

GENERAL ST. MARC RESEARCH

PART

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Haiti and St. Marc Overview

- **Republic of Haiti:**

According to Wikipedia:

République d'Haïti
Republik Ayiti



- **Haiti Overview:**

Haiti is a Caribbean country that occupies the island of Hispaniola in the Greater Antillean archipelago and shares a border with the Dominican Republic. The total area of Haiti is 27,750 sq. kilometers and it has a population of 9 million. Port-au-Prince is the capital and the gourde is the standard currency. Haiti has two official languages, French and Haitian Creole. French is spoken by most educated Haitians and in the business sector. Haitian Creole contains significant African influence as well as Spanish and Taino influences. Spanish is also spoken by a good portion of the population. 80% of the population are Catholics and voodoo, an Afro-diasporic faith, is widely practiced by all.

- **Departments:**

Haiti is divided into ten departments: Artibonite, Centre, Grand'Anse, Nippes, Nord, Nord-Est, Nord-Ouest, Ouest, Sud-Est, Sud. The departments are further divided into 41 arrondissements and 133 communes, which serve as second and third level administrative divisions.



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- **History:**

The island of Hispaniola, of which Haiti occupies the western third, was inhabited by the Taino Indians upon arrival by the European colonizers. They spoke an Arawakan language. The Taino name for the island was Kiskeya. It was divided by different groups amongst the natives called caciquedoms. They were funded with payments consisting of harvests. Artifacts from that time period include cave painting throughout the country.

Christopher Columbus landed on Hispaniola on December 5, 1492 and claimed the island for Spain. He left behind 39 men founding the settlement of La Navidad which was destroyed by the indigenous people. He then moved to the eastern side of the island and established La Isabela. At one point in history Queen Anacona, a princess of Xaragua married the cacique of Maguana. The couple resisted Spanish rule and she was captured by the Spaniards and executed in front of her people. She is still revered to this day as one of the country's founders.

Later the Spaniards found gold on Hispaniola and directed local Amerindians to mine it. Those refusing to work were killed or sold into slavery. Disease, including smallpox, was also brought to the island, causing widespread death among the Taiono. The Laws of Burgos 1512-1513 codified the laws governing behaviors of the Spaniards towards natives, forbidding maltreatment and endorsing conversion to Catholicism. At this time locals were colonized and grouped into encomiendas for work under colonia masters. Finding it hard to manage the colonies from afar, the Spanish governors imported enslaved Africans for labor. In 1517 Charles V authorized the draft of slaves. Most of the natives died out or fled to the hills and then mixed with escaped slaves to form a new multiracial generation called Zambos (or marabou by the French). Another mixed group included mestizo who were children born to native women and European men. Later these children were called mulatres by the French.

Hispaniola also became a haven for pirates. The western part of the island was settled by French buccaneers, including Bertrand d'Ogeron who grew tobacco. He attracted many colonists from Martinique and Guadeloupe and the first windmill for processing sugar was created in 1685.

France and Spain settled hostilities on the island at the Treaty of Ryswick of 1697 which divided Hispaniola between them. France received the western third and subsequently named it Sant Dominique. Many French colonists soon arrived and established plantations there due to high profit potential. Approximately 30,000 French colonists emigrated to the western part of the island. Sugar, coffee, and the indigo industries flourished with slave labor at this time. It is reported that nearly 1/3 of newly imported Africans died within a few years of being imported.

Inspired by the French Revolution and the principle rights of man, free people of color and slaves pressed for Freedom and more civil rights. A revolution was held in 1791 and the French government sent troops to reestablish control and build an alliance with the free people of color for more civil rights. Eventually the French commissioners abolished slavery in the colony. A former slave, Toussain l'Ouverture helped drive out the Spaniards and British invaders who threatened the colony; he helped to restore stability and prosperity to the island. In response Napoleon Bonaparte later sent an expedition of 20,000 men under the command of his brother-in-law Charles Leclerc, to retake the island and restore slavery. However yellow fever killed most of the French soldiers. But Leclerc was able to capture Toussain l'Ouverture and send him to prison in France where he eventually passed away.

