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# Diverse Origins: The Nation's 14 Largest Hispanic-Origin Groups

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## About this Report

This report examines the Hispanic population of the United States by its 14 largest origin groups. The data for this report are derived from the 2011 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS), which provides detailed geographic, demographic and economic characteristics for each group. Accompanying this report are [profiles](#) of the 14 largest Hispanic-origin groups—[Mexicans](#), [Puerto Ricans](#), [Salvadorans](#), [Cubans](#), [Dominicans](#), [Guatemalans](#), [Colombians](#), [Spaniards](#), [Hondurans](#), [Ecuadorians](#), [Peruvians](#), [Argentineans](#), [Nicaraguans](#) and [Venezuelans](#). Also accompanying this report is an [interactive graphic](#) analyzing these groups on several characteristics.

## Acknowledgements

The authors thank Paul Taylor for editorial guidance. Eileen Patten checked numbers in the report. Molly Rohal was the copy editor.

## Overview

The nation's Latino population is diverse. Represented among the 51.9 million Latinos in the United States are individuals who trace their heritage to more than 20 Spanish-speaking nations worldwide. But one group—Mexicans—dominates the nation's Latino population.

In 2011, nearly two-thirds (64.6%) of U.S. Hispanics, or 33.5 million, traced their family origins to Mexico, according to Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2011 American Community Survey (ACS). By comparison, Puerto Ricans, the nation's second largest Hispanic-origin group, number about 5 million and make up 9.5% of the total Hispanic population in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>1</sup>

Following Mexicans and Puerto Ricans are Salvadorans, Cubans,<sup>2</sup> Dominicans, Guatemalans, Colombians, Spaniards, Hondurans, Ecuadorians, Peruvians, Nicaraguans, Venezuelans and Argentineans. Together these 14 groups make up 95% of the U.S. Hispanic population.<sup>3</sup> Among them, six Hispanic

**Figure 1**  
**U.S. Hispanic Population, by Origin, 2011**  
(in thousands)



Note: Total U.S. population is 311,592,000 (rounded to the nearest thousand).

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2011 ACS (1% IPUMS)

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<sup>1</sup> Population estimates presented in this report are for Hispanics living in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Those living in Puerto Rico are not included in population estimates for the nation's Puerto Rican-origin population. According to the Puerto Rican Community Survey, some 3.7 million people lived in Puerto Rico in 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Population estimates from the 2011 ACS rank the U.S. Salvadoran-origin population ahead of the U.S. Cuban-origin population, but these estimates are statistically indistinguishable from each other. This isn't the first time this has happened. Since 2008, the Salvadoran-origin population was estimated to be larger than the Cuban-origin population twice—in 2009 and 2011. Meanwhile, in 2008 and in 2010, the Cuban origin population was estimated to be larger. However, the Salvadoran-origin population is growing faster and is poised to overtake the Cuban-origin population sometime in the next few years. For more, see our [blog post](#) "Salvadorans may soon replace Cubans as third-largest U.S. Hispanic group."

<sup>3</sup> Percentages are computed before numbers are rounded.

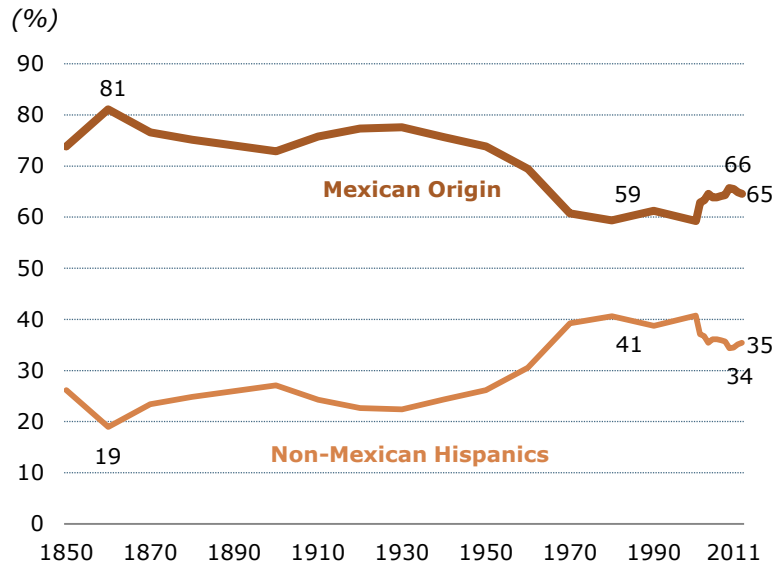
origin groups have populations greater than 1 million.

