

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Argentina

**CAPITAL:** Buenos Aires

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Federal Republic

**AREA:** 2,766,899 Sq Km (1,068,302 Sq Mi)

**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION** 35,780,000

---



**LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY:** Argentina is located in the southern area of the South American Continent. It is bound by Bolivia and Paraguay to the north, Brazil to the northeast, Chile to the west, Uruguay and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. Argentina is divided into four topographical regions. (1.) The Pampas which contains many lakes and rises gradually from the Atlantic Ocean to the Andean foothills, (2.) Patagonia which is a windswept semiarid region that rises to elevations of 1,500 metres (4,921 feet) with depressions that drop below sea level by 32 metres (104 feet), (3.) the northeastern lowlands which lie to the north of the Pampas and east of the Andes and (4.) the northwestern Andes which extend along the western half of the country. The Andes contain broad valleys and are generally inhospitable. The principal rivers are the Parana, Uruguay and Paraguay Rivers which drain into the Rio de la Plata Basin in northern Argentina while in the south the Colorado and Negro Rivers rise in the Andes and flow to the Atlantic Ocean. Major Cities (pop. est.); Buenos Aires 2,961,000, Cordoba 1,179,000, Rosario 1,078,000, La Plata 543,000 (1991). Land Use; forested 19%, pastures 52%, agricultural-cultivated 10%, other 19% (1993).

---

**CLIMATE:** Most of Argentina lies in the shadow of the Andes. As the prevailing westerly winds lose their moisture and descend into Argentina temperatures increase while humidity decreases. As a whole, the climate varies from a humid sub-tropical climate in the north with the central semi-arid Pampa ranging from a tropical to a moderately cool climate. The southern area of the country is sub-arctic and is directly influenced by the prevailing westerlies. Rainfall diminishes from east to west with snow rarely falling. Average temperature ranges in Buenos Aires are

from -5 to 14 degrees Celsius (23 to 57 degrees Fahrenheit) in June to 17 to 29 degrees Celsius (63 to 84 degrees Fahrenheit) in January.

---

**PEOPLE:** Around 85% of the population are of European origins predominantly Spanish and Italian, although British as well as other Europeans, Jews and Middle Easterners are also represented. Latin American migration has been a recent trend and the remaining 15% are AmerIndians as well as Mestizos who are of mixed AmerIndian and European descent. The AmerIndians are estimated only at 50,000 and are concentrated in the extremities of the north, northwest and south.

---

**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 12 persons per sq km (30 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 86.2% urban, 13.8% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 48.9% male, 51.1% female (1991). Life Expectancy at Birth; 67.0 years male, 74.0 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 30% under 15, 23% 15 to 29, 20% 30 to 44, 14% 45 to 59, 10% 60 to 74, 3% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 20.0 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 9.0 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 11.0 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 26.0 per 1,000 live births (1987).

---

**RELIGIONS:** Mostly Christians with 93% of the population Roman Catholic while 2% are Protestant and another 2% are Jews.

---

**LANGUAGES:** The official language is Spanish, although it differs in pronunciation and grammar from Castilian Spanish. Additionally, English, French, German and Italian are spoken by the relevant minorities. The three AmerIndian languages that remain are Tehuelche, Guarani and Quechua.

---

**EDUCATION:** Aged 25 or over and having attained: less than primary education 32.0%, of which 6.0% have no formal schooling, primary

34.6%, secondary 20.5%, higher 6.9% (1980). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 95.3% (1990).

---

**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** In Sept. 1930 a coup brought Argentina's first military government to power with the period from 1930-1943 known as the "Era of Patriotic Fraud." Again in 1943 under Col. Juan Domingo Peron another military coup took place and in 1945 the provisional government took the first steps toward the establishment of a constitutional regime. In 1951 Pres. Peron was reelected and in 1955 the armed forces temporarily united against the President forcing him into exile. In 1966 military commanders of the armed forces suspended the Congress and dissolved all political parties. By 1969 unrest became widespread and several people were killed in a series of general strikes. In 1973 Peron returned from exile and was reelected after the resignation of Hector Campora, a fellow Peronist who resigned after only 50 days in office. In 1974 Pres. Peron died and was succeeded by his wife Isabelita. In 1976 the military took control of the government and arrested Isabelita and implemented the "Dirty War" in which thousands of Argentines disappeared with most believed to be tortured and executed. In March 1981 Maj.Gen. Viola was ousted by the military and was replaced by the Commander-in-Chief, Gen. Galtieri. In 1982 Argentina under Gen. Galtieri invaded the Falkland Islands with the hope of restoring national credibility, although after a short combat with the British, the Argentine forces surrendered. In 1983 Argentina was in a severe economic crisis and Raul Alfonsin took office. In May 1989 the Peronists returned to power under Carlos Saul Menem and in Dec. 1990 he pardoned many of the military leaders involved in the "Dirty War". Argentina's unsuccessful fight against hyper-inflation which reached 1,800% at the end of 1990 has increased the discontent among the people. In Jan. 1991, there was a major Cabinet reshuffle in the wake of "corruption in high places" allegations regarding the country's privatization program. In April 1991, Domingo Cavallo was appointed as Economy Minister and introduced a convertibility plan to stabilize the economy. In late 1991 the President's personal popularity had suffered a downturn in the wake of drug money-laundering scandals involving family members and his former campaign secretary. During 1992 Pres. Menem averted further bad publicity from

the continuing corruption saga involving his family and close aides. Cavallo's convertibility plan was also incorporated into law and obliged the government to back the issue of currency with dollar reserves. During mid-1992 the economic reform process was deepened after growing voter discontent with government policies surfaced in senate elections. Various protests and strikes organized by the government's opposition parties continued throughout the last quarter of 1992. Argentina continued to prosper in 1993 under the framework of stability provided by the 1991 "convertibility plan". Pres. Menem's desired changes to the 1853 constitution to allow his reelection bid in the planned 1995 elections were renewed in 1993. In Nov. 1993, amendments to the constitution to allow the reelection of a second consecutive reduced 4 year term were finally agreed to by the party leaders and ratified by the Chamber of Deputies and Senate in December. In Dec. 1993 Menem was forced to return home from a state visit to the Vatican after rioting broke out between public workers who had not been paid and security forces. Also in late 1993 government files were opened which confirmed that some 1,000 Nazi war criminals had entered the country after WWII.

---

**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the Peso (P) *formerly the Austral (A)* which is divided into 100 Centavos.

---

**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$224,013,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$61,534,000,000 (1993). Imports; USD \$16,651,000,000 (1993). Exports; USD \$12,869,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$3,614,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; USD -\$4,002,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 12,305,000 or 38% of total population (1990). Unemployed; 7.3% (1989).

---

**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partners are the former USSR, Brazil, the Netherlands, the USA, Japan, Italy, Germany, Chile and Spain.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Apples, Cattle, Citrus Fruits, Coal,

Copper, Cotton, Fruit, