

Paraguay

Geography

Location: Central South America, northeast of Argentina

Area:

total area: 406,750 sq km

land area: 397,300 sq km

Land boundaries: total 3,920 km, Argentina 1,880 km, Bolivia 750 km, Brazil 1,290 km

Coastline: 0 km (landlocked)

Maritime claims: none; landlocked

Climate: varies from temperate in east to semiarid in far west

Terrain: grassy plains and wooded hills east of Rio Paraguay; Gran Chaco region west of Rio Paraguay mostly low, marshy plain near the river, and dry forest and thorny scrub elsewhere

Natural resources: hydropower, timber, iron ore, manganese, limestone

Land use:

arable land: 20%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 39%

forest and woodland: 35%

other: 5%

Irrigated land: 670 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: deforestation (an estimated 2 million hectares of forest land have been lost from 1958-1985); water pollution; inadequate means for waste disposal present health risks for many urban residents

natural hazards: local flooding in southeast (early September to June); poorly drained plains may become boggy (early October to June)

Note: landlocked; buffer between Argentina and Brazil

People

Population: 5,358,198 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 41% (female 1,077,284; male 1,123,776)

15-64 years: 55% (female 1,465,147; male 1,468,642)

65 years and over: 4% (female 120,776; male 102,573) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.71% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 31.48 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 4.38 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 24.1 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 73.58 years
male: 72.06 years
female: 75.18 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 4.22 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Paraguayan(s)
adjective: Paraguayan

Ethnic divisions: mestizo (mixed Spanish and Indian) 95%,
Caucasians plus Amerindians 5%

Religions: Roman Catholic 90%, Mennonite and other Protestant
denominations

Languages: Spanish (official), Guarani

Literacy:
total population: 90%
male: 92%
female: 88%

Labor force: 1.692 million (1993 est.)

by occupation: agriculture 45%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Paraguay

conventional short form: Paraguay

local long form: Republica del Paraguay

local short form: Paraguay

Type: republic

Capital: Asuncion

Independence: 14 May 1811 (from Spain)

National holiday: Independence Days, 14-15 May (1811)

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory up to age 60

Flag: three equal, horizontal bands of red (top), white, and blue with an emblem centered in the white band; unusual flag in that the emblem is different on each side; the obverse (hoist side at the left) bears the national coat of arms (a yellow five-pointed star within a green wreath capped by the words REPUBLICA DEL PARAGUAY, all within two circles); the reverse (hoist side at the right) bears the seal of the treasury (a yellow lion below a red Cap of Liberty and the words Paz y Justicia (Peace and Justice) capped by the words REPUBLICA DEL PARAGUAY, all within two circles)

Economy

Industries: meat packing, oilseed crushing, milling, brewing, textiles, other light consumer goods, cement, construction

Agriculture: accounts for 26% of GDP; cash crops - cotton, sugarcane, soybeans; other crops - corn, wheat, tobacco, cassava, fruits, vegetables; animal products - beef, pork, eggs, milk; surplus producer of timber; self-sufficient in most foods

Illicit drugs: illicit producer of cannabis for the international drug trade; important transshipment point for Bolivian cocaine headed for the US and Europe

Transportation

Railroads:
total: 970 km

Highways:
total: 28,300 km

Inland waterways: 3,100 km

Ports: Asuncion, Villeta, San Antonio, Encarnacion

Airports:
total: 929

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy (includes Naval Air and Marines), Air Force