On January 1, 1804 Saint-Dominique reconquered the French in a battle for Independence, declaring the new nation to be named Haiti to honor one of the indigenous Taino names for the island. Haiti is the only nation born of a slave revolt. And as a result French colonists fled with the slaves they still had as did numerous free people of color - some of whom were also slaveholders. At this time Toussain L'Ouverture's ally Dessalines was proclaimed Emperor for life by his troops. He exiled or killed remaining whites and ruled as a despot.

After a series of instable dictators, from 1957 to 1986, Haiti was governed by the hereditary dictatorship, the Duvalier family. Dr. Francois Duvalier, known as Papa Doc and hugely popular among the blacks was President of Haiti from 1957-1971. He was a strong believer in the rights of the Haitian black majority and advanced black interests in the public sector. His presidency gave birth to a volunteer organization

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known as Tonton Macouters joined by farmers responsible for a variety of violent acts throughout the country. During this time the Haitian diaspora made vital contributions to the establishment of education, medicine, administration and development. From 1971-1987, Papa Doc's son, Jean-Claude Duvalier, led the country and was known as Baby Doc. He was ousted in 1986 to France for corruption.

In December 1990 the former priest Jean Bertrand Aristide was elected president, winning by more than 2/3 vote. *His use of paramilitaries however, caused national dissatisfaction.* He, too, was ousted from the country. The US aided his return to Haiti. And with his return Aristide established a local police force, disbanding the Haitian military. He then vacated office. In 1996 Rene Preval was elected as president for a five year term.

- **Politics:**

Haitian politics have long been contentious. France and the United States have repeatedly intervened in Haitian politics at the request of one party or another. Haiti consistently ranks among the most corrupt countries in the world, most infamously attributed to 'Papa Doc's reign. It is estimated that President Baby Doc Duvalier and his wife Michelle took \$504 million from the Haitian public treasury between 1971 and 1986 and some argue that millions were also stolen by Aristide. Foreign aid now makes up approximately 30-40% of the national government's budget. The largest donor is the US followed by Canada and the European Union. From 1990 to 2003 Haiti received more than \$4 billion in aid.

- **Natural Disasters:**

In 2004 tropical storm Jeanne skimmed the north coast of Haiti leaving 3,000 people dead due to flooding and mudslides mostly in the city of Gonaives. Haiti was again hit by tropical storms in late August and early September 2008 which all produced heavy winds and rain in Haiti. Lowlands experienced massive flooding. High food and fuel prices as a result caused a food crisis and political unrest in April 2008.



Flooding in Gonaives, 2004



Port-au-Prince, January 2010

On January 12, 2010 Haiti was struck by a magnitude 7.0 earthquake, the country's most severe in over 200 years. The epicenter of the earthquake was just outside the Haitian capital of Port-au Prince with a confirmed death toll of 230,000. Widespread damage resulted from the earthquake. The capital city was devastated. As many as one million Haitians were left homeless. Several international appeals are underway including the Disasters Emergency Committee in the United Kingdom, Young Artists for Haiti in Canada and Hope for Haiti Now: A Global Benefit for Earthquake relief based in the US.

- **Terrain:**

Haiti's terrain consists mainly of rugged mountains interspersed with small coastal plains and river valleys. The northern region includes the country's most important valley in terms of farming. In 1925 Haiti was lush, with 60% of its original forest covering land and mountainous regions. Since then the population has cut down an estimated 98% of original forest cover for use as fuel in cookstoves, destroying fertile farmland soils. In addition to soil erosion, deforestation has caused periodic flooding.

- **Deforestation:** According to Haiti Demain and www.aashf.org:

The forest cover of Haiti today is about 2% of what it originally was (in contrast with 47% forest cover

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in the Dominican Republic). Forests in Haiti once included mangroves, forest reserves, natural parks, and dry forestland. 30 million trees have been cut annually to meet the demands of energy usage in the country. The hills are often barren throughout the landscape. There have been no plans or efforts to replant. Even protected zones have not escaped forest destruction; the 'grand foret des Pins' lost almost 12,000 hectares of quality forestland and has been reduced to 4000 hectares.

