, shortly after San Isidro, is marked by the mammoth "Virgin's Rock." From here, the ascent to the cool plateau of the Gran Sabana is so steep it is called "La Escalera," the stairway. The road was opened as recently as 1973. Heavy rains erode the loose, sandy (and extremely infertile) soils, making road engineers' work a misery but at the same time feeding gorgeous waterfalls. Off the 40-mile detour to Cavanayen Mission there are two spectacular falls reached by rough jeep tracks: Aponguao Falls (Chinak-Meru), 370 feet high, and Tordín, about 300 feet. Each deserves an early start in the day. A chain of massive table mountains crowned by dramatic clouds dwarfs the Catholic mission in Cavanayen valley. During school holidays the padres allow visitors to stay overnight for a few dollars at the stone boarding school. Chinston camp, 11 miles before Cavanayen, offers basic lodging.

Between here and Santa Elena there are splendid camping sites by streams (the water is quite safe for drinking) and more lovely waterfalls—dropping west below the road are Kama Falls (160 feet) and La Laja, about the same height. The catastrophes at the Yuruaní River, however, are the haunt of merciless blackflies. A 4-wheel-drive track leading to Roraima and Kukenam mesas, looming in the east, takes off beyond San Francisco de Yuruaní, a Pemon settlement. Jeeps penetrate almost to the foot of Mt. Roraima in the dry season (Dec.-Apr.), but even then electric storms justify the Indian name for the mountain as Great Mother of Streams, whose waters flow into 3 basins: the Orinoco by way of the Caroni, the Amazon in Brazil, and the Essequibo in Guyana. Trekkers usually hire guides at Paraipey, an Indian village reached by a 15-mile jeep track ($12 a day).

Nine miles from Brazil, Santa Elena is a growing frontier town complete with hospital, army post, gas station, bank, air service, and telephone office. Its first inhabitant arrived in 1923, built a house on the banks of the Uairén, and called the place Elena after his daughter. Many of the 27 children of founder Lucas Fernández Peha today raise cattle, run shops, or work gold around Santa Elena. Mines still produce gold and diamonds in Icabari, at the end of the road 70 miles west. New lodgings such as La Nona on the road entering town, and the Friedenau's five cabins in Cielo Azul district, are nicer than the crowded Hotel Las Fronteras on Calle Urbaneja. Life is springing up in pioneer farms around El Pauji and tourist camps such as Cañarquin near Icabari. Camp Shalilí-Ko opened in 1986 in a lovely wooded spot before El Pauji, has 10 cabins with beds for 40; ample food, excursions to El Abisimo Canyon overlooking Brazil; great hiking and birding. For Shalilí-Ko reservations, including air charter, call Ana Ponte (02-752-6767, 751-5009). Outside Icabari, Villa Tranquila offers six comfortable cabins with bath, in a well-run camp by a river. Reservations in Caracas through Venguides (02-951-6211, fax 951-6544).

AMAZONAS FEDERAL TERRITORY

Just one hour by jet south of Caracas is Puerto Ayacucho, capital of the Amazonas Federal Territory (70,200 square miles), whose forests, rivers, and mountains stretch south to Brazil, half a degree from the equator. The territory occupies one-fifth of Venezuela but has scarcely 80,000 inhabitants in 180 miles of roads; it is still little known away from the rivers which afford access. Here are the headwaters of the great Orinoco River which runs over 320,000 square miles of Venezuela and Colombia through 2,000 tributaries. The Orinoco has the peculiarity, however, of feeding some of its water into the Amazon basin via the Casiquiare River which reverses its current in the rainy season. This canal was first recorded by Alexander Humboldt, the famous German explorer, who reached here in 1800.
A dozen different Indian tribes, each with its own culture and language, make the forests and rivers their home. The Makiritare, or Yekuana, are masters of river navigation and the art of hollowing dugout canoes (curiwas and bongos) from tree trunks, some eighteen yards long. The Piaroa build superb conical houses, or shuarutas, twelve yards high and thatched with palm. The Sanemá have no chiefs and no one gives or takes orders. The Yanomami, who move freely over the Brazilian border, have only recently learned about missionaries; many have never seen white men.

This land of “Green Mansions” typified by W.H. Hudson has long fascinated and frustrated foreign travelers. Lack of communications and prohibitions against visiting Indian territory without an armful of permits have dampened tourism. Gradually, this is changing. A road now links Puerto Ayacucho, at the northwest corner of the territory, with Caicara in Bolívar State, and work is going ahead on a 185-mile road to San Juan de Manapiare, also from Caicara. The tourist camp at Yutaje in the Manapiare Valley is popular with fly-in weekenders; even remoter camps run specialized tours.

Puerto Ayacucho is a river port of 24,000 inhabitants situated some 570 miles from the Orinoco’s mouth. The Atures and Maipures rapids here interrupt all river navigation. Goods bound for the upper Orinoco must be trucked forty miles south of the rapids to Samariapo. Colombia borders the west bank of the Orinoco until the Atabapo River.

Hot and dusty in the dry season (December through April) and hot and muggy in the rains (May through November), there is little to distinguish Puerto Ayacucho from other tropical trading posts. Founded in 1924, it has a shady Plaza Bolívar surrounded by the Town Hall, state and Indian Affairs offices (ORAI), and Salesian church and school. There is an Ethnological Museum, movie theater, an old hotel of note, and several modest restaurants. The water is clean and the government health service has eradicated yellow fever and smallpox. But malaria is on the rise and travelers to jungle destinations should take antimalaria pills such as chloroquine and paludrine, two doses before arrival and two doses weekly. Tropical disease control is studied at CAICET, a research center.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR AMAZONAS TERRITORY

GETTING THERE. All traffic, ground, air, or river, goes through Puerto Ayacucho. By air, Daily Aeropostal and Avensa jets from Maiquetia, via San Fernando de Apure. Twice-weekly flights by Aerotrop from Ciudad Bolívar-Caicara. By road, Por puestos and buses cover the Caicara route daily. Four-wheel-drive vehicles using the new Llanos road from San Fernando de Apure cross the Orinoco on the ferry or chalana between Puerto Píez and El Burro. By river, Orinoco ferries haul goods, people, and cars up from Ciudad Guayana, Ciudad Bolívar, and Cabruta. Depending on high or low water, the journey can take up to 3 days. The ferry is uneventful and cheap at $30 for car plus passengers from Cabruta, but provides no food.

GETTING AROUND. To see the Puerto Ayacucho environs, a group of 4 is ideal for hiring a jeep plus guide. Nearby sights include Piaroa villages of Raya, Gavilán, and Carinaguíta and Guahibo communities at Mirabal, Coromoto, and Cerro Pintado, the latter named for an enormous rock bearing a prehistoric carving of a serpent. The petroglyph is 50 yards long and has a sister snake on a rock west of the Orinoco, in Colombia. A jeep is also needed to reach cool bathing spots on the green Cataniapo River and in the Jungle Toboggan Park with its natural slide and rock pools. Jeep rentals from: Tour Amazonas opposite the Obelisco, Ave. 23 de Enero (048-21337), credit card required. Turistar, No. 17 Ave. 23 de Enero (048-21993); Visa credit card. About $30 a day.
SOUTH AMERICA

Six-seater air taxis go regularly to Maraca and San Carlos de Rio Negro near Brazil, to San Fernando de Atabapo and San Juan de Manapiare, as well as to San Fernando in Apure State and Caicara in Bolivar. For charters by the hour, contact Aguyus (048-21443) or Transportes Aéreos Wayumi (048-21635).

Boats or dugouts, from small curiaras to large bongos, can be hired by arrangement for a day's excursion up the Orinoco, from Samariapo to Isla Ratón, where there is a large Salesian Mission. How much this costs will depend on bargaining, but $50 should go a long way. From Puerto Ayacucho docks, launches cross to the Colombian side; for less than $2 anyone may go for the day after registering at the Guardia Nacional dock post. Launches also regularly take passengers down to Puerto Páez at the mouth of the Meta River opposite Puerto Carreño, a busy Colombian port.

