

Colombia

Key facts in 1929

Area: 1,141,748 km²^[1]

Population: 8 Million^[2]

Life expectancy: 33 years^[3]

Literacy rate: 51,6%^[4]

Biggest Minorities: Indigenous people, Afro-Colombians^[5]

Select Main Cities: Bogotá, Medellín, Cali^[1]

Neighboring countries: Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Panama^[1]

Sea Access: Yes, Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea^[1]

GDP: 1'540'000'000 \$1929^[6,7]



Recent Historical Background

Colombia in the years leading up to 1929 was marked by relative political stability under the Conservative Party, which had dominated Colombian politics since the end of the Thousand Days' War in 1902. This period, known as the Conservative Hegemony, lasted until 1930 and was characterized by economic growth, especially in coffee exports, and infrastructure development. However, social inequalities and regional disparities were pronounced. The country remained largely rural, with limited industrial development. The late 1920s also saw rising tensions due to labor unrest and the influence of emerging liberal ideas challenging the conservative status quo.^[8,9] Colombia was also hit gravely by the influenza epidemic in 1918, which was one of the deadliest epidemics in Colombian history, killing 1900 people in Bogotá.^[10]

Political Situation

In 1929, Colombia's political system was a conservative-dominated government under President Miguel Abadía Méndez. It mainly favored social hierarchies and economic interests. The governing party was the Conservative Party, while the opposition was the Liberal Party. Colombia during that time faced increasing social unrest among rural and urban laborers, as well as significant regional disparities.^[8]

Economic Situation in 1929

Colombia's economy in 1929 was very diversified. The economic system was marked by a mix of traditional agriculture and emerging industrial sectors, with a significant role played by foreign investment in oil and mining.^[8] Coffee was the most important exportation product, followed by other agricultural products such as bananas but also minerals, including oil and emeralds. Imports in that time were mostly manufactured goods and machinery.^[11,12] Its main trade partners at that time were the United States, European countries and regional neighbors, and Colombia used the Colombian Peso for trade.^[11] The country was still in a transitional phase, boasting a strong agrarian sector and had emerging industries, particularly in the textile and food processing sectors.^[8] Colombia was largely self-sufficient in food production, with varieties of crops being grown across its diverse climatic zones.^[13] Meanwhile, Major industrial hubs were emerging in cities like Medellín and Bogotá, with transportation networks developing to connect these centers with ports on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.^[14]

Military Strength in 1929

Colombian weaponry production in 1929 was limited. The technological level of its military was modest, and the country depended on imports for advanced weaponry, which were adapted locally. Colombia's military doctrine at that time was focused on internal security and border protection, with a mix of conventional and counter-insurgency tactics.^[15] Its equipment was not very well-documented, with the number of tanks, cavalry and other vehicles being unknown.

Key Facts about Military Strength of Colombia ^[16,17,18]	
Active personnel	9'000
Tanks	Unknown
Cavalry	Unknown
Other vehicles	Unknown
Ships	>21
Planes	16
Funding in 1929\$	10'000'000

Allies/Enemies/Existing territorial disputes in 1929

Main Allies: Colombia maintained diplomatic relations with most Western countries, with a notable historical connection to the United States following the Panama secession in 1903.^[19]

Main Enemies: No explicit enemies, but internal political divisions between conservatives and liberals led to internal strife.

Territorial Disputes: Tensions with Peru over the Leticia region in the Amazons.^[20]

Some of the Main Goals for the 1930s

1. **National Unity:** Overcoming regionalism and fostering a sense of national unity was essential for Colombia, given its diverse and geographically fragmented population.
2. **Economic Growth:** Stimulating economic growth through the development of agriculture (especially coffee), industry, and trade was a key goal.
3. **Infrastructure and Education:** Improving infrastructure, such as transportation networks, and investing in education were priorities for long-term development.

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