It is important to note that trees in fact play an important role in the conservation of soil, the preservation of water resources, and the stability of the ecosystem. Deforestation also causes erosion of fertile topsoil, making it impossible to grow food in many areas. Deforestation also provokes life-threatening landslides. Any redevelopment of the country needs to take into consideration the impact of using wood for construction or fuel on the natural landscape.

- **Farming:** According to Haiti Demain:
To help mitigate this incessant spiral of deforestation, loss of resources, and resultant flooding, it is important to think about the development of sound agricultural practice. This should include the planting and growth of crops such as coffee, cacao, and fruit trees.



- **Aftermath of Earthquake:** According to Wikipedia:
The aftermath of the January 12, 2010 earthquake revealed the fragility of Haiti as not only prone to natural disaster but disproportionately densified. It has become clear that people had flocked to the city of Port-au-Prince for opportunity in a country where opportunity was few and far between in other parts of the nation. With soil erosion and flooding countrywide came a loss of agricultural producing capability.



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- **Population Difficulties:**

Almost half the population in Haiti is illiterate. Haiti has only 15,200 primary schools of which 90% are nonpublic and managed by communities, religious organizations or NGOs. The enrollment rate for primary school is 67% and fewer than 30% reach 6th grade. Secondary schools enroll 20% of eligible age children. Unemployment stands at 54%.

Economically Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas with an average GDP of about \$2/person/day. It is impoverished and is one of the world's poorest and least developed. About 80% of the population were estimated to be living in poverty in 2003. Poverty has forced at least 225,000 Haitian children to work as restavecs or unpaid household servants which the United Nations considers to be a modern day form of slavery.

About 66% of all Haitians work in the agricultural sector which consists mainly of small scale subsistence farming. The country has experienced little formal job-creation over the past decade. Haiti's richest 1% own nearly half the country's wealth. 40% of families do not have enough to eat.

- **Health:**

Half of the children in Haiti are unvaccinated and just 40% of the population has access to basic health care. Nearly half the causes of death have been attributed to HIV/AIDS (5% of the population is infected), respiratory infections, meningitis and diarrheal diseases, including cholera and typhoid according to the World Health Organization. 90% of Haiti's children suffer from waterborne diseases and intestinal parasites. Cases of Tuberculosis in Haiti are more than 10 times as high as those in other Latin American countries. Some 30,000 people in Haiti suffer each year from malaria.

Only 28% of people have access to basic health care. One in twelve Haitian children die before their 5th birthday and a child dies there every hour from malnutrition.

- **AIDS and Haiti:** According to: http://www.amplifyyourvoice.org/u/AFY_Ratna/2010/4/7/After-the-Earthquake-HIVAIDS-in-Haiti:

The joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in their February 2010 report outlined the recent earthquake's impact on Haiti's AIDS infrastructure:

- A large majority of the 120,000 Haitians living with HIV/AIDS live in the three departments (provinces) most severely affected by the earthquake.

- Most of the AIDS treatment facilities and clinics in Haiti's major cities (Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Leogane, and Petit Goave) have been demolished.

- Less than 40% of Haitians receiving HIV-related care before the earthquake receive it now.

- More than one million displaced people are living in 700 temporary, unplanned camps. Without immediate preventative efforts, sexual violence and exploitation already existing in the camps will continue to spread HIV infections.

- Over one million Haitians lack proper shelter from the rain; many are sleeping in the streets or in rubble from the earthquake. These individuals also lack access to clean water, sanitary facilities, and consistent sources of food.

- In short, January's earthquake caused \$13.2 billion in damages. In order to rebuild its national HIV response, Haiti will need the support of the international community as well as a financial support of \$70 million immediately for the next six months to ensure that HIV programs will continue and new programs for the displaced population will be put into practice.

