

Mexico and the seven countries of Central America have more complicated boundaries. Six of these countries have two coastlines. The map shows that one country has a coastline only on the Pacific Ocean, and one has a coastline only on the Caribbean Sea*. These countries are Spanish-speaking; in fact there are more Spanish speakers here than in Spain. Some of Mexico and all of Central America are tropical.

The **West Indies** are made up of islands. Some countries have lots of islands; some islands are one or two countries. They are shown in more detail on page 81. **Cuba** is the biggest island country. One island has TWO countries on it*. They are shown in more detail on page 81. This area is often called 'The Caribbean'. Some West Indians have emigrated to the USA, Britain and France.

* Which ones? Answer on page 97.



▲ **Market in St George's, Grenada.**

The West Indies have hot sunshine and plenty of rain. This is an ideal climate for growing vegetables and fruit. These stalls are stacked high with local produce. Many islands have volcanic soil which is rich in minerals and very fertile.

Grenada is an island country which grows and exports bananas and nutmeg. Find it on the map on page 81.

NORTH AMERICA FACTS

- AREA** 24,249,000 sq km
 - HIGHEST POINT** Mount McKinley (Alaska), 6194 metres
 - LOWEST POINT** Death Valley (California), 86 metres below sea level
 - LONGEST RIVERS**
Red Rock–Missouri–Mississippi, 5970 km
Mackenzie–Peace, 4240 km
 - LARGEST LAKE** Lake Superior*, 82,350 sq km
 - BIGGEST COUNTRY**
Canada, 9,970,610 sq km
 - SMALLEST COUNTRY** Grenada (West Indies), 344 sq km
 - RICHEST COUNTRY** USA
 - POOREST COUNTRY** Haiti
 - MOST CROWDED COUNTRY** Barbados
 - LEAST CROWDED COUNTRY** Canada
- * The world's largest freshwater lake