Although its dangers are greatly exaggerated by moviemakers, the Amazonas Territory is far enough from civilization to make credit cards impractical and even banks have been known to balk at traveler's checks. Cash will avoid hang-ups.


Canicuruma. Expensive. Located on the banks of the Orinoco at Garcia rapids (048-22574). The kind of hotel/camp this area has long needed. 60 doubles in Indian-style, round, thatched-roof houses (air-conditioned). Swimming in the river or in a gigantic pool. For tour packages, contact Caracas agencies such as Diadema (02-724856/8, fax 724556).

Toucan Resort. Expensive. (048-22601). Well-run guest house north of Puerto Ayacucho where 16 doubles serve as base for trips by river or to Indian villages. (Contact Alpi Tours.)

TOURIST INFORMATION AND TOURS. The Amazonas Territory, long a mystery to tourists and travel agents alike, is at last open to adventure tours. In Puerto Ayacucho, Pepe Jaime of Tobogans Tours, Av. Rio Negro (048-21700), handles groups as large as 50, from 1 to 10 days, combining travel by plane, jeep, and falco—large dugout with outboard motor. The star excursion, or Estrella Tour, to vertical Mt. Autana goes by dugout up the Orinoco, Sipapo, and Autana rivers, 4 days, and provides all food and camping gear. Each tourist is given his own hammock and shown how to sling and use it.

Selva Tours (Av. Orinoco, 048-22122), from its branch office, arranges private flights to jungle lodges near San Juan de Manapiare and river trips on the Orinoco for 1 to 4 days. Prices run approximately $100 a day per person (min. 4) for river expeditions, more when charter flights are required.

Vanguides (02-951-6211, telex 24714 BVENCV) flies those with more money than time from Caracas to the Amazonas and "Lost World," stopping at Yutaje camp, Piaroa communities in Guanay Valley, and Cascuri Mission, before heading on to Canaima and points east in a spectacular week-long circle, at a price tag of about $200 per day.

For a less strenuous vacation, Yutajé Camp in the Manapiare Valley appeals to families who prefer bed, bath, cabin, and sit-down meals. Built and run year-round by an Italian, José Raggi, the camp has a 5,000-foot airstrip and accommodations for about 30. Lots of birds, howler monkeys, treks through woods, great bass fishing, waterfalls, lagoon with otters, freshwater dolphins. Alpi Tours (02-283-4677, fax 284-7098), flies groups from Caracas to Yutajé, 5 degrees from the equator, at a cost of about $400 a person (3 days/2 nights), all inclusive. Alpi's Linda Sondermann reports that the beautiful jungle base of Callo Santo in the Manapiare Valley has reopened with new lodgings, including some 2-room chalet with private baths. Guests here can sleep in hammocks. From Puerto Ayacucho by commercial plane, the 3-day package runs $350 a person (min. 4).

(See Treks and Adventure Tours in "Facts at Your Fingertips" for addresses.)

CRAFTS. From the many tribes of the Orinoco headwaters come handsome baskets and wapax, or trays, masks, blowpipes, feather and bead adornments, rings made of jet, carved body stamps, and jaguar stools of hardwood. The Artesania Amazonas shop at the airport has a good supply. An early Friday morning crafts market in Puerto Ayacucho attracts hundreds of Indian artisans to the plaza fronting the Museo de Etnologia, which has its own good shop.
PARQUES NACIONALES Y MONUMENTOS NATURALES DE VENEZUELA
NATIONAL PARKS AND NATURAL MONUMENTS OF VENEZUELA

No | Parques Nacionales                        | No | Monumentos Naturales
---|------------------------------------------|---|------------------------
1  | Henri Pittier                            | I | Cueva del Guácharo     
2  | Sierra Nevada                            | II| Morros de San Juan     
3  | Guatopo                                  | III| María Lionza            
4  | El Avila                                 | IV| Cerro Santa Ana         
5  | Yurubí                                   | V | Laguna de Las Marites   
6  | Canaima                                  | VI| Las Tetas de María Guevara 
7  | Yacambú                                  | VII| Cerro Matasiete y Guayamúri 
8  | Cueva de la Quebrada del Toro           | VIII| Piedra del Cocuy       
9  | Archipiélago Los Roques                  | IX | Cerro Autana            
10 | Macarao                                  | X | Morros de Macaira       
11 | Mochima                                  | XI| Cueva Alfredo Jahn      
12 | Laguna de La Restinga                   | XII| Laguna de Urao          
13 | Médanos de Coro                          | XIII| La Chorrera de la González 
14 | Laguna de Tacarigua                     | XIV| Cerro Platíllón         
15 | Cerro El Copey                           | XV | Loma de León            
16 | Aguaro-Guariquito                        | XVI| Formaciones de Tepuyes  
17 | Morrocoy                                 | XVII| Pico Codazzi           
18 | El Guácharo                              |    |                        
19 | Terepaima                                |    |                        
20 | Jaua Sarisarifiana                       |    |                        
21 | Serranía de La Neblina                   |    |                        
22 | Yapacana                                 |    |                        
23 | Duído Marahuaca                          |    |                        
24 | Península de Paria                       |    |                        
25 | Perijá                                   |    |                        
26 | El Tamá                                 |    |                        
27 | San Esteban                              |    |                        
28 | Sierra de San Luis                       |    |                        
29 | Cinarucu-Capanaparo                      |    |                        
30 | Guaramacal                               |    |                        
31 | Dinira                                   |    |                        
32 | Páramos del Batallón y La Negra          |    |                        
33 | Chorro El Indio                          |    |                        
34 | Sierra La Culata                         |    |                        
35 | Cerro Saroche                            |    |                        
36 | Turuápamo                                |    |                        
37 | Mariusa - Delta del Orinoco              |    |                        
38 | Ciénagas del Catatumbo                  |    |                        
39 | Parima - Tapirapocó                      |    |                        

Visualizado por: Comité de Turismo
Fuente (Source): Inparques Septiembre (September) 1991
DOMESTIC TOURISM IN VENEZUELA

CUADRO NO. 5 - 3

VENEZUELA

TIEMPO DE PEFJANENCIA EN EL ULTIMO VIAJE REALIZADO
DE ESPARCIMIENTO POBLACION MAYOR DE 15 ANOS

PERIODO 1990 - 1991

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TOTAL 1141978.

FUENTE: ECOPLAN

FECHA: DICIEMBRE, 1991
CUADRO No. 5 - 2
VENezuela
MOTIVOS DE VIAJES DE LA POBLACION MAYORES DE 15 ANOS
PERIODO 1990 - 1991

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| NEGOCIOS                  | 262298.     
| SALUD                     | 258007.     
| MISION-REUNION            | 70328.      
| RELIGION                  | 41037.      
| DEPORTE                   | 41398.      
| OTROS                     | 101609.     
| TOTAL                     | 3636875.    