- **Diaspora:**

As a result of difficult circumstances within the country, millions of Haitians live abroad, chiefly in North America including the Dominican Republic, the US, Cuba, Canada, and the Bahamas. There are an estimated 600,000 Haitians in the United States alone. This group is entitled the Haitian diaspora.

- **Culture:**

Haiti has a rich history and as a result is an interesting mix of French, African, colonial Spanish and native Taíno elements that contribute to its culture. Haiti is known mostly for painting and sculpture. The music of Haiti is influenced by European and African ties with Voodoo ceremonial traditions tied in.

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Rara parading music, troubador ballads, and compas are all well known. Compas is a complex ever-changing music that arose from African rhythms and European ballroom dancing mixed with Haiti's bourgeois culture. It is a refined musical style with a meringue flare as a basic rhythm. Wyclef Jean is a famous Haitian musician with a hiphop style.

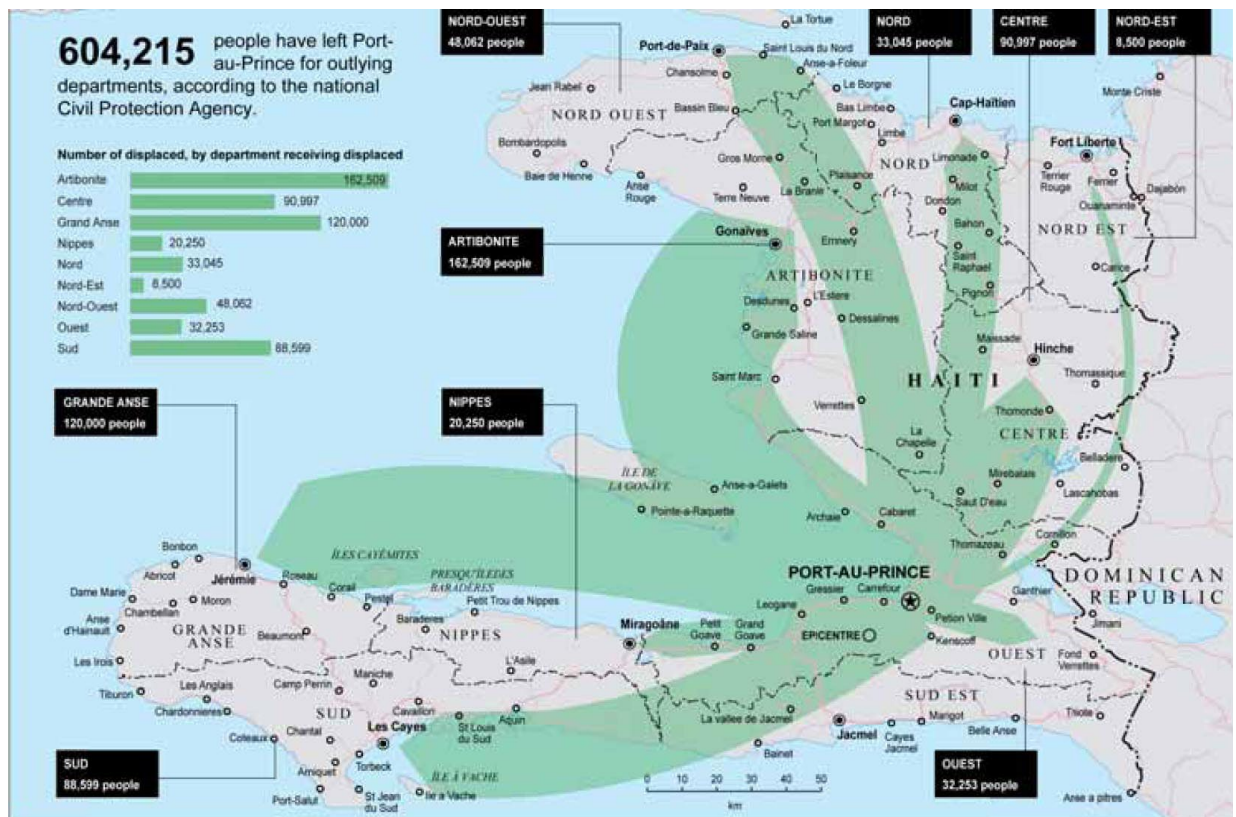
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Haitian art uses brilliant colors, a naive perspective, and humor. It usually depicts food, landscape, marked scenes, jungle animals, rituals, dances, gods, and fables. People are often disguised as animals and vice versa.

