

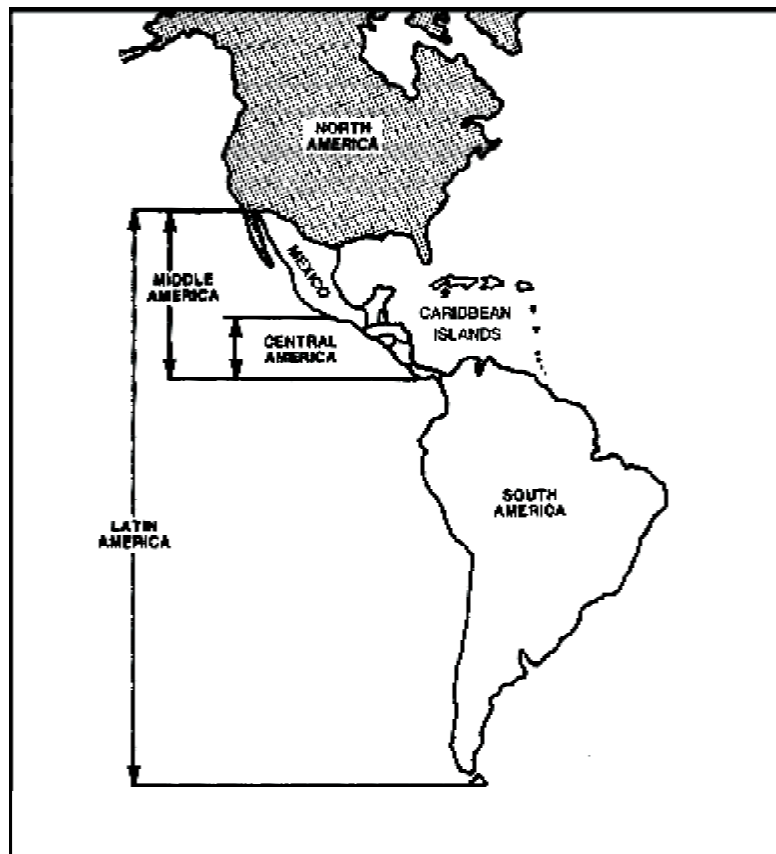
CHAPTER - 2

MIDDLE AMERICA

Introduction

Middle America consists of that stretch of land it extends southward from the southern border of the United States to Colombia in South America. It includes:

- (1) Mexico, the largest country in area and population;
- (2) The small Central countries; and
- (3) Numerous islands, large and small in the Caribbean Sea or near it.



Central America

Introduction

South-east of Mexico, the North American continent tapers southwards through a narrow isthmus which connects North and South America and embraces seven small countries known collectively as Central America. Five of the countries Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Panama have sea coast on both the sides— the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean (Caribbean Sea). The other two countries have coasts on the one side only. El Salvador has coast on the Pacific side and Belize on the Atlantic side. Geographic fragmentation is the major characteristic of Central America.



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MEXICO

Area : 19,72,547 sq. km. Latitude : 14°30'-32°40'N
Population : 99.6 million Longitude : 86°50'-117°10'W
Capital : Mexico City.

Mexico is a triangular shaped country which is situated next to the compact bulk of the continuous United States. It looks comparatively small on a world map but its area is nearly eight times that of United Kingdom and is the largest of the Middle American Countries.

Minerals : Mexico is the leading producer of silver, sulphur and fluorite and is also one of the main producer and exporter of petroleum.

Mexico City

- Country's capital is situated in a high level basin.
- The largest metropolitan city in the world, and the most polluted city.

HONDURAS

Area : 1,12,090 sq. km.
Latitude : 13°-16°30'N
Longitude : 83°15'-89°30'W
Population : 6.1 million
Capital : Tegucigalpa D.C.

- Situated between Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. It is similar in structure of Guatemala but the Atlantic coastline is long and the Pacific coastline on the Gulf of Fonseca is short.
- One of the poorest countries in the western hemisphere.

NICARAGUA

Area : 1,13,000 sq. km.
Latitude : 10°-45'-15°10'N
Longitude : 83°15'-87°40'W
Population : 5.1 million
Capital : Managua.

