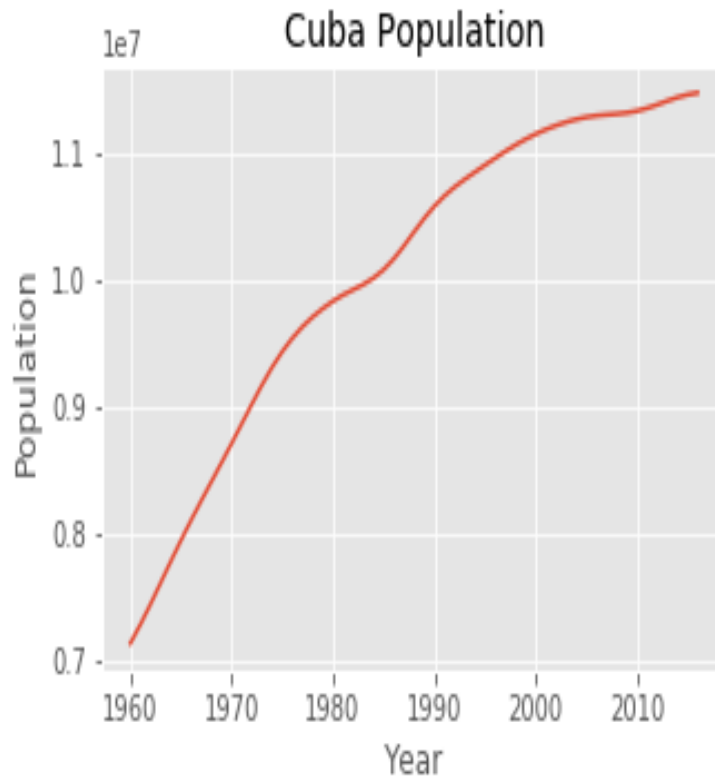


Cuba



Coordinates: 22°00′N 80°00′W﻿ / ﻿22.000°N 80.000°W﻿ / 22.000; -80.000Cuba﻿ (/ˈkjuːb/; Spanish pronunciation: [ˈkuβa]), officially the Republic of Cuba (Spanish: República de Cuba (help·info)), is a country comprising the island of Cuba as well as Isla de la Juventud and several minor archipelagos. Cuba is located in the northern Caribbean where the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic Ocean meet. It is south of both the U.S. state of Florida and the Bahamas, west of Haiti, and north of Jamaica. Havana is the largest city and capital; other major cities include Santiago de Cuba and Camagüey. Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean, with an area of 109,884 square kilometres (42,426 sq mi), and the second-most populous after Hispaniola, with over 11 million inhabitants. The territory of Cuba was inhabited by the Ciboney tribes in the 4th millennium BC. Until the 15th century, it was inhabited by Amerindian tribes which became a colony of Spain until the Spanish–American War of 1898, when Cuba gained nominal independence as a de facto United States protectorate in 1902. As a fragile republic, Cuba attempted to strengthen its democratic system, but mounting political radicalization and social strife culminated in the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1952. Further unrest and instability led to Batista's ousting in January 1959 by the July 26 Movement, which afterwards established communist rule under the leadership of Fidel Castro. Since 1965, the state has been governed by the Communist Party of Cuba. A point of contention during the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, a nuclear war nearly broke out during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Cuba is one of the few remaining Marxist–Leninist socialist states, where the role of the vanguard Communist Party is enshrined in the Constitution. Independent observers have accused the Cuban government of numerous human rights abuses, including arbitrary imprisonment.