Football (soccer in the US) is the most popular sport, with basketball gaining in popularity.

- Bas Artibonite Overview:** According to FEBS, Haiti Demain and ARCHIVE Research: Bas Artibonite is a region in the Department of Artibonite, located along the North coast of the bay of Haiti, which has a population of roughly 1,700,000. With an area of 4,984 sq km it is Haiti's largest department. The region is the country's main rice-growing area. The main cities include Gonaives (the capital) and Saint Marc. The department has been in a state of economic decrease since the insurgencies and coups have reduced the nation's stability. Since the election of President Rene Garcia Preval the production of rice and other crops has been on an increase.

The 5 departments in the North are the most populated in Haiti. After the earthquake the population has been growing, with 4,766,000 habitants, or 47% of Port-au-Prince's population relocating there. This region of the country is less sensitive to hurricanes and seismic risks than the South. But there is a great risk of flooding near riverbanks, especially near the city of Gonaives. It is estimated that these regions will be the most developed in the aftermath of the earthquake. The Artibonite and the Central region alone have gained 2.6 million inhabitants.



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- Sant Marc Overview:** According to Wikipedia:
 Sant Marc is a coastal port town in western Haiti in the Artibonite Department. According to the 2003 Census the municipality has 160,181 inhabitants. Due to the most recent earthquake this number is changing. The port of Sant Marc is currently the preferred port of entry for consumer goods coming into Haiti. This may be due to its location from volatile and congested Port-au-Prince as well as its central location relative to a large group of Haitian cities. These cities together with their surrounding areas contain nearly eight million of Haiti's ten million people.



In 1905 the Compagnie National built a 100 km railroad north from Port-au-Prince to St. Marc. The track was later extended another 30 km east to Verrettes. Although the railroad is no longer functioning, the route has been paved and converted to a vehicular road, now known as "Route 1" or the international highway. Route 1 runs from Port-au-Prince through St. Marc and extends all the way up to Gonaives where it intersects Route 2. It is essentially the only paved road in St. Marc. It has become a public space and place of business; in many smaller towns, vendor stands line the sides of the road. If you pull over, you can essentially have "road side" assistance - vendors will come up to the car and try to sell you goods. It would be dangerous if it were to become too developed with the modernization of vehicles, as there is still a lot of pedestrian traffic on this road.

- Political Unrest:** According to: http://www.poz.com/articles/140_77.shtml
 In February 2004, anarchy railed the vital Haitian port of St. Marc. Rebel forces, hoping to unseat then-president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. People burned down police stations as locals erected barricades against government troops with car chassis, tree trunks and flaming tires. Aristide's troops chased out the rebels and began what one newspaper called a "terrifying lockdown," burning opposition sympathizers alive in their homes and leaving wild dogs to feast on corpses. Thousands of St. Marc residents fled to nearby mountains.

Although there is currently a law enforcement system in place, headed by the Deputy of St. Marc. It apparently does not serve its purpose. According to several residents, police officials are corrupt and will not hesitate to accept bribes to set prison inmates free. Because of this, there has been a tendency for local residents to seek street justice, which oftentimes goes unobserved by the police. This includes setting thieves on fire by placing a burning rubber tire around them and other heinous acts. This system of law enforcement undoubtedly discourages crime in St. Marc to some extent.

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- **Earthquake Aftermath:**

In St. Marc, homes were not affected by the January 12 earthquake. However, there was a significant amount of damage to the agricultural fields. As a result, some farmers were launched into even deeper poverty.