- The republic of Nicaragua is situated between Honduras in the north and Costa Rica in the south, in the heart of Central America.
- It is the largest but most sparsely populated country of Central America.

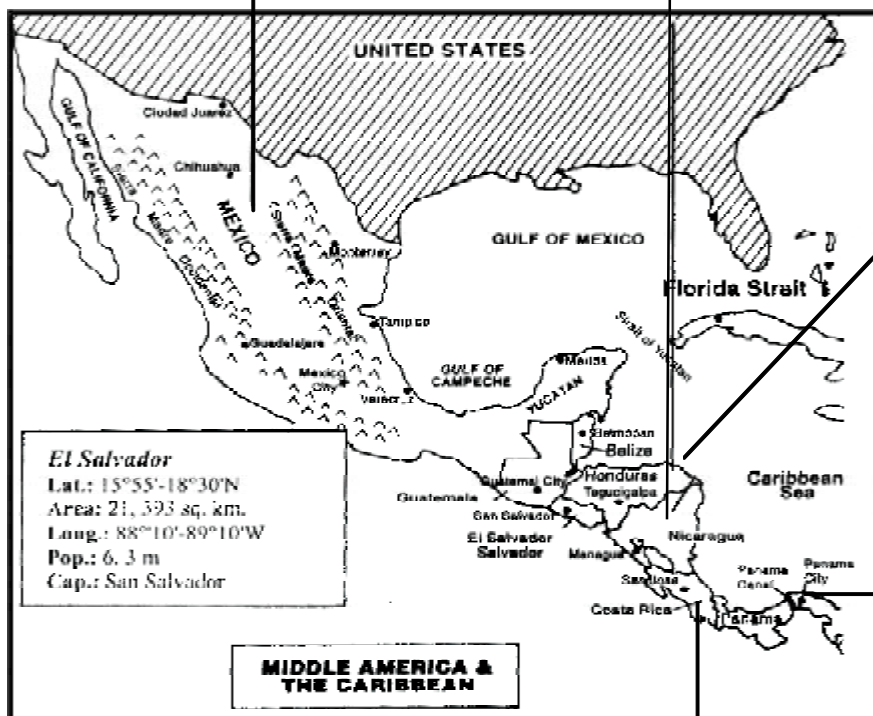
PANAMA

Area : 77,080 sq. km.
Population : 2.9 million
Latitude : 7°-15'-9°40'N
Longitude : 77°15'-83°W
Capital : Panama City

- The southernmost country of Central America is situated between Costa Rica and Colombia. It was once a part of the South American country of Colombia but became a republic in 1903.

Panama City

- Only capital city of a Central American country which is located at the coast.



COSTA RICA

Latitude : 8°-11'-15'N Area : 51,100 sq. km.
Longitude : 82°35'-85°55'W Population : 3.6 million
Capital : San Jose

- Situated between Nicaragua in the north and Panama in the south. It is a narrow country between the Atlantic and Pacific coast.

San Jose

- Capital city, lies in the mountains on the Pacific side.
- Linked to Limon on the Atlantic side by railway.



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Caribbean Islands

The West Indies or Caribbean Islands are hundreds of islands, large and small. They are sometimes referred to as the Antilles. The Antilles themselves are subdivided into Greater Antilles and Lesser Antilles. Many of the islands have become independent countries.

BAHAMAS

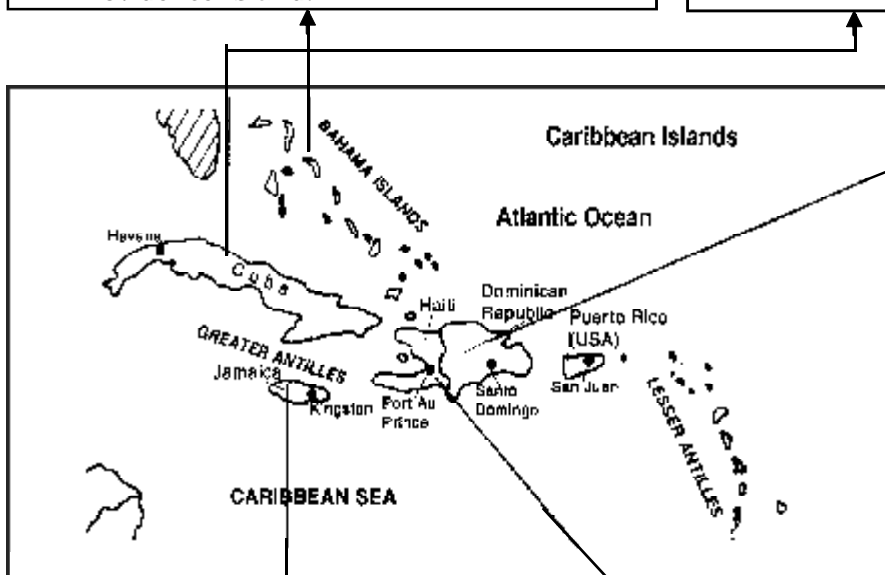
Area : 12,880 sq. km. Latitude : 21°-27°17'N
Population : 2,83,705 Longitude : 72°45'-10'W
Capital : Nassau