FUENTE: O.C.E.I. - ENCUESTA TURISTICA 1991
FECHA: DICIEMBRE, 1.991
CUADRO No. 5 - 4

VENEZUELA

POBLACION MAYOR DE 15 ANOS FECHA DEL ULTIMO VIAJE DE RECREACION Y ESPARCIMIENTO

PERIODO AGOSTO 1990 - SEPTIEMBRE 1991

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**FUENTE:** O.C.E.I. "ENCUESTA TURISTICA 1.991"

**FECHA:** ABRIL, 1.992
CUADRO No. 5 - 11
VENEZUELA
TURISTAS LLEGADOS, SEGÚN CONTINENTES
PERIODO 1985 - 1989

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ECOPLAN
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GRAFICO No. 5 - 4
VENEZUELA. TURISTAS LLEGADOS SEGÚN CONTINENTES
AÑO 1990

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VENEZUELA
TURISTA LLEGADOS, POR MES
PERIODO 1985 - 1989

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TOTAL ANOS 268733 527179 465499 372743 418449

FUENTE: O.C.E.I. - ANUARIO ESTADISTICO DE VENEZUELA, 1.989
ECOPLAN
FECHA: DICIEMBRE, 1.991
TURISTAS LLEGADOS A VENEZUELA, MENSUAL Y AÑO
TOURIST ARRIVALS BY MONTH AND YEAR
1984 - 1990
Figura (Figure) 1
Turistas Llegados e Inversiones a Nivel Mundial
World Tourist Arrivals & Capital Investment
1989

Pasajeros a Nivel Mundial
World Passenger Arrivals
1989

Inversiones en Turismo
Travel and Tourism Capital Investment
(USS Billions)
1989

Western Europe 58%
Middle East 2%
Africa 3%
Latin America 3%
Eastern Europe 9%
Australia, China, New Zealand, Japan, Hong Kong, Other Pacific
North America 11%
Caribbean 2%
Wester Europe $92
Middle East $14
Africa $5
Latin America $7
Eastern Europe $75
North America $37
Caribbean $1
Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Asia, China and Other Pacific

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<tr>
<th>País/Country</th>
<th>Gastos de Promoción Nacional/ National Marketing Expenditure (US$ 000's)</th>
<th>Publicidad/Advertising (US$ 000's)</th>
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* Estimated

National Marketing Expenditure Source: Caribbean Tourism Organization
Advertising: Leading National Advertisers, Inc.
Publishers Bureau, Inc., and the Arbitron Company
Figura (Figure) 3
Turistas Llegados a Venezuela por Región
Tourist Arrivals by Region of Origin
1984 - 1990

Turistas Llegados a Venezuela por Mercados
Tourists Arrivals by Principal Markets
1984 - 1990
Figura (Figure) 4

Turistas Llegados a Venezuela de Europa
Tourist Arrivals From Europe
1984 - 1990

Turistas Llegados a Venezuela de Norteamérica
Tourist Arrivals From North America
1984 - 1990

Fuente (Source): Corporaturismo
Visualizado por: Comité de Turismo
**Orígenes en Orden de Importancia**

**Origins in Order of Importance**

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CUADRO NO. 2 - 14
PERMANENCIA Y GASTO PROMEDIO
POR TURISTA EXTRANJERO

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MEDIA: 7,7

TOTAL: 267

FUENTE: FONDIEN "PERFIL DEL TURISTA INTERNACIONAL"
FECHA: MAYO 1.992
Figura (Figure) 10
Proyección de Turistas Llegados 1991-1996
Projection of Tourist Arrivals 1991-1996

Fuente (Source): Corpoturismo y Turismo Venezuela.

Visualizado por: Comité de Turismo
Figura (Figure) 9
Mercados y Origen
Hotel Markets and Origins
1990-1991

Segmentos del Mercado (Market Segments)
1990

- Camas no ocupadas: 36%
- Negocios: 31.36%
- Grupos y Convenciones: 8.96%
- Turistas: 23.68%

1991*

- Camas no ocupadas: 32.1%
- Negocios: 31.91%
- Grupos y Convenciones: 26.48%
- Turistas: 9.51%
- Extranjeros: 31.49%

Ocupación Doble % (Double Occupancy %)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>49%</td>
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*Nota: Datos por el 1er Semestre - 1991 Data for 1st Semester.
Figura (Figure) 7
Oferta y Ubicación Hotelera
Hotel Room Supply and Location
1er Semestre (Semester) 1991

Cantidad Habitaciones
Quantity of Rooms

Ubicación Hotelera
Hotel Location

Fuente (Source): Corpoturismo
"Turismo Guía para el Inversionista", Septiembre, 1991

Visualized by: Comité de Turismo
Figura (Figure) 8
Estadísticas de la Industria Hotelera
Hotel Industry Statistics
1983 - 1er Semestre (Semester) 1991

Niveles de ocupación promedio (%) - Average Occupancy (%)

Margen de utilidad promedio (%) - Average profit margins (%)

Tarifa diaria promedio rentas - Average daily rental rate

Caracas Bs.  Interior Bs.  Promedio en Bs.  Average in Bolivars  Promedio en $  Average in Dollars

Fuente (Source): Self Valeri & Acosta, Junio (June) 1991
CUADRO U.4
ESTADO ZULIA
TURISTAS LLEGADOS AL ZULIA
POR EL AEROPUERTO DE LA CHINITA
PERÍODO 1985-1989

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CUADRO U.5
ZULIA Y VENEZUELA
NUMEROS DE HOTELES CATEGORIZADOS
PERÍODO 1987-1989

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FUENTE: 1.- ANUARIOS ESTADISTICOS DE VENEZUELA. OCEI.
CUADRO N°. 2-5
TIPLOGIA DEL ALOJAMIENTO

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FUENTE: FONDENE "PERFIL DEL TURISTA INTERNACIONAL"
FECHA: ABRIL 1.992
CUADRO U.6
ZULIA Y VENEZUELA
HOTELESexistentes
HABITACIONES Y CAMAS
PERIODO 1986-1988

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FUENTE: ANUARIOS ESTADISTICOS DE VENEZUELA. OCEI.
CUADRO No. 2 - 16
OFERTA HOTELERA COMPLEMENTARIA
AL PROYECTO

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<th>MARUMA</th>
<th>KRISTOFF</th>
<th>EL PASEO</th>
<th>CABIMAS</th>
<th>AMERICA</th>
<th>GH DELICIAS</th>
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FUENTE: ECOPLAN, INVESTIGACIONES PROPIAS
FECHA: MAYO, 1992
Tabla (Table) 9
Hoteles Disponibles y Clasificación 1991
Hotel Supply and Categories 1991

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<th>% TOTAL</th>
<th>CANT. HOTELES NUMBER OF HOTELS</th>
<th>% TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Fuente (Source): CORPOTURISMO

Tabla (Table) 10
Ubicación de Hoteles
Hotel Location
1991

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<th>Cantidad Hoteles Quantity Hotels</th>
<th>Cantidad Hab Quantity Rooms</th>
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<td>Selva (Jungle)</td>
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<td>1,424</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>27,765</td>
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LINEA AEROPOSTAL VENEZOLANA: The most convenient route between The United States and The Caribbean, in comfortable MD-83's

AEROPOSTAL... in USA, makes Orlando and Atlanta your connection with the rest of the world.

... in Caracas, connects you with the Caribbean's 10 most important airports to 22 cities in Venezuela.
Tabla (Table) 8
Pasajeros Llegados por Aerolínea y Porcentaje del Mercado 1990
Selected Airline Passenger Arrivals and Market Shares 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AEROLINEA</th>
<th>TOTAL PASAJEROS</th>
<th>% DEL TOTAL</th>
<th>% DEL TOTAL</th>
<th>% Cambio '89 Vs '90</th>
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Fuente (Source): Corporación Entyre C.A.
Section VI

THEMATIC BACKGROUND MATERIAL

Thematic background material relating to the culture, history and physical attributes of Venezuela is presented in this section.
SPECIAL EVENTS. Depending on the region, towns celebrate their patron saint's day with fireworks, religious processions, street dances, bulldogging, and contests including climbing a greased pole. Colorful customs blend cultural sources from Africa, Spain, and pre-Columbian America. Some fiestas blossom into large regional events with bullfights, cattle fairs, and beauty contests, as in Mérida (Feria del Sol, 3rd week in Feb.), San Cristóbal in January, and Maracaibo (Feria de La Chinita, mid-Nov.).

January: Feast of the Three Kings (6) brings out the entire town of San Miguel de Bocanó, Trujillo State, for costume parades, street dances, and a procession bearing the infant Jesus. La Feria de San Sebastián (3rd week) is a 4-day explosion of spectacles, music, and fairs in San Cristóbal, Táchira State. San Sebástian's Day (20) transforms the seaside town of Ocumare, Aragua State, into a 4-day party with choir, drums, fireworks, and cockfights.

