

# Venezuela - Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture

Russell Maddicks

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An influential oil producer with a colorful and charismatic president at its helm since 1999, Venezuela is a vast, sometimes frustrating, but never dull country. It is one of the most complex countries in Latin America and one of the least understood.

An ambitious attempt to benefit the poor and redistribute oil wealth by President Hugo Chavez has seen a major political transformation in recent years that has put a severe strain on its traditional ties with the USA. He has made steadfast attempts to confront his powerful northern neighbor and reduce Venezuela's economic dependence on the United States. However, Miami remains the top holiday destination for Venezuelans traveling abroad, baseball beats soccer as the preferred sport, and teenage girls still cover their bedroom walls with American idols like Justin Bieber.

Venezuelans are known for being friendly, gregarious, and outgoing. They value family over everything and love to criticize the status quo, but they are also fiercely proud and protective of their homeland and react poorly to criticism of their country from outsiders.

*Culture Smart! Venezuela* takes you beyond the stereotypical descriptions of a tropical petro-state, famous for its beauty queens and its populist president, to provide you with an insider's understanding of the country and its people. Practical tips, valuable insights, and vital statistics will help you get to the heart of this vibrant, sometimes contradictory, and increasingly important country.



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