- The Commonwealth of the Bahamas is an archipelago, extending from Florida up to 1200 km in south eastwards direction.
- Andoras is the largest island, but New Providence is the most important and most populous island.
- The capital Nassau is situated in the New Providence Island.

CUBA

Area : 1,10,860 sq. km. Latitude : 19°52'-23°5'N
Population: 11.1 million Longitude: 74°-10'-85°W
Capital : Havana

- Cuba, the largest island in the Greater Antilles and most westerly located of all the Caribbean islands.
- Cuba ranks as the world's largest sugar producer.
- The capital Havana is the main sea port with an international air port.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Area : 48,730 sq. km. Latitude: 17°40'-19°N
Population: 12.6 million
Longitude: 68°15'-71°55'W
Capital : Santo Domingo

- The Dominican Republic extends over the eastern two thirds of Hispaniola, is the second largest island of Greater Antilles.
- Agriculture is the chief economic activity and sugar is the main cash crop.

JAMAICA

Area : 10,990 sq. km. Latitude : 17°-40°-18°30'N
Population : 2.6 million Longitude : 76°10'-78°20'W

Capital : Kingston

- An island in the Greater Antilles, is the third largest Caribbean island, lying 150 km. south of Cuba.
- has rich bauxite deposits and ranks as the world's second largest producer of bauxite and alumina.
- Important producer of sugarcane in the world.
- Most parts have karst features. (limestone topography).

HAITI

Area : 27,750 sq. km. Latitude : 18°-20°N
Population: 6.4 million Longitude: 71°40'-74°30'W

Capital : Port-au-Prince

- Haiti occupying the wester part of Hispaniola, is a mountainous country lying between Cuba in the west and Puerto Rico in the east.
- Probably the poorest nation in the western hemisphere.



BERMUDA

Area : 55.3 sq km.

Population : 63,022

Language : English

Capital : Hamilton

- The British colony of Bermuda is situated in the western Atlantic, 11,120 km. south east of New York.
- It consists of some 300 small coral islands of which Great Bermuda is the largest.