February/March: Carnaval is not the time for a business trip since all work stops a week before Ash Wednesday amid a mass exodus for the beaches. In Caracas, water throwing is a hazard; also chancy are costume balls where women masked as "negritas" take the initiative (and some turn out to be men!). For parades, calypso, and a great time, go to El Callao, Bolívar State, or Carúpano, Sucre State. Valencia also has a lively parade (and better hotels); in Colonia Tovar a mock funeral ends Carnival German-style.

March/April: Easter. Blessing of the Palms in Plaza Bolívar and Plaza Chacao, Caracas. In El Hatillo, south Caracas, villagers act out the Passion drama starting on Holy Thursday. Nazarene pilgrims dressed in purple gather at Santa Teresa Church in downtown Caracas. In the Andes, passion plays are acted out in Cañamón, Táchira State, and La Punta near Mérida. In Ureña, Táchira State, and in La Ceiba, Trujillo State, robed and hooded penitents or "encapuchados" go on their knees to mass. In many town squares, a life-size dummy of Judas, sometimes stuffed with rockets, is mocked and set afire on Easter Sunday.

April: In San Fernando de Apure, a mid-month Alma Llanera Fair combines a cattle show with bulldogging, barbecues, and harp contests. Venezuela's national dance, the jaraguá, is from the Llanos, as is the national dress, the ligüilqui ("leeky-leeky"). On April 22 in Barquisimeto, Lara State, a national horse fair draws buyers from afar.


June: Corpus Christi, 9 weeks after Easter, releases Devil Dancers in grotesque masks who perform outside the churches of San Francisco de Yare in Miranda State, Naiguatá on the central littoral, Turiamo, Chacao, Cata, and Cuyagua on the coast of Aragua State, and Patanemo on the Carabobo coast. June 23-25: In coastal villages from Patanemo to Curipe, Miranda State, the Feast of St. John the Baptist is a 3-day workout of big drums, the mina and curvets, which keep crowds dancing in the streets far into the night. June 24: commemorations take place at Carabobo Battlefield, 18 miles west of Valencia, where patriots sealed independence in 1821.

June 28-29: in Guatire, near Caracas, the Patronato de San Pedro, led by townspeople with top hats and blackened faces, celebrates St. Peter's Day.

August: In Ciudad Bolívar, the Orinoco Fair (3-8) combines a sungfest, calypso bands, horse races, and fishing contests. August is the time for feasting on sapaoa fish, which ascend the Orinoco to spawn in such large schools that you can hear the fish pass. Mid-August: in Tárrega, Táchira State, a week of bullfights in honor of the Virgin of Tárrega.

September: Pilgrims gather in Guanare, Portuguesa State, on the day of the patroness of Venezuela, La Virgen de Coromoto (8), at a shrine built where she appeared first in 1651. Also on September 8, La Virgen del Valle in Margarita attracts thousands of grateful devotees who have made her church one of Venezuela's richest. September 23-24: in Mapararí, Falcon State, the Dance of the Turas (flutes) honors Our Lady of Mercy in a half-pagan rite.

October: Columbus Day (12) is "Dia de la Raza" celebrating Amerindian origins. In Chivacoa, Yaracuy State, followers of the Maria Lionza cult converge on the sacred site of Quisamal.

November: Maracaibo turns out for the week-long Feria de La Chinita (18) honoring the Virgin of Chiquinquirá; parades, bands, fairs.

December: The birth of Christ is celebrated in many traditions, led by the elaborately costumed Pastores (shepherds). In Mariara, Carabobo State, on the 1st Sun. in December, half the male dancers dress as shepherdsesses. Also, the Pastores dance on the 2nd Sat. in Limón near Maracay and on Christmas Eve in San Joaquin near Valencia. In the Andes, San Miguel de Bocanó is famous for its costumed Pastores, who are joined by Paseones (clowns) on January 4-6. On December 27 the black saint San Benito is paraded through the towns of Macachíes in Mérida State, and Gibraltar and Bobares, south of Lake Maracaibo (where the Los Chimbunguales festival lasts through New Year's Eve).

Caracas at Christmas resounds to strident gaita music of Zulia State, which has disdained carols; Santa Claus and reindeer have almost, but not quite, usurped the place of creches or nacimientos. Also on the cane is roller skating to the Midnight Mass or Misa del Gallo (rooster). Following this, boys in eastern Venezuela used to turn gasoline-soaked coconuts into flaming footballs.

Venezuelan Food and Drink. Simple and hearty staple foods include fried plátanos (cooking bananas), cururos negres (black beans), and hervido, a soup with chunks of chicken, beef, vegetables, or roots. It is the use of such roots as yuca, yam, sweet potato, ocumo (tannia), and aipo that give the distinctive flavor to many popular dishes. Try the special crema de ajo. Another good and economical rib-sticker is sancocho, a cross between a stew and an hervido, with large pieces of beef, potato, cabbage, corn, and pumpkin. Parrillada, either grilled Argentine-style in thick churrasco steaks or errola, marinated in thin strips, is a favorite standby with fried yuca and arepas or corn bolíos. Fresh fruit juices are fabulous, made on the spot at most areperas. Ask for jugo natural (unprocessed) or batido (a fruit-shake). These are made from orange, mango, bananas, watermelon, parchita (passion fruit), lechona (pawpaw), etc., and cost about 50 cents.
Culture

Not only by oil live the Venezuelans. Venezuela is a country of notable artists and great writers, some of whom are world renowned. Cultural life in Caracas, as in general in the main Venezuelan cities, is very active.

The “Caraqueños” spend their Sundays visiting museums and galleries and the Venezuelans’ admiration for fine art is translated into important private collections. The countless art galleries in Caracas exhibit works by renowned contemporary artists.

Museums

Caracas has several art museums. First among all is the Sofia Imber Museum of Contemporary Art. The MACCSI is one of the best museums in Latin America and its art collections are the result of a rigorous selection.

Among its many halls, there is one dedicated exclusively to Pablo Picasso. Its sculpture collection includes works by Henry Moore, Marisol, Chadwick, Zitman, Butler, Lobo, Grooms, Botero, Segal, Otero, Narváez, etc.

The great contemporary artists represented in the MACCSI are: Matisse, Bacon, Rauschenberg, Tamayo, Lam, Leger, Miró, Chagall, Herbin, Dubuffet, Braque, Calder, and many others. Of course, the best works by the greatest Venezuelan artists are on display in this museum: Soto, Otero, Borges, Cruz-Diez, Zapata, Quintana-Castillo, Reverón, Ritcher, Lazo, Vigas, Espinoza, Romer, among others. A visit to the MACCSI is undoubtedly an exceptional experience.

The Caracas Museum of Fine Arts (Museo de Bellas Artes de Caracas) was founded in 1939. It contains a large collection of Latin American and Venezuelan art. Next to the MBA is the National Gallery of Art (Galería Nacional de Arte) dedicated exclusively to Venezuelan art. Both institutions are in Parque Los Caobos.

The Alejandro Otero Museum is located at La Rinconada. Its collection comprises essentially Venezuelan art. The Museum will concentrate particularly on the work of Alejandro Otero, a great Venezuelan artist whose sculptures will be on show in the ample gardens of this museum that bears his name.

Arturo Michelena, a good 20th Century painter, has his own museum in the old section of Caracas, La Pastora.

In Ciudad Bolivar, near the Orinoco River, is the Jes’s Soto Museum. It gathers the majestic work of this great Venezuelan kinetic artists, to gather with works by European artists that were donated by Soto to this Museum located in the Guayana region.

Art

Latin America’s painters have won great acclaim throughout the world. Venezuela is a country of great painters. In the XIX Century Arturo Michelena, Cristóbal Rojas and Martín Tovar y Tovar stand out.

