

Uruguay

Geography

Location: Southern South America, bordering the South Atlantic Ocean, between Argentina and Brazil

Area:

total area: 176,220 sq km

land area: 173,620 sq km

Land boundaries: total 1,564 km, Argentina 579 km, Brazil 985 km

Coastline: 660 km

Maritime claims:

continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation

territorial sea: 200 nm; overflight and navigation guaranteed beyond 12 nm

Climate: warm temperate; freezing temperatures almost unknown

Terrain: mostly rolling plains and low hills; fertile coastal lowland

Natural resources: soil, hydropower potential, minor minerals

Land use:

arable land: 8%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 78%

forest and woodland: 4%

other: 10%

Irrigated land: 1,100 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: substantial pollution from Brazilian industry along border; one-fifth of country affected by acid rain generated by Brazil; water pollution from meat packing/tannery industry; inadequate solid/hazardous waste disposal

natural hazards: seasonally high winds (the pampero is a chilly and occasional violent wind which blows north from the Argentine pampas), droughts, floods; because of the absence of mountains, which act as weather barriers, all locations are particularly vulnerable to rapid changes in weather fronts

People

Population: 3,222,716 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 25% (female 392,262; male 409,580)

15-64 years: 63% (female 1,026,314; male 995,492)

65 years and over: 12% (female 233,377; male 165,691) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.74% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 17.57 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 9.27 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -0.93 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 16.3 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 74.46 years
male: 71.24 years
female: 77.83 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.41 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Uruguayan(s)
adjective: Uruguayan

Ethnic divisions: white 88%, mestizo 8%, black 4%

Religions: Roman Catholic 66% (less than half adult population attends church regularly), Protestant 2%, Jewish 2%, nonprofessing or other 30%

Languages: Spanish, Brazilerio (Portuguese-Spanish mix on the Brazilian frontier)

Literacy:
total population: 96%
male: 97%
female: 96%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Oriental Republic of Uruguay

conventional short form: Uruguay

local long form: Republica Oriental del Uruguay

local short form: Uruguay

Type: republic

Capital: Montevideo

Independence: 25 August 1828 (from Brazil)

National holiday: Independence Day, 25 August (1828)

Constitution: 27 November 1966, effective February 1967,
suspended 27 June 1973, new constitution rejected by referendum
30 November 1980

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory

Flag: nine equal horizontal stripes of white (top and bottom) alternating with blue; there is a white square in the upper hoist-side corner with a yellow sun bearing a human face known as the Sun of May and 16 rays alternately triangular and wavy

Economy

Overview: Uruguay's economy is a small one with favorable climate, good soils, and substantial hydropower potential.

Industries: meat processing, wool and hides, sugar, textiles, footwear, leather apparel, tires, cement, petroleum refining, wine

Agriculture: accounts for 12% of GDP; large areas devoted to livestock grazing; wheat, rice, corn, sorghum; fishing; self-sufficient in most basic foodstuffs

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 3,000 km

Highways:

total: 49,900 km

Inland waterways: 1,600 km; used by coastal and shallow-draft river craft

Ports: Fray Bentos, Montevideo, Nueva Palmira, Paysandu, Punta del Este

Airports:

total: 85

with paved runways 2,438 to 3,047 m: 2

with paved runways 1,524 to 2,437 m: 5

with paved runways 914 to 1,523 m: 8

with paved runways under 914 m: 54

with unpaved runways 1,524 to 2,438 m: 2

with unpaved runways 914 to 1,523 m: 14

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy (includes Naval Air Arm, Coast Guard, Marines), Air Force, Grenadier Guards, Coracero Guard, Police