Transient individuals and families affected by the earthquake have come to St. Marc seeking shelter with family or friends after their homes were destroyed. The earthquake has in some capacity affected everyone in St. Marc. Many have friends, family, or work that has been afflicted. People from Port-au-Prince who have relocated to St. Marc after the earthquake are now in search of a stable job and housing. But few have had success. This population may turn to risky behavior (i.e. prostitution) in order to ensure their survival.

According to PEPFAR:

The January 12 earthquake that hit the capital and other cities in the South of Haiti, caused over one million people to flee. Of this number, the department of the Artibonite received about 165,000 people. The town of St. Marc acquired over 40,000, according to IHSI (l'Institution Haitian des Statistiques Imprévu) estimations. The St. Marc community saw a population increase of over 17% from its initial 222,930 in the days immediately following the disaster. Additional services for displaced PLWHA and orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) are in urgent need as those most affected by the earthquake remain to be PLWHA and their families.

In the days following Jan 12, FEBS started to receive displaced PLWHA and OVC. This number only grew each day. Currently, none of the local health institutions have the capacity or the resources to accommodate the drastic increase of patients. The predictions of IHSI and the civil protection estimate that 880 PLWHA and 10,000 OVC (6,040 of which are under 5) will be coming to this area which serves as the welcoming door for those fleeing Port-au-Prince. Along with the increase in population, an increase in the number of cases of rape and risky sexual behavior was observed in the community no less than a few weeks after the earthquake. As a result, an increase in the number of infection is expected and FEBS has been in anticipation.

- **Urban Overview:**

St. Marc is a large port town surrounded by mountains. At all times, there are many boats in the port, typically sail boats. St. Marc is a merchant port. The actual town itself is not hilly as it is located closer to the sea. But there are areas where the town starts to extend into the foothills. From these vantage points, the ocean is sometimes viewable. The city also has a few park spaces dispersed throughout, including Cite Nissage Saget. These parks are often surrounded by vendors with carts full of goods.

Local residents like living in St. Marc because of its rich culture. It is a city safer than larger cities such as Port-au-Prince where people cannot leave home past dark. St. Marc is generally considered a safe place to live by Haitian standards. About 60% live in the communal section, meaning outside of town. This is to say that they have no access to infrastructure, i.e. drainage systems, electricity or potable water. There are many recent developmental projects taking place in St. Marc, however, with assistance and funding from USAID and IOM.

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They include: grading and paving roads, implementing a sewage/drainage system and providing access to potable water at various points throughout town. The only paved road in downtown St. Marc is Route 1, which runs through the center of town. Although paved, it is not easy to navigate and has many divots and points of inundation. Other roads are either dirt or gravel. The most prevalent mode of transportation is the mobylette (due to the inexpensive maintenance and low gas consumption). Generally, people fit as many as four on a bike even though the mobylettes are designed for a maximum of two people. Bikes are another common source of transport. Cars are considered a luxury mode of transportation.



Cite Nissage Saget

St. Marc is known for being a unique blend of city and rural lifestyles. For many living in Port-au-Prince, it is considered the start of the “country”. Goats are rampant and can be seen roaming about the city streets. Many people in St. Marc also own cows or chickens.

- **People:**

Haitians in general are a very hospitable and welcoming population, including those in St. Marc. It is said here that “Bonjou is the passport”, meaning that saying hello opens doors. Every time you see someone you know or are have only just met, you must say either “bonjou or bonswa”, literally meaning ‘good day’ or ‘good evening’. Typically it is the person entering a room who makes the greeting.



Although St. Marc is known as the “pleasure city” as many young people reside in St. Marc, the majority of people in St. Marc live in abject poverty and work extremely hard to make ends meet.

Haitians also tend to have very powerful voices which carry very far. From an outsider’s perspective it appears as if they are angry when in fact this is not the case. People in St. Marc are very jovial; they enjoy exchanging jokes with each other. Comedy is a favorite past time.