Armando Reverón is of such stature that he can be considered the great painter of this cen

The Foundation Biblioteca Ayacucho, headed by the writer José Ramón Medina and sponsored by the Venezuelan government, has published approximately 160 titles by Latin American authors, and it aims to publish a total of 500 works. Amongst its books we find from the Indies’ chronicles to works by Jorge Luis Borges, Alejo Carpentier, Mariano Picón Salas, Simón Bolívar, Alcides Arguedas, Baldomero Sanín Cano, Pablo Neruda, Vicente Huidobro, Vicente Gerbasi, Macedonio Fernández, Nicolás Guillén, Rómulo Gallegos, Miguel Ángel Asturias, among others. Historians, philosophers, political thinkers, novelists and poets illustrate in the Ayacucho Library the process of Latin America’s writings.
tury. He studied in Madrid and in Paris. Upon his return to Venezuela, he began a process of unlearning that led him to finding a personal style that defined him and made him famous. Human figures somehow ghostly, sea and landscapes where light, on generally ochre backgrounds, are treated in an original manner.

Caracas as a city and, above all, its Avila mountain have captured the imagination of two great painters Manuel Cabré and Pedro Angel González, who succeeded in depicting the many tones of that magic mountain.

Among Venezuela's contemporary artists three names deserve a special mention: Alejandro Otero, Jesús Soto and Carlos Cruz Diez.

Otero's work is very imaginative and solid. During the last twenty years of his life he sought to express himself in three-dimensional works. He left us impressive sculptures, such as the one that can be admired in front of the Air and Space Museum in the city of Washington.

Jesús Soto is the first modern kinetic painter. His work is well known particularly in Europe. Carlos Cruz Diez, on the other hand, has explored color and his physichromies have established him as an artist with a well defined style.

If in Latin America the naif-style of painting has found good followers, in Venezuela this is particularly so. The country has first-rate popular artists, such as Bárbaro Rivas, Feliciano Carvallo, José Vicente Aponte, Apolinario, Antonio José Fernández, Juan Félix Sánchez y Rufino Guillén.

It is not easy to summarize in a few lines the wide variety of Venezuelan art. The contemporary tendencies of the world art scene are represented in Venezuela by artists such as: Jacobo Borges, Pedro León Zapata, Antonio Lazo, Luis Guevara Moreno, Carlos Sosa, Luisa Palacios, Manuel Quintana Castillo, Luisa Richter, Francisco Hung, Carmelo Niño, Alirio Palacios, Alirio Rodríguez, Edgar Sánchez, Humberto Jaimes Sánchez, Héctor Polo, Adrián Pujol, Jorge Pizzani, Jorge Belandria, Ricardo Benaim, Víctor Hugo Irazábal, Régulo Pérez, Manuel Espinosa, Corina Briceño, Napoleón Pizani, Carlos Zerpa, Mercedes Pardo, Angel Hurtado, Susana Ambuardarín, Gazniella Pagazani and Carlos David.

As in painting, Venezuelan artists have excelled admirably also in sculpture. Marisol, whose work “The Last Supper” is in New York's Metropolitan Museum; Francisco Narváez, Cornelis Zitman, Carlos Mendoza, Javier Level, Carlos Prada, Miguel Borrelli, Edgar Guinand, Lía Bermúdez are among the best known Venezuelan sculptors.

**Literature**

Venezuela's literature has produced some outstanding writers. Among the contemporary novelists a special reference should be made to Rómulo Gallegos, author of Doña Barbara, Cantaclaro, El Forastero, La Trepadora, Pobre Negro, Canaima, Reinaldo Solar, and Sobre la Mi Amo Tierra. Gallegos wrote his novels bearing in mind Venezuela's
different regions and its varied human types and cultures.

Savagery against civilization, the civil wars, the power of the jungle and the mirage of prairies, the advent of petroleum, man and his struggle or enchantment with nature, all are central themes in Gallegos' writings.

Among the best Venezuelan novelists are Enrique Bernardo Núñez, Arturo Uslar-Pietri, Guillermo Meneses, Salvador Garmendia, Adriano González-León, Isaac Chocron, Francisco Herrera Luque, Luis Britto-García, Francisco Massiani, José Balza, Miguel Otero-Silva, José Rafael Pocaterra, Antonio Arráiz, Teresa de la Parra, Antonia Palacios, Pedro Berroeta, Oswaldo Trejo, Marcos Tarre, Carlos Noguera.

In the field of the essay, the most notable and profound 20th Century Venezuelan writer is Mariano Picón-Salas. He is the author of Regreso de Tres Mundos; Europa-America, Preguntas a la Esfinge de la Cultura; Miranda; Pedro Claver, El Santo de los Esclavos; De la Conquista a la Independencia and of countless essays in which culture and history are interpreted.

Some of the essay writers that have excelled in Venezuela are, among others: Pedro Grases, Joaquin Drago, Pedro Beroes, Eduardo Arcía-Farías, Pasqual Venegas-Filardo, Luis Beltrán Guerrero, Orlando Araj, Manuel Pérez-Vila, Carlos Irazabal, Carlos Rangel, Ernesto Mayz-Vallenilla Juan Carlos Rey, Isaac J. Pardo, Luis Castro Leiva, Antonio Pasquali, Pedro Díaz-Seijas.

History as a genre has also enlisted important professionals in Venezuela. The study of their country is a subject that attracts an increasing number of Venezuelans, such a Ramón J. Velásquez, Germán Carrera-Damas, Guillermo Morón Elías Pino-Iturrieta, José Luis Salcedo Bastardo, Manuél Alfredo Rodriguez, Antonio Arellano-Moreno, Armando Rojas, Manuel Caballero, Tomás Polanco-Alcántara, Alfredo Boulton, Miguel Arroyo, José Manuel Siso-Martínez, Miguel Acosta Saiges, Augusto Mijares, Ramón Díaz-Sánchez Irene Rodríguez-Gallad, Diego Bautista Urbanja, Juan Calzadilla, Roberto Guevara. Some of these authors have written on politics, the economy, art and culture, and all have searched for an interpretation of Venezuela's process.

Vicente Gerbasi is the great Venezuelan contemporary poet. His vast writings are known throughout the Spanish-speaking world. The most famous of his works is My Father, the Immigrant, a chant to his Italian father.

Other poets who should be mentioned are Juan Sánchez Peláez, Eugenio Montejo, Lui Pastori, Juan Liscano, Eddie Rafael Pérez, Francisco Pérez Perdomo, Guillermo Sucre, María Fernand Palacios, Luis García Morales, José Ramón Medin Ida Gramko, Enrique Hernández D'Jesus, Víctor Valera Mora, Caupichón Ovalles, Alfredo Silv. Estrada, Luis Alberto Crespo, Rafael Arráiz Luca, William Osuna. Poetry is, indeed, the most popular literary genre in Venezuela.

The short-story also has held an important position in Venezuelan literature. Among its may ensants we find: Alfredo Armas Alfonzo, Anto
Performing Arts

In the field of the performing arts Venezuela has produced some outstanding dancers, musicians, movie directors and theater groups. One of the most modern theaters in Caracas is the Teatro Teresa Carreño, named after a great Venezuelan pianist. Its spacious architecture encompasses, besides the main theater, a number of auditoriums, rehearsal areas and a smaller semi-circular theater, where drama, opera, music and dance programs are staged.

Caracas has more than five symphonic orchestras, among them: Solistas de Venezuela, Orquesta Nacional Juvenil, Orquesta Sinfónica de Venezuela and Filarmónica de Caracas.

The states' capitals also have their own orchestras, often of great artistic quality, such as the Orquesta Sinfónica de Maracaibo, a city that has organized several important festivals of contemporary music.

In the field of musical composition and direction, a number of Venezuelan talents have obtained international recognition during recent years, among them: Antonio Estévez, Antonio Lauro, Juan Carlos Núñez, Alfredo Rugeles, Alfredo del Mónaco.

Venezuela's choirs and polyphonic groups have also stood out in international competitions, as is the case with the Schola Cantorum de Caracas.

In the field of dance, Venezuela has produced a number of very talented choreographers and dancers who have explored all kinds of techniques and styles. Zundra Rodríguez, Vicente Nebreda, Sonia Sanoja, Nina Novak and María Eugenia Barrios are among the best known representatives of the very active Venezuelan dance movement that has produced outstanding companies such as the Ballet Internacional de Caracas, Ballet Nuevo Mundo de Caracas, Ballet Teresa Carreño, Danzahoy, Contradanza, Taller de Danza de Caracas, Danza Contemporánea de Maracaibo.

