TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

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The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

HAITI

Country name	Haiti
State title	Republic of Haiti
Name of citizen	Haitian
Official languages	French (*fra*); Haitian Creole (*hat*)[1]
Country name in official languages	Haïti (*fra*); Ayiti (*hat*)
State title in official languages	République d'Haïti (*fra*); Repiblik d Ayiti (*hat*)
Script	French and Haitian Creole are both written in Roman
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	HT/HTI
Capital	Port-au-Prince (*hat*: Pòtoprens)
Population / Area	11.5 million (UN data 2021) 27,750 km^2

Introduction

Haiti is a Caribbean country on the western half of the island of Hispaniola, part of the Greater Antilles group, which together with the Lesser Antilles makes up the Antilles archipelago. The eastern part of the island is the country of Dominican Republic.

The island was originally inhabited by the indigenous Caribbean Taíno people. Europeans arrived during the first voyage of Christopher Columbus in 1492, and the island subsequently became part of the Spanish Empire. The western part of the island was ceded to France in 1697 and later became Haiti. The country gained independence from France in 1804, and was occupied by the United States from 1915 to 1934.

Haiti has faced significant challenges, including political instability, poverty and natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes.

Geographical names policy

Where possible, geographical names should be taken from official Haitian sources. Official sources are likely to be in a French style, and names thereon should be reflected as shown. Haitian Creole spellings can be included alongside these, if they are available. All diacritical marks (see below for details), apostrophes and hyphens should be retained. In the absence of official Haitian sources, the NGA Geographic Names Server (GNS) or United Nations mapping can be a source of geographical names.

Languages

Haitian Creole is the principal language spoken by Haitians; about 10% of the population are also conversant in French.

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[1] ISO 639-3 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Factfile.

After the country's independence from France in 1804, French continued to be Haiti's literary language and remained the only language acknowledged in the Constitution until 1961, when a new Constitution permitted the use of Creole "*for the safeguarding of the material and moral interests of those citizens who do not have sufficient knowledge of the French language*"[2]. Creole was not explicitly declared official alongside French until the 1987 Constitution[3].

Much work has been carried out in an attempt to standardise the orthography of Haitian Creole. A system developed by the *Institut Pédagogique National*, *òtograf,* was selected as the official orthography by the Haitian government in 1980[4] and has become the most widely used orthography. The *Akademi Kreyòl Ayisyen (AKA)* was established in 2014, and is the authority on the Haitian Creole language. With its roots in 18th century French, Haitian Creole draws also on several West African languages (such as Wolof (*wol*) and Fon (*fon*)) as well as Spanish (*spa*) and some English. There are three recognised dialects: Northern, Central and Southern.

Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings[5]):

French contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
À	00C0	à	00E0
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Ç	00C7	ç	00E7
È	00C8	è	00E8
É	00C9	é	00E9
Ê	00CA	ê	00EA
Ë	00CB	ë	00EB
Î	00CE	î	00EE
Ï	00CF	ï	00EF
Ô	00D4	ô	00F4
Œ	0152	œ	0153
Ù	00D9	ù	00F9
Û	00DB	û	00FB
Ü	00DC	ü	00FC
Ÿ[6](U+0178)	0178	ÿ[6]	00FF

Haitian Creole contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
È	00C8	è	00E8
Ò	00D2	ò	00F2

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[2] Article 35 of the 1964 Constitution.
[3] Article 5 of the 1987 *Constitution de la République d'Haïti*
[4] *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics*, Robert B. Kaplan, 2005
[5] See www.unicode.org
[6] rarely encountered

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Map of Haiti

Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status

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Administrative structure

At first-order (ADM1) level, Haiti is divided into 10 départements which are subdivided into arrondissements at the second-order level (ADM2). The arrondissements are divided into communes at the third-order level. The list below reflects the current structure with the recommended spelling given in bold.

PCGN recommended name	Long form in French	Long form in Creole	Location	ISO 3166-2 code	Centre	Location	ADM2s
Artibonite	Département de l'Artibonite	Depatman Latibonit	19°20'N 072°30'W	HT-AR	**Gonaïves**	19°27'N 072°41'W	Dessalines; Gonaïves; Gros-Morne; Marmelade; Saint-Marc
Centre	Département du Centre	Depatman Sant	19° 00'N 072°00'W	HT-CE	**Hinche**	19°09'N 072° 01'W	Cerca La Source; Hinche; Lascahobas; Mirebalais
Grand'Anse	Département de la Grand'Anse	Depatman Grandans	18°30'N 074°05'W	HT-GA	**Jérémie**		Anse d'Hainault; Corail; Jérémie
Nippes	Département des Nippes	Depatman Nip	18°25'N 073°25'W	HT-NI	**Miragoâne**	18°27'N 073°06'W	Anse-à-Veau; Baradères; Miragoâne
Nord	Département du Nord	Depatman Nò	19°36'N 072°18'W	HT-ND	**Cap-Haïtien**	19°45'N 072°12'W	Acul-du-Nord; Borgne; Cap-Haïtien; Grande-Rivière-du-Nord; Limbé; Plaisance; Saint-Raphaël
Nord-Est	Département du Nord-Est	Depatman Nòdès	19°32'N 071°42'W	HT-NE	**Fort-Liberté**	19°40'N 071°50'W	Fort- Liberté; Ouanaminthe; Trou du Nord; Vallières
Nord-Ouest	Département du Nord-Ouest	Depatman Nòdwès	19°45'N 073°05'W	HT-NO	**Port-de-Paix**	19°57'N 072°50'W	Môle-Saint-Nicolas; Port-de-Paix; Saint-Louis du Nord
Ouest	Département de l'Ouest	Depatman Lwès	18°18'N 072°24'W	HT-OU	**Port-au-Prince**	18°32'21"N 072°20'06"W	Arcahaie; Croix-des-Bouquets; La Gonâve; Léogâne; Port-au-Prince
Sud	Département du Sud	Depatman Sid	18°15'N 073°40'W	HT-SD	**Les Cayes**	18°12'N 073°45'W	Aquin; Les Cayes; Chardonnières; Côteaux; Port-Salut
Sud-Est	Département du Sud-Est	Depatman Sidès	18°18'N 072°24'W	HT-SE	**Jacmel**	18°14'03"N 072°32'05W	Bainet; Belle-Anse; Jacmel

Useful internet references

- BBC Country profile: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-19548810
- CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/haiti/
- Embassy of Haiti, Washington, D.C.: http://www.haiti.org/
- Ethnologue report on languages of Haiti: https://www.ethnologue.com/country/HT/
- FCDO travel advice: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/haiti
- Haitian Creole Academy (Akademi Kreyòl Ayisyen): http://akademikreyol.net/index.html
- *Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique:* https://ihsi.gouv.ht
- ISO country codes: https://www.iso.org/obp/ui#iso:code:3166:HT
- Omniglot writing systems and languages of the world: http://www.omniglot.com/writing/haitiancreole.htm
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GeographicNamesSearch/
- Wikipedia entry for Haiti: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haiti

Compiled by PCGN
info@pcgn.org.uk
www.gov.uk/pcgn
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