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- **Music:**

There are three main types of music listened to in St. Marc:

- Troubalou is very similar to Salsa music and includes drums, trumpets, and guitar.
- Haitian folk music is strongly associated with Vodou. It is often played as processional music in the streets between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday.
- According to Wikipedia, Kompa is a modern meringue that was originated in the 1800's and modernized/popularized in the 1950's by Nemours Jean Baptiste, a sax and guitar player.

In St. Marc, many people also listen to popular American music. However there have been quite a few popular Haitian groups who have developed over the years, such as Les Formidables. This group is no longer together as most members are now deceased, but the group's music lingers on. Virtuou is currently a very popular group in St. Marc. BC and Gwoup 703 are other popular Haitian groups. And RapCreole is an emerging popular style among the youth. Typically this kind of rap utilizes beats from Haitian folk or popular music. Popular 'RapKreyol' artists include BC (Barikad Crew), Skwardy, Izolan, Fantom. and Sebastien Pierre is a popular R&B artist.

- **Food:**

Food plays a large role in the life of people in St. Marc. People are always eating; it is an important part of normal daily social interaction. For the most part, cooking is done outside to avoid overheating and moisture collection inside.

The diet in St. Marc is very starchy; plantains, rice and pasta are present in almost every meal. In St. Marc, seafood is also consumed regularly. For instance, crab, dried cod and fresh fish are available. Goat is perhaps the most common meat, but chicken and beef are also consumed regularly. Haitians have an affinity for either very spicy food (even peanut butter is spicy) or very sweet food (sugar is added to sugary cereals). Spices and spicy peppers are used abundantly in Haitian cuisine.



A significant amount of produce is also grown locally, specifically bananas, mangoes, cherries, corn, manioc, rice, and tomatoes. The typical St. Marc resident consumes a lot of fruit.

A dish very specific to St. Marc consists of rice with sauce "pois" (beans), crab/goat meat mixed in, or both. Other dishes include bananne pesse (fried plantains) which are accompanied with piklese, a spicy "gardiniera" mixture that consists of carrots, cabbage, and peppers.

Soup is typically prepared on Sunday which makes use of all the weeks leftovers. It usually consists of several types of meat, potatoes, and carrots. Fresh fish, typically sole, is also consumed regularly. This fish is cooked over an open fire with a mayonnaise based marinade mixed with various spices.

Riz du let is a common dessert. It is essentially a rice pudding made with cinnamon, milk, sugar, and butter.

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- **Economics:**

Commerce is the largest trade in St. Marc. Many find work as a merchant, either with their own stand in the market or at a boutique “convenient store” stand. There are also a multitude of ambulant sellers who carry baskets of goods or candy on their heads as well as canned milk to passers-by. It is interesting to note there are not many products manufactured in St. Marc. Nearly all products sold are received as donations or surpluses from second-hand stores in the US. St. Marc. markets are open everyday and one can find almost any type of fruit or vegetable grown locally.



St. Marc hosts a charcoal market for cooking material. As charcoal is used for much of the cooking in St. Marc and throughout Haiti in general, it is manufactured locally and thus supports a large work force.

Aside from the charcoal market, St. Marc’s economics revolve a great deal around agricultural products produced in the area. In Deye Legliz, an area near St. Marc harbor, food markets are open everyday and one can find almost any type of fruit or vegetable grown locally. Most residents frequent the market every Saturday to stock up on food supplies for the week.

The Boulevard area houses a large flea market with a variety of mostly second-hand items sold, including clothing, electronic equipment, shoes, toys, bicycles, etc. The marche’s (markets) are open everyday but are typically frequented on Saturdays. Many people from Port-au-Prince come to the markets in St. Marc because of the inexpensive costs.

- **Shopping:**

There are a few different types of stores in St. Marc. These include:

- Pharmacies that sell medicinal products.
- Open Air Markets provide produce and other grains.
- Bakeries sell breads, kasave, and various sweet baked goods.
- Boutiques serve as general convenience stores.
- Megezans are specialty shops for such items as fabric, hardware, beauty salons and car parts.