In the field of drama the number of stable companies that stage works by both Venezuelan and international playwrights is noticeable. Particular mention should be made of the following theater groups: Rajatabla, El Nuevo Grupo, Grupo Actoral 80, La Carpa, Cobre, El Thai, Theja, Corso Teatro, La Sociedad Dramática de Maracaibo. Among the dramatists, Isaac Chocrón, José Ignacio Cabrújas, Ibson Martínez, Edilio Peña, Rodolfo Santana, José Simón Escalona, Mariela Romero are among the ones who have achieved wide recognition within the Spanish-speaking world.

The International Theater Festival is the most important theatrical event in Venezuela. It gathers the most prestigious local and international groups in an impressive sampling of the best theater throughout the world.

During the 1970's, Venezuela witnessed a cinematographic boom that has led, most recently, to the production of movies of a notable artistic and technical quality. Among the better known film directors are: César Bolívar, Román Chalbud, Mauricio Wallerstein, Luis Correa, Jacobo Penso, Carlos Azpúrua, Carlos Oteyza, Fina Torres and Marilda Vera.

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SPECTACULAR LAND

Venezuela, South America's sixth largest country, dominates the southern Caribbean with a coast line that extends 1,750 miles to the western reaches of the Atlantic. Within its 352,150 square miles lies a topography that includes everything from sun-rich beaches to snow-peaked mountains, from desert-like sand dunes to dense tropical jungle, from great uncultivated savannas to richly productive farmlands. And its capital, Caracas, lies in a valley of eternal springtime.

Legend tells us that Amerigo Vespucci gave Venezuela its name, which literally means "Little Venice", when he sailed into Lake Maracaibo in 1499 and found the Indians living in huts built on stilts above the water — Indians whose descendants still live in much the same manner even today.

More than a thousand rivers are woven into the texture of Venezuela but the nation is dominated, of course, by the 1,600-mile Orinoco, eighth largest in the world, which with its tributaries drains some eighty percent of the country.

In the diamond-producing savannas of the country's southeast is Guayana where Angel Falls, highest waterfall in the world, tumbles from an underground river near the rim of Auyan-tepui (Devil Mountain) in an astounding drop of 3,212 feet: more than two and a half times the height of the Empire State Building. The Guayana also includes the Caroni industrial region, fastest growing commercial complex in South America, and the new Guri Dam which will eventually be one of the greatest producers of electricity in the world with a capacity of over 6,000,000 kilowatts.

The Andes form the western topography of the country and are dominated by Pico Bolivar (16,427 feet) higher than Europe's, Mount Blanc. In the north they drop off to the shores of Lake Maracaibo, the world's richest oil reservoir.

As a land of infinite variety, Venezuela offers unusual vacation opportunities for everyone. Nature endowed the country with an ideal climate, an excellent geographical location, rich natural resources, exotic flora and fauna. In this setting man has added some of the finest resort and recreational facilities to be found anywhere.

The deluxe hotels in Caracas and at the nearby coastal area, rank with the finest in the world and they operate at rates well below those of New York, Miami, Los Angeles and the Caribbean islands. In addition, every city of importance has at least one modern, up-to-the-minute hotel operated under U.S. management. There are also scores of comfortable hotels throughout the country.

Venezuela's better restaurants and night clubs — and there are plenty of them — take their place with the best, anywhere and are usually cheaper than those further north.

No matter what you want to do — swim, climb, golf, fish, hunt, quest for adventure, go sightseeing, or just take it easy — Venezuela has everything.

HISTORICAL

On the first day of August, 1498, Christopher Columbus sighted the coast of what is now known as Venezuela. Six years earlier he had first sighted the new world at Santo Domingo and only four days previously had discovered the island of Trinidad. This, however, was his first glimpse of the American continent and it didn't take Spain long to follow his discovery with an organized program of colonization.

At the time of the discovery, Venezuela was the home of several Indian tribes including the Arawaks and the Caribes who were deadly enemies, the peaceful Guayiros who were farmers and fishermen, and the Timotes who had already mastered the art of terrace farming.
The first Spanish colony was established by some 50 pioneers from Santo Domingo in 1500, barely two years after Columbus, on the island of Cubagua, just off the coast of Venezuela. In the next half century settlements sprang up in a dozen places as Spain developed the power she was not to relinquish for more than three hundred years.

Several attempts were made to gain independence before the inspired leadership of Simón Bolívar, the "Liberator", sparked a series of campaigns that successfully ousted the Spanish in 1823. Venezuela was a part of Gran Colombia until 1830 when it set up its own government with General José Antonio Páez as the first president. Foreign domination was ended but for more than a century Venezuela was plagued with an unending series of coups d'état and dictatorships. The struggle ended in 1958 when the people elected Rómulo Betancourt as President. For the first time since Columbus, an elected leader completed his five-year term and turned his office over to a constitutionally elected successor, Dr. Raúl Leoni — a triumph of democratic process.
"Our glance was arrested by a grove of palm trees along the shore, their sixty-foot tall trunks towering above the landscape. The terrain is covered with cassia and capparis bushes and the tree-like mimosas which spread their fan-shaped branches like Italian pines. The feathery fronds of the palms were etched against a blue sky of crystalline and cloudless translucence. The sun climbed quickly to its zenith and beat down blindingly on the whitish hills with their occasional cylindrical cactus and on the calm and tranquil sea. The shores were alive with pelicans, herons and flamingos. The shimmering day light, the intense colors of the vegetation, the shapes of the plants and the colorful plumage of the birds all bore the incomparable stamp of the tropics."

Alexander von Humboldt, upon first sighting the Venezuelan coastline on July 16, 1798. (from Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent During the Years 1799-1804).
Tuesday, August 13. Paria. The Admiral seems to have gone about 30 or 40 leagues at most since leaving the Boca del Dragon (off Trinidad) ... He observed that the land stretched out wider and appeared flatter and more beautiful down toward the west. ... He therefore came to the conclusion that so great a land was not an island but a continent; and, as if addressing the Sovereigns, he speaks thus:

"I have come to believe that this is a mighty continent which was hitherto unknown. I am greatly supported in this view by reason of this great river (the Orinoco) and by this sea which is fresh. ... And if this is a continent it is a wonderful thing and will be so regarded by all men of learning."

Cristóbal Colón, Diary, 1497.
Section VII

CONCEPT ITERATION

A first version of a site plan and model have been prepared by architect Jose Blanco and are inserted in this section. The site plan identifies suggested content. A Spanish description of the content elements prepared by Ecoplan and photographs of the plan model are included.
5.1.1.- Identificación y Descripción del Proyecto.

El proyecto Santa Rita la Isla de los Niños del Mundo, como ya se ha expresado con anterioridad, constituye un desarrollo único en Venezuela que permitirá el esparcimiento sano de la familia venezolana y del turista extranjero. Para tal fin el Proyecto contempla los siguientes ambientes:

**COMPLEJO OPERATIVO DE RECEPCIÓN** (Reception Complex)

A la Isla se puede llegar por embarcaciones públicas, privadas, por cable o por autovía. Todos estos servicios están directamente adyacentes a la Gran Plaza de la Comunidad, rodeada de un complejo comercial con tiendas y servicios. De esta plaza arranca también el Eje Vial Monumental y las otras vías y caminos que conducen a diferentes lugares a los que se accederá en tren, tranvía, diligencia, carretera y cable. Adjunto a la Plaza están las oficinas operativas de la Isla y el Núcleo de Recepción con servicios de información, audiovisuales, marquetería y exposiciones. Además las oficinas de reclamos, niños perdidos y primeros auxilios; existen servicios de ambulancia.
FANTASIMOVIL (Monorail Entry)

Es una autovía que parte desde tierra firme hacia Santa Rita la Isla de los Niños del Mundo. La distancia es de 2,5 kilómetros. El FANTASIMOVIL se desliza sobre un canal único de ida y otro de venida. La estructura portante es de concreto y las unidades móviles tienen ruedas de caucho y sistema convencional de motor, su diseño es futurista y comunica el núcleo de estacionamiento de automóviles en tierra firme con la Estación Espacial.

