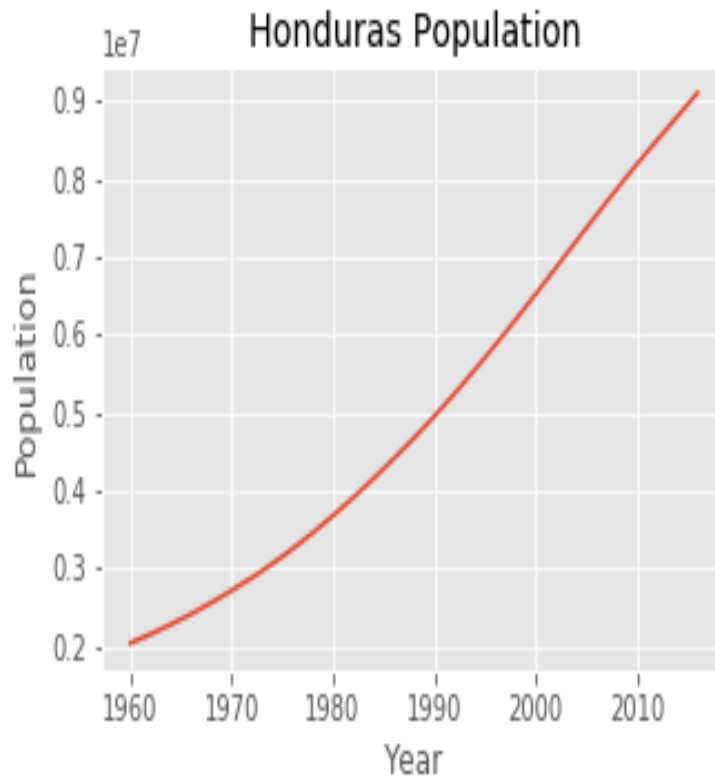


Honduras



Coordinates: 15°00′N 86°30′W﻿ / ﻿15.000°N 86.500°W﻿ / 15.000; -86.500Honduras (/hɒnˈdʊrəs/ (listen); Spanish: [onˈduɾas]), officially the Republic of Honduras (Spanish: República de Honduras), is a republic in Central America. It has at times been referred to as Spanish Honduras to differentiate it from British Honduras, which became modern-day Belize. Honduras is bordered to the west by Guatemala, to the southwest by El Salvador, to the southeast by Nicaragua, to the south by the Pacific Ocean at the Gulf of Fonseca, and to the north by the Gulf of Honduras, a large inlet of the Caribbean Sea. Honduras was home to several important Mesoamerican cultures, most notably the Maya, before the Spanish invaded in the sixteenth century. The Spanish introduced Roman Catholicism and the now predominant Spanish language, along with numerous customs that have blended with the indigenous culture. Honduras became independent in 1821 and has since been a republic, although it has consistently endured much social strife and political instability, and remains one of the poorest countries in the western hemisphere. In 1960, the northern part of what was the Mosquito Coast was transferred from Nicaragua to Honduras by the International Court of Justice.