Mexican-origin Hispanics have always been the largest Hispanic-origin group in the U.S. In 1860, for example, among the 155,000 Hispanics living in the U.S., 81% were of Mexican origin—a historic high. Since then the origins of the nation's Hispanic population have diversified as growing numbers of immigrants from other Latin American nations and Puerto Rico settled in the U.S. For example, between 1930 and 1980, Hispanics from places other than Mexico nearly doubled their representation among U.S.

Hispanics, from 22% to 41%. But with the arrival of large numbers of Mexican immigrants in the 1980s and 1990s, the Mexican share among Hispanics grew, rising to a recent peak of 66% in 2008. Since then it has declined slightly—to 65%—as Mexican migration to the U.S. has slowed ([Passel, Cohn and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2012](#)).

The nation's Hispanic-origin population differs in many other ways as well. For instance, U.S. Hispanics of Mexican origin have the lowest median age, at 25 years, while Hispanics of Cuban origin have the highest median age, at 40 years. Venezuelans are the most likely to have a college degree (51%) while Guatemalans and Salvadorans are among the least likely (7%). Argentineans have the highest annual median household income (\$55,000) while Hondurans have the lowest (\$31,000). Close to half (46%) of Hondurans and Guatemalans do not have health insurance while 15% of Puerto Ricans and Spaniards do not have health insurance. Further comparisons and rankings of the nation's largest Hispanic-origin groups are shown in the appendix of this report.

Figure 2  
**Share Mexican-Origin among the U.S. Hispanic Population, 1850-2011**



Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Decennial Censuses 1850 to 1990 and American Community Surveys 2001-2011 (IPUMS)

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Hispanics are the nation's largest minority group. Estimates released last week by the U.S. Census Bureau ([2013](#)) show that the Hispanic population in 2012 was 53 million, making up 17% of the U.S. population.<sup>4</sup> By comparison, non-Hispanic blacks, who are the nation's second largest minority group, represent 12% of the nation's population and non-Hispanic Asians rank third at 5%.<sup>5</sup>

Hispanics are also the nation's largest immigrant group and one of its fastest growing populations. According to the Census Bureau, Hispanic population growth between 2000 and 2010 accounted for more than half of the nation's population growth ([Passel, Cohn and Lopez, 2011](#)). Among the nation's 40.4 million immigrants, nearly half (47%) are Hispanic ([Motel and Patten, 2013](#)).

Accompanying this report are 14 [statistical profiles](#)—one for each of the 14 largest Hispanic-origin groups. Each statistical profile describes the demographic, employment and income characteristics of a Hispanic-origin population residing in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Each origin group's characteristics are compared with all Hispanics and the U.S. population overall.

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<sup>4</sup> Throughout this report and in the accompanying statistical profiles, the 2011 American Community Survey is the main data source used. According to Pew Hispanic Center tabulations based on the 2011 ACS, there were 51.9 million Hispanics in the U.S. in 2011. The population estimate published by the U.S. Census Bureau for Hispanics—53 million—reflects data from 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Reference to whites, blacks and Asians refers to the non-Hispanic components of each population.

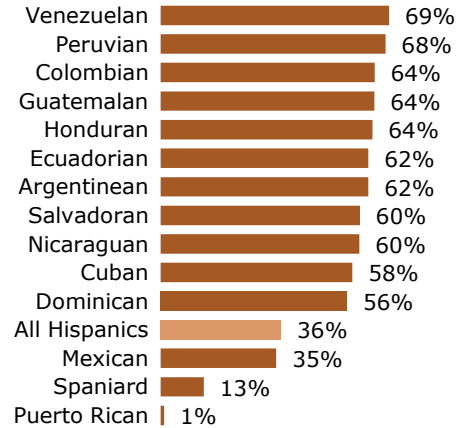
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<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb13-112.html>