PUERTO DEPORTIVO. MARINA (Marina)

Una forma de llegar a la Isla, puede ser en lancha o bote privado, para lo que se dispondrá de todas las comodidades de estacionamientos dentro de la dársena deportiva, con avituallamiento de agua y de combustible líquidos. La instalación está dotada de 250 atraques en pantalanes sobre pilotes de hormigón y un sistema de muelles flotantes anclados.

BARCO DE RUEDAS (Riverboat - Sternwheeler)

Desde el Puerto Deportivo se podrá tomar esta embarcación, similar a las barcazas del Misissipi del Siglo XIX, que en forma amable y despaciosa nos dará una vuelta a la Isla.

TU ERES VENEZUELA (You Were Venezuela)

Con la expresión arquitectónica de una fortaleza española del Siglo XVII y a través del mundo de la sorpresa, la curiosidad y la admiración, se presenta al público visitante, el devenir histórico de Venezuela desde la fecha de su descubrimiento al Mundo Occidental hasta nuestros días. Esta visita está dividida en sectores que están representados por dos (2) diferentes y anexas edificaciones. En una curioseamos sobre todo lo referente
a nuestras raíces y en la otra contemplamos con orgullo la razón de nuestra nacionalidad para soñar y crear nuestro futuro. Adjunto está el Planetario con capacidad para 120 personas.

**PUERTO VIEJO (Old Port)**

Es a principio del Siglo XVII cuando en las ciudades-puertos americanos los poblados de construcción de bahareque y paja se transforman en casas de mampostería y piedra. El trazado irregular de la ciudad era dominante, irradiando del ahora portuaria llamada Plaza de la Mar con calles desviadas que se extienden hasta la Plaza Mayor, mientras se interponen y entrecruzan las calles adoptando pocas veces la retícula octogonal exigida por las Leyes de India. El comercio portuario fracciona fuertemente las propiedades, por eso es que en los puertos se carece de grandes palacios.

A los pies de Tu eres Venezuela, hacemos crecer esta ciudad puerto. Allí estará la taberna, las pulperías, los comercios. Al final del viejo muelle estará el faro y dentro de algunas de las edificaciones se instalará el mundo de fantasía de una aventura de piratas. Este ambiente, a su vez, queda integrado con el Pueblo-Hotel Colonial, creando el complejo: Maracaibo Colonial.

**BARCO PIRATA (Pirate Ship)**

Será un barco a tamaño natural que saldrá hacia el Lago y tendrá un recorrido durante el cual el capitán y la tripulación pirata representarán escenas de marinería e incluso un motín, con condenados al paseo de la tabla.

El mensaje vivencial está en poder recorrer un barco del Siglo XVII y ver su dotación y armamento. Aquí el uso de actores para
la ambientación motivacional es esencial e importante.

FORTALEZA DEL CAPITAN FLINT (Captain Flint's Fort)

En el costado superior de la Isla se podrá visitar la fortaleza del legendario personaje de la Isla del Tesoro.

PUEBLO-HOTEL COLONIAL (Colonial Hotel)

El Pueblo-Hotel, con habitaciones provistas de balcones, agrupadas al igual que en un pueblo, alrededor de una plaza, con calles empinadas y plazitas recoletas y dentro de una arquitectura del tipo llamado californiano, pretende brindar al visitante ese algo distinto.

Consta de 420 espacios físicos entre habitaciones y cabañas de una y dos habitaciones dotadas de aire acondicionado y todos los servicios. Tiene tiendas, salones y servicios generales dentro de una estructura sencilla y paz pueblerina en ambiente de cinco (5) estrellas que invitan al descanso y esparcimiento.

EJE VIAL MONUMENTAL (Monument)

Une la Plaza de la Comunidad con el Palacio de Cristal. Está formado por un bulevar o paseo público peatonal sombreado y dotado de asientos y jardines que están elevados sobre las calles laterales por las que se desplazan tranvías y carrozas y en las que se realiza el gran desfile nocturno.

ESTACION ESPACIAL (Space Module)

Se nos presenta el Mundo del Futuro. Estará representado por una Estación Terminal para Viajes Espaciales. Todo un ambiente de luces, sonidos y efectos escenográficos. De aquí sale y hasta aquí llega el FANTASIMOVEL. La Nave Galáctica podrá ser visitada
en su interior y realizar un vuelo al espacio. Adjunto a la Estación Espacial está el centro comercial y restaurante donde con el mismo ambiente futurista habrá tiendas y almacenes, salas de proyección y lugares de entretenimiento.

PALACIO COLISEO DE CRISTAL (Cristal Palace)

Punto central de convergencia en el diseño urbano de la Isla es el Palacio Coliseo de Cristal. Así llamamos a una gran sala de espectáculos cubierta y climatizada que está diseñada sobre una superficie de 7.000 metros cuadrados. Tiene capacidad para 7.500 espectadores y una pista de hielo central de 1.800 metros cuadrados. Su cubierta y muros perimetrales están construidos con concreto y bloque de vidrio multicolor.

En la pista tendrá lugar el evento principal, con presentación y desfile de todos los muñecos, payasos, orquestas y atracciones. Durante los intermedios, las instalaciones pueden ser usadas por el público para el disfrute del patinaje sobre el hielo.

ESTACION PRINCIPAL (Train Station)

Esta estación ferroviaria recordará alguna vieja postal que nos habla de la cultura del ferrocarril. La obra responde al carácter de este tipo de edilicia: un gran vestíbulo central de doble altura, con vidrieras superiores en arcos y una mansarda de latón estampado apoyado sobre cornisas. Dos construcciones laterales de un solo piso contribuyen a destacar el cuerpo central. Todo ello dotado de prolijas y serias, tina carpintería y bella marquesina de acceso. Desde ella viajamos hacia el Pueblo del Oeste.
MANSION VIRGINIANA  (Virginia Home)
Con igual sentido y hacer arquitectónico, se presenta este recuerdo del sur de los Estados Unidos; sirve de alojamiento para el personal.

TREN DEL OESTE  (Western Train)
Reproducción de la máquina y vagones de un tren de finales del Siglo XIX donde se viajará al Pueblo del Oeste. Adyacente a la Estación Principal estará la Posta de diligencias de donde saldrán éstas y la caravana de carretas.

PUEBLO DEL OESTE  (Western Town)
Una vez más repetimos la calle del viejo oeste con la estación del tren, sus comercios, el telegráfico, las caballerizas y el bar salón donde se presentan espectáculos musicales. Un ataque de indios, el tiroteo callejero y el desafío personal a pistola, todo ello realizado por personal profesional, dan vida y entretenimiento a este sector.

JUEGOS DE AGUA  (Water Park)
El objetivo principal reside en proporcionar la alegría del disfrute de los juegos acuáticos y el sano deporte de la natación. Piletas rebosantes de agua, con cascadas, pequeñas caídas de agua, remansos, surtidores y pulverizadores de agua. Aquí la gente puede distraerse con toda clase de entretenimientos: nadar, saltos, buceo, tobogán acuático o dejarse arrastrar por la corriente para lo que se dispone de piscinas con olas artificiales, trampolines, cataratas, toboganes con cambios de corrientes y una pileta reglamentaria.

Siendo una instalación donde la competencia de natación queda en 5-6
segundo término, se ha cuidado en dar facilidades para jugar con el agua, tomar baños de sol y descansar. La ballena azul de 30 metros de largo donde penetraremos al interior y se oye palpitar su corazón y se ve al futuro ballenato en el útero de su madre.

CASTILLO DE CAMELOT (Camelot Castle)
Situado sobre una colina está el Castillo de CAMELOT. Es una edificación visitable con puente levadizo y estancias interiores donde veremos al Rey Arturo y a los Caballeros de la Mesa Redonda. La magia de la caballería andante, los torneos con todo el esplendor de los encuentros ecuestres y competencias de armas y arcos podrán ser disfrutadas y vividas en un marco de entretenimiento para chicos y grandes.