In St. Marc there are also people who carry baskets of goods with them (typically on top of their heads). When driving by, vendors will approach cars for purchases.



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- **Culture:** According to ARCHIVE Research:

In general, people from St. Marc would distinguish between two different classes: a Middle class and a Lower Class (the poverty class). Perhaps the largest distinction between the two is the ability to read/write in French. In St. Marc, the more languages spoken, the better the education is acknowledged by others. Many of the better schools teach both French and English. When children finish with these schools, they are fluent in three languages, including Creole. Poorer schools only teach in Creole.

With most people living in poverty, everyday becomes a struggle to survive. Individual aspirations are restricted to being able to feed children and send them to school. Long-term planning goals are not on the forefront of the minds of most people living in St. Marc. It is perhaps the goal of many families that their children's children will be able to live a better life.

For people living in the "middle class", the dream is to one day be able to afford a Concrete Masonry Unit house. A CMU house is associated with security and wealth. Middle class families may also wish to save enough money to send themselves and their children out of the country.

Since life in St. Marc generally revolves around money, which is placed as a priority above even personal health and individual survival, there is not the same sense of community that people in the developed world might be used to. A desire for the betterment of the city is not typically shared and there is a general lack of patriotism and pride in the larger community. This is perhaps a response to the corrupt political system in which public officials pocket money coming into the community. The notion of "bettering the public" is brushed aside for personal gain.

- **Gender Roles:**

In Haiti, women's roles primarily consist of: cooking, cleaning, and caring for children. According to FEBS staff, women are undoubtedly the inferior sex and many are placed in roles where they compromise their sexuality in order to secure food and shelter for themselves and/or children. This leads to more complex issues. For instance some of these women do not have a say in how many children they will bear, resulting in overcrowded homes. Some women do have careers as market vendors. This is primarily a women-dominated trade. Educated women or upper-middle class women also have office careers.

Men are considered the breadwinners. They work either tending the fields or selling merchandise to bring home money. Their role as the patriarch of the family is commonly accompanied by machismo. There also does not tend to be much interaction between the father and children as between the mother and children. Men are more apt to drink as it is more socially acceptable for men to be intoxicated than women.



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- **Religious Beliefs:** According to: http://www.salisbury.edu/nursing/haitiancom/health_care_practpg1.htm: Religious believers follow mostly Catholicism and Voodoo. Both are prevalent throughout the country. Catholicism/Christianity is the most wide-spread and generally accepted religion in St. Marc. Most Haitians attend church on Sundays. Roman Catholicism was the first form of Christianity brought to Haiti and now is the most prevalent Christian denomination with 80% of Haitians practicing. Evangelical, Protestants, and Baptist churches are also very common in St. Marc. The majority of residents are very involved in their church as it helps them maintain their cultural identity. On any given day, groups of people singing religious hymns can also be heard throughout the streets. Many local churches shun PLWHA and claim that AIDS is a made up disease that does not exist. Many FEBS clients have stopped seeking treatment and guidance, discouraged by their local pastors.



Thought to be brought over by African slaves and developed over time, the word Voodoo is derived from an African word meaning spirit. It is the most widely practiced religion and is considered the official religion of Haiti. Although a few devout Catholics denounce it, the majority of Haitians practice both religions simultaneously. Because of this Voodoo is often resorted to for explaining illness. Voodoo is more strongly rooted in the rural areas, and this population is more reluctant to accept Western medicine. Although urban areas are more accepting of Western health care, many still resort to their Harungas (spiritual guide) for additional support and guidance.

In Voodoo, illnesses are thought to be derived of either natural or supernatural causes. A natural illness is considered to be an imbalance between hot and cold. Supernatural illnesses are thought to be brought on by an evil spirit, or loas, and are perceived to be more severe.

- **Beach/Diving:**

Going to the beach is a popular activity for families and friends on the weekend. The most popular time to go, is on Sunday after church. The beaches of St. Marc typically consist of small rocks and although quite beautiful, are often littered with garbage.

