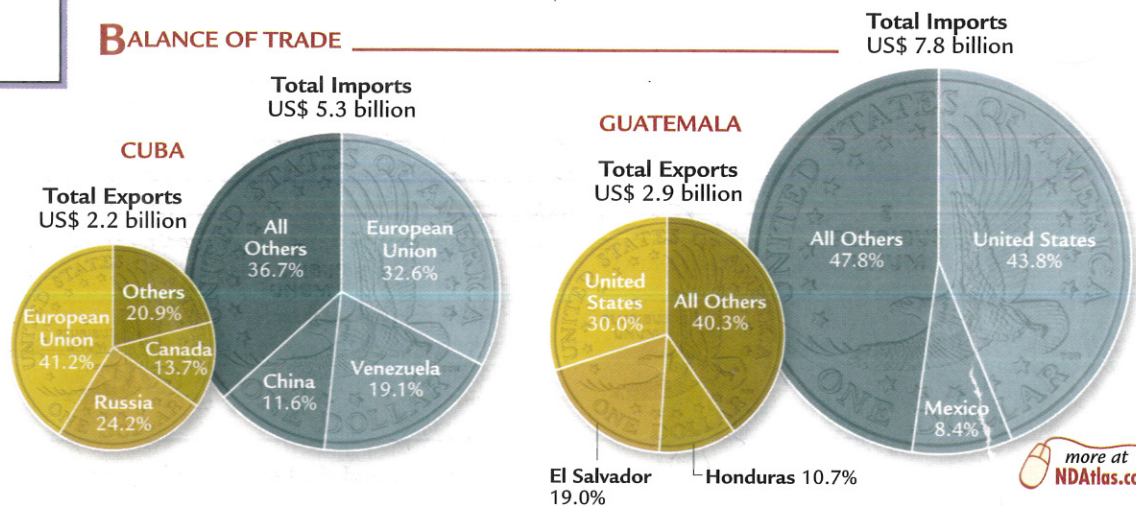


ENERGY RESOURCES AND METALS

- Coal
- Oil (petroleum)
- Natural gas
- Aluminum (bauxite)
- Copper
- Gold
- Iron
- Lead
- Manganese
- Nickel
- Silver
- Zinc

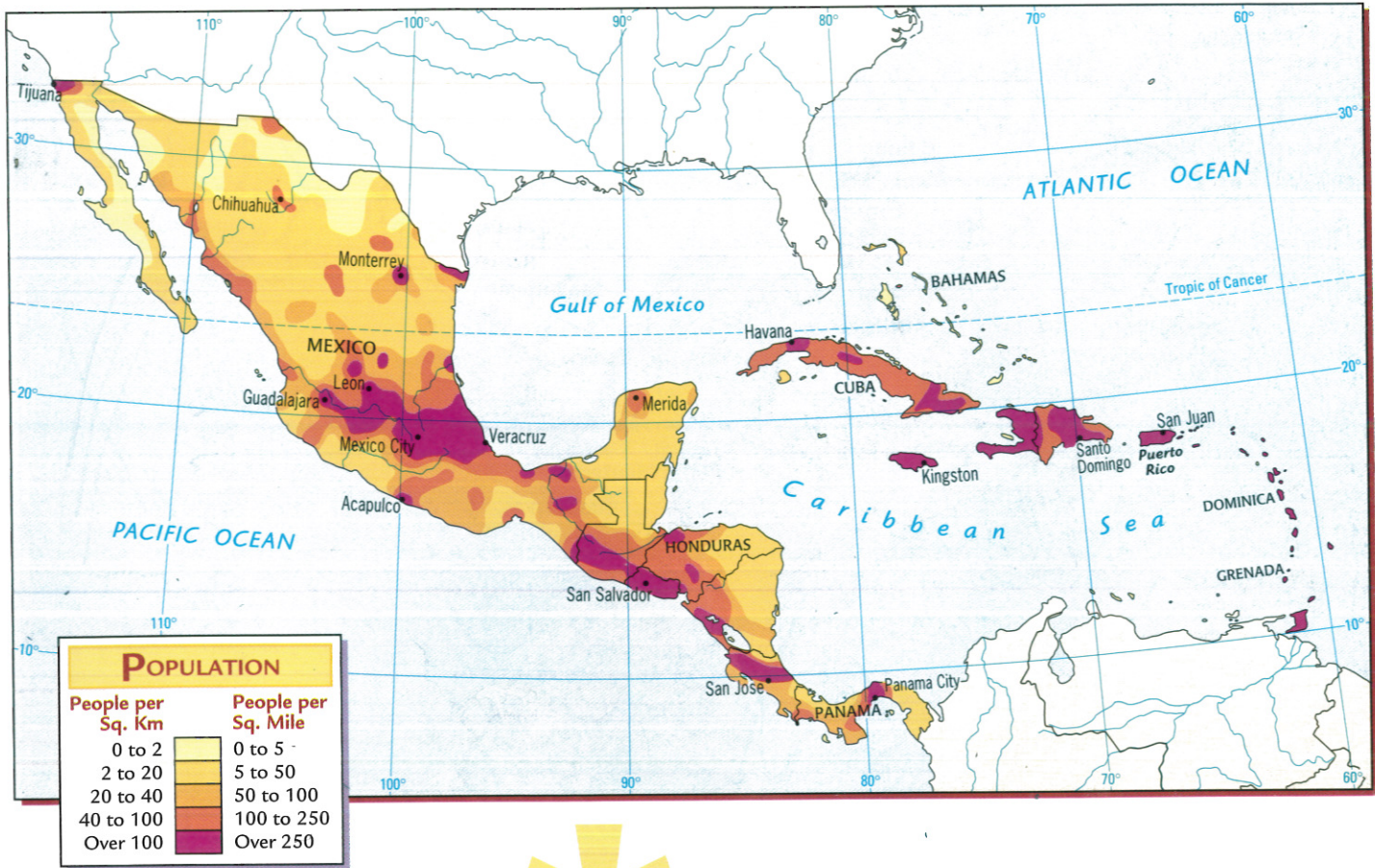
BALANCE OF TRADE



PANAMA CANAL

The Panama Canal is vital to world trade, providing a relatively inexpensive passageway between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Vessels save thousands of miles by traveling through the canal, rather than sailing around South America.





The Caribbean Difference

Indigenous West Indians did not survive contact with Europeans. Plantation owners replaced them with African slaves. As a result, the Caribbean is very different from the rest of Middle America. Most West Indians today have African ancestors and many speak French, English, Dutch, or local dialects called patois or creole. In contrast, most people in Mexico and Central America have indigenous ancestors and speak Spanish.



Latin America includes Middle America and South America. This region is called "Latin America" because most of its people speak Spanish, Portuguese, or French—all Latin-based languages. (See page 43.)

REGIONAL MAPS OF MIDDLE AMERICA

- 1 Mexico • page 108
- 2 Puerto Rico and the Lesser Antilles • page 109
- 3 Central America • page 109