## Appendix: Rankings of the 14 Largest Hispanic-Origin Groups

Figure A1

### Share Foreign Born among the U.S. Hispanic Population, by Origin, 2011



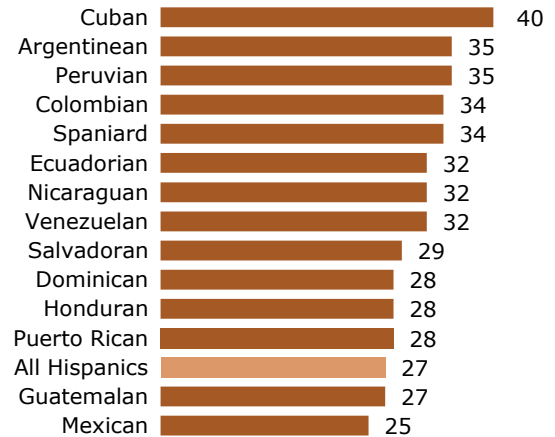
Notes: "Foreign born" includes those born outside the U.S. or its territories (including Puerto Rico) and neither of whose parents are U.S. citizens. U.S. share foreign born is 13%.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2011 ACS (1% IPUMS)

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Figure A2

### Median Age of the U.S. Hispanic Population, by Origin, 2011



Note: Median age for the general U.S. population is 37.

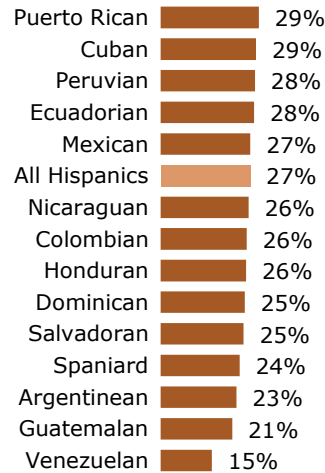
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2011 ACS (1% IPUMS)

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Figure A3

### Share of U.S. Hispanic Population Ages 25 and Older With Only a High School Diploma, by Origin, 2011



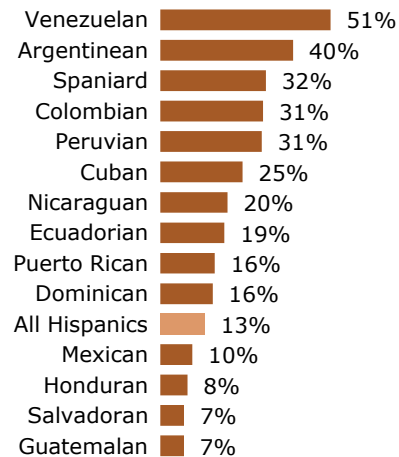
Note: Total U.S. share is 28%.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2011 ACS (1% IPUMS)

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Figure A4

### Share of U.S. Hispanic Population Ages 25 and Older with a Bachelor's Degree or More, by Origin, 2011



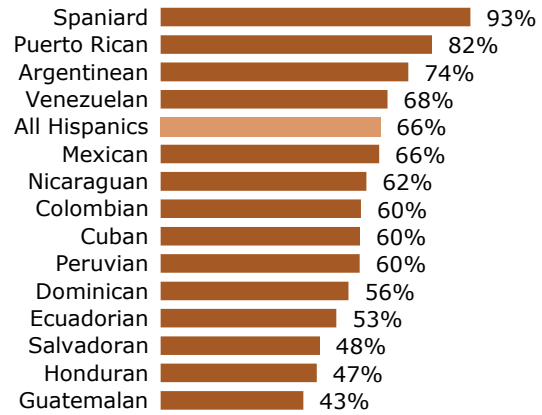
Note: Total U.S. share is 29%.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2011 ACS (1% IPUMS)

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Figure A5

### Share of U.S. Hispanic Population Ages 5 and Older Proficient in English, by Origin, 2011



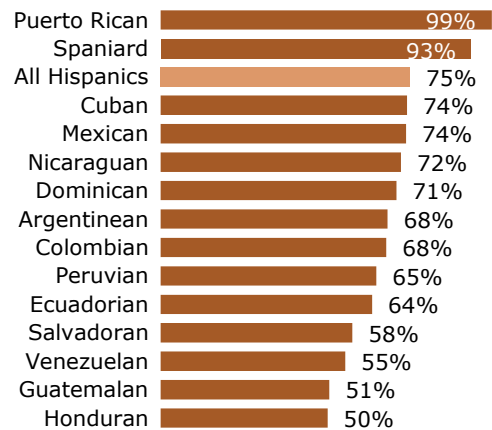
Notes: "Proficient in English" includes those who speak only English at home or speak English very well. Total U.S. share is 90%.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2011 ACS (1% IPUMS)

