**Fun Facts about Haiti**

**Official Name**: Republic of Haiti

**Capital City:** Port au Prince

**Size:** 27,750 km²

**Population:** 10.85 million (2016)

**Language:** French (upper class citizens); Creole (majority)

**Founded:** Haiti was founded in 1492 by the famous explorer Columbus.

**Terrain:** Two-Thirds of the country is mountainous with short, swift rivers.

-Roads are typically in rough condition with only one-fourth of roads being paved.

**Haitian Industries:**

* Sugar Refining
* Textiles
* Cement Manufacturing
* Tourism
* Assembly work

**Agriculture:**

* Sustenance farming, including family plots and fields.
* Commercial crops, including coffee, mangoes, sugar cane, wood, cotton and cocoa.
* Staple crops, including rice, maize and sorghum (cereal grain)

**Religion**

* 80% of the population is Roman Catholic (often combined with voodoo)
* 16% of the population is Protestant
* 4% of the population is another religion
* Half of the population practices voodoo, a combination of African tribal religions mingled with bits of Catholic rituals.

**Voodoo**

* God is believed to be so busy that he needs spirits to help him. These spirits are believed to protect people or show displeasure by making people sick.
* Voodoo is not concerned with sin and moral laws.
* It is practiced with daily rituals with incantations and ceremonies involving sacred objects such as drums, flags, jars, rocks, bones, dolls or magic potions.
* Frequent animal sacrifices appease the demanding gods.
* Many voodoo leaders believe the Bible will destroy the Haitian’s faith in voodoo, so they discourage them from learning to read.

**Greetings and Hospitality:**

* It is considered rude to not greet a person before you begin a conversation
* A typical Haitian greeting includes “good morning/afternoon/evening” and asking how the other person is doing
* Air kissing is another form of greeting for both men and women.
* It is rude for you not to offer your guests something to drink. Soda or juice are typical options. It is an insult to offer a guest water, because water is free for everyone. However, a guest can ask for water.

**Superstitions:**

* A superstition is a belief that is not based on truth or reality. In the Haiti culture there are many superstitions, these are only a few.
* It is said that snakes walk on legs; if you see one walking, it has to grant you a wish.
* It is believed that everything you dream will come true.
* It Is believed that all animals can talk, but only witchdoctors and voodoo priest can understand them.
* It is believed that all Americans have money trees in their yards.

**Church:**

* Haitians wear their very best clothes to church. Women wear dresses and men wear suit coats and ties.
* People who attend church must wear shoes. If you are not wearing shoes you may not be able to enter.
* Church services may last for two or more hours. This does not include time for Sunday School.
* Visitors are often asked to give greetings to the church and then asked if they know Jesus
* Traditionally men, women and children sit separately in church.
* Teenagers who are in the Brigade (kids program) are sometimes used as greeters and ushers.
* Sometimes, a person may walk around the church with a big stick or a feather to keep people awake.