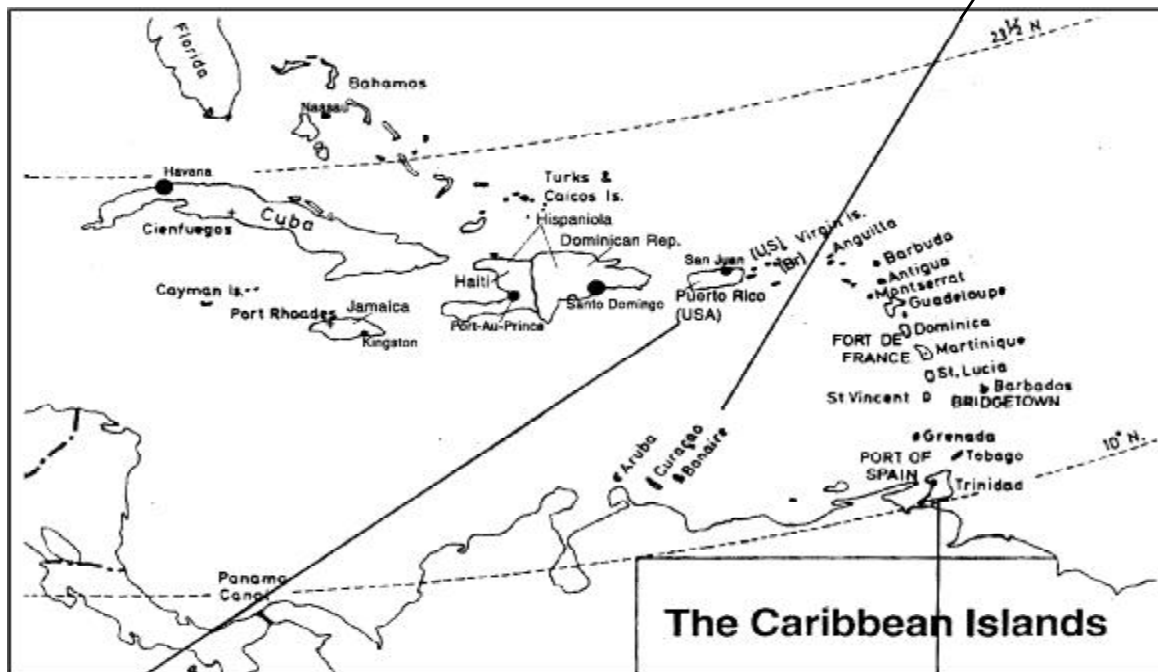
BERMUDA TRIANGLE

- A mysterious triangular shaped area of North Atlantic Ocean lying approximately between latitude 25° to 85° W.
- It is a triangle formed by Bermuda, Puerto Rico and Florida, (USA).
- Since 1940's many ships and air crafts have disappeared mysteriously in the sea, without giving any warning or explanation.

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

It has two widely separated division:

1. Three main islands (Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao) and smaller islands off the coast of Venezuela, important for tourism and oil refineries.
2. Three small islands which are situated to the south east of Puerto Rico.



PUERTO RICO

Area : 8,891 sq km.

Population : 4 million

Language : Spanish and English

Capital : San Juan

- A self governing part of USA, lying about 2,400 km southeast of Florida.
- Smallest and the eastern most island of the Greater Antilles.
- Sugar Industry is the leading industry.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Area : 5130 sq. km Population: 1.3 million

Capital : Port of Spain

- Trinidad lies 11 km off Venezuela and Tobago is situated 32 km north east of Trinidad.
- They are southern most islands of the Caribbean archipelago and geologically an extension of South American Continent.
- Has one of the strongest economics in the Caribbean area which is supported by offshore oil and oil refineries.



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Atlantic Ocean Islands

Azores (Portugal) Area : 2248 sq. km. Population : 2,38,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The archipelago lies 1,300 km west of Portugal. • It is volcanic origin. • It consists of nine main islands in three widely separated groups.
Madeira (Portugal) Area : 795 sq. km. Population : 4,37,312	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The volcanic archipelago is situated 700 km south-west of the Azores. • It consists of two inhabited islands, Madeira and Porto Santo.
Canaray Islands Area : 7273 sq. km. Cape Verde Area : 4033 sq. km. Capital : Praia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Canary island, is a part of Spain, situated to the west of African coast. • An important 'Port of Call' in the Atlantic Ocean. • The Republic of the Cape Verfe is an archipelago of 15 islands, lying to the west of Africa in the Central Atlantic. • Of volcanic origin, the islands are divided into two groups: Barlavento (windward) and Sotavento (leeward).
Sao Tome and Principle Area: 964 sq. km. Capital : Sao Tome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Republic of Sao Tome and Principle lying to the north of equator in the Gulf of Guinea about 200 km from the African coast.
St. Helena (U.K.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The British colony of St. Helena, situated about 1,900 km of West Africa in the South Atlantic Ocean. • It is volcanic in origin.
Ascension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situated to the north west of St. Helena. • It is of volcanic origin and is almost barren except on Green Mountain.
Tristan da Cunha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tristan da Cunha group of South Atlantic ocean is situated half way between the Capa Twon (South Africa) and South America. • The largest island of the group is Trista which consists of volcanic cone. • It is the most isolated in the world.
Falkland islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The British colony of Falkland, situated to the east of Argentina coast in the South Atlantic Ocean, is known for petroleum reserves. • It consists of two main islands—East Falkland and West Falkland and also some smaller islands.