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Figure A6

### Share of Citizens among U.S. Hispanic Population, by Origin, 2011



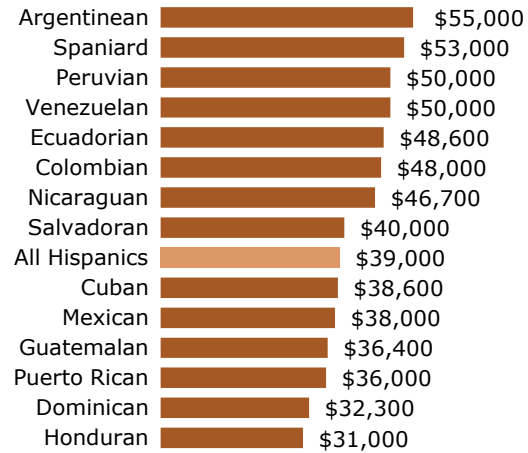
Notes: "Citizens" includes U.S. citizens by birth or naturalization and reflects survey respondent self-reports. Total U.S. share is 93%.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2011 ACS (1% IPUMS)

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Figure A7

### Median Household Income among U.S. Hispanic Population, by Origin, 2011



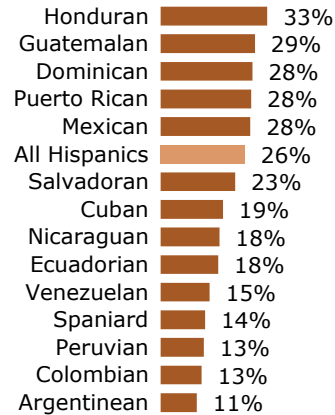
Notes: The household population excludes persons living in institutions, college dormitories and other group quarters. Median U.S. household income is \$50,000.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2011 ACS (1% IPUMS)

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Figure A8

### Poverty Rate of U.S. Hispanic Population, by Origin, 2011



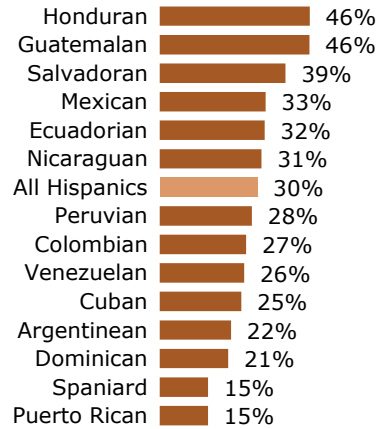
Notes: Poverty status is determined for individuals in housing units and non-institutional group quarters. The poverty universe excludes children under age 15 who are not related to the householder, people living in institutional group quarters and people living in college dormitories or military barracks. For detailed information on how poverty status is determined, see [http://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variables/POVERTY#description\\_tab](http://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variables/POVERTY#description_tab). Due to the way in which the IPUMS assigns poverty values, these data will differ from those that might be provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. Total U.S. poverty rate is 16%.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2011 ACS (1% IPUMS)

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## The Nation's 14 Largest Hispanic-Origin Groups

Figure A9

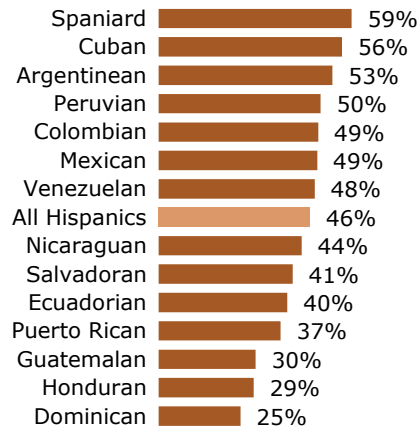
**Share of U.S. Hispanic Population Without Health Insurance, by Origin, 2011**

Note: Total U.S. share is 15%.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2011 ACS (1% IPUMS)

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Figure A10

**Homeownership Rate among U.S. Hispanic Population, by Origin, 2011**

Notes: "Homeowners" include household heads living in owner-occupied homes. The household population excludes persons living in institutions, college dormitories and other group quarters. Total U.S. homeownership rate is 65%.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2011 ACS (1% IPUMS)

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