TRIBUNAL DE CAMELOT (Jousting Stadium)
Campo de honor donde tendrán lugar las competencias de los caballeros andantes.

COMPLEJO FERIAL Y PARQUE MECÁNICO (Iron Ride Park)
No estará ubicado en un solo sitio. Se entiende que la presencia de atracciones mecánicas como las montañas rusas y sus versiones del escorpión, el tirabuzón y la pitón, así como las ruedas gigantes, los caballitos, los carros chocones y las ruedas voladoras, complementan el recorrido y la estancia en los diferentes lugares. Todo ello dotado con una ambientación de casetas de tiro al blanco, juegos de bolos, adivinanzas, pruebas de fuerza y ventas de hamburguesas, perros calientes, arepas, churros y bebidas.
También se ha dotado este sector de un malecón frente al Lago,
con su costado escalonado sobre una playa artificial desde el que se podrá ver competencias de wind surf, lanchas y espectáculos acuáticos.

**IMAGEN DE SANTA RITA** Escultura arrodillada realizada en concreto que se levanta como cerramiento de una capilla inferior que sirve de reclinatorio a la imagen. La altura total de la obra es de 45 metros. *(Image of Santa Rita)*

**TORRE DE T.V. (TV Tower)**

Está formada por un edificio base de tres (3) niveles y cincuenta (50) metros de diámetro con patio central sobre el que se eleva un edificio de oficinas y operaciones de diez (10) pisos, cerrado en cristal y coronado por una torre central de concreto de seis (6) metros de diámetro con espingones laterales por donde se deslizan dos (2) ascensores todo visión, y las escaleras de emergencia, hasta una altura de 120 metros. Sobre ésta se apoya una antena de 65 metros dotada de todos los apoyos necesarios para emisión, recepción y satélite.

**GREY ZULIANA** *("Grey Zuliana" Cultural Center)*

Sobre el propio lago de Maracaibo y con una expresión arquitectónica futurista, se eleva una ciudad cultural, la denominada "Grey Zuliana". Esencialmente consta de tres (3) edificaciones en forma de pirámide: una vertical, es un complejo ferial recreativo geográfico e histórico; en su interior tendrá el Monumento a la Batalla Naval del Lago y servirá de lugar de enseñanza sobre la geografía, historia, la literatura zuliana, a la vez será sitio de exposición e información sobre la industria petrolera, petroquímica, minera, siderúrgica, fabril
manufacturera, ganadería, agricultura, finanzas, pesca, comercio y turismo zuliano.
En la pirámide mayor invertida estará un museo de escultura, pintura, cerámica y artes menores, y en la otra pirámide se ubica un teatro central con capacidad de 750 asientos para presentaciones teatrales, danzas y eventos como charlas, foros y reuniones. En las terrazas de las pirámides se instalará un experimento de utilización y conversión solar.

ISLA DE PAJAROS (Aviary)
Se propone cerrar dentro de un domo geodésico de 300 metros de diámetro y 65 metros de altura mediante un sistema modular de malla, la actual Isla de Pájaros a la que se complementará y dotará de toda la flora y fauna conveniente, evitando problemas de relación de especies. Se quiere crear un ambiente donde las aves no tengan miedo en acercarse a los visitantes. Se accederá a través de una trampa esclusa, en pequeños botes y en lanchones que partirán desde la Isla y así podremos visitar La Cabaña de Robinson Crusoe, recorrer a pie los puentes y caminos de esta Isla de Pájaros llenos de lujuriantes vegetación tropical.
Section VIII

MARKET CAPTURE

Prevailing actual market capture rates for 18 theme parks are submitted in Table 1 as a guide for the charrette group in attendance projecting for Isla de Los Ninos del Mundo. These capture rates are expressed as a percentage of the total market, both resident and tourist.
### Table 1

**MARKET CAPTURE RATES OF SELECTED U.S. THEME PARKS 1990**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attraction</th>
<th>1990 Attendance (thousands)</th>
<th>Market Size (thousands)</th>
<th>Gross Market Capture Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Resident (0-100 miles)</td>
<td>Overnight Visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mega-Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disney World Complex 1/</td>
<td>38,500</td>
<td>5,902</td>
<td>24,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disneyland</td>
<td>12,900</td>
<td>17,223</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Large Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Studios Florida</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>5,902</td>
<td>24,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Studios Hollywood</td>
<td>4,625</td>
<td>17,223</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knott's Berry Farm</td>
<td>3,447</td>
<td>17,223</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Flags Magic Mountain</td>
<td>3,214</td>
<td>17,223</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Tier Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opryland</td>
<td>2,125</td>
<td>2,409</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Flags Over Texas</td>
<td>2,821</td>
<td>4,876</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Flags Over Georgia</td>
<td>2,435</td>
<td>5,290</td>
<td>10,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Flags Great America (Illinois)</td>
<td>2,624</td>
<td>11,604</td>
<td>11,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great America (Santa Clara)</td>
<td>2,271</td>
<td>10,922</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smaller Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worlds of Fun</td>
<td>1,171</td>
<td>2,495</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Flags Over Mid-America</td>
<td>1,610</td>
<td>3,748</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Flags AstroWorld</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>4,571</td>
<td>8,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geauga Lake</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td>7,688</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Fair</td>
<td>1,127</td>
<td>3,836</td>
<td>9,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excluding Disney Parks:

- **Low**: 9%
- **Average**: 14%
- **High**: 25%

1/ Includes Magic Kingdom, EPCOT, and MGM Studios; attendance estimate is three-park total.
2/ Estimated 1991 (first full year) attendance.

Source: Harrison Price Company.
Section IX

CHARRETTE AGENDA
Isla Santa Rita de Los Ninos del Mundo
Double Tree Inn, San Pedro, CA
June 8, 1992

1. Orientation
   a. Introduction
   b. The Los Ninos Organization and Its Programs
   c. Project Objectives

2. The Site
   a. Acreage
   b. Access
   c. Physical Characteristics
   d. Climate Conditions

3. The Resident Market and Its Economy
   a. Venezuela
   b. Zulia/Maracaibo
   c. Resident Market within 150km and 200km
   d. Demography/Income

4. Tourism and the Total Market
   a. Domestic Tourism @ Seasonality
   b. Foreign Tourism
   c. Total Market
   d. Hotel Census (number of rooms, party size and occupancy, length of stay, percentage in hotel rooms)

5. The Present Iteration
   a. Site Plan
   b. Model
c. Project Elements (attraction)
d. Resort Elements

6. Market Penetrations and Attendance
   a. Normal Park
   b. Mega Park
   c. Range of Attendance - Normal and Plus X Factor

7. Sizing of the Attraction
   a. Design Day
   b. Capacity
   c. Acreage Requirements Phase 1

8. The Resort
   a. Number of Rooms
   b. Amenities Required
   c. Marketing Context
   d. Time Share

9. Economics of the Attraction Project
   a. Per Capita Expenditures
   b. Revenues
   c. EBDIT (operating profit)
   d. Justifiable Investment
   e. X Factor Aspects (greater expenditure to force attendance)

10. Concept and Theming

11. Development Cost Parameters
    a. Construction Costs in Venezuela
    b. Cost Range

12. Summary
List of Charrette Participants

From the Client:

Luis Avila Soto  Director, Santa Rita Isla de Los Ninos (CEO)
Jose Perez Gil  Managing Director, Isla de Los Ninos (COO)
Humberto Alvarez  Managing Director, Ecoplan
Jose Blanco  Project Architect
Nerio Romero  Project Engineer

From the Outside:

Fred Cochrane  Resort and Attraction Developer
Alvaro Villa  Exhibit and Show Producer (ex-Disney)
Tom Reidenbach  Theme Park Designer (ex-Disney)
Michael Lee  Show Creator and Designer from Lucas
Harrison Price  Attraction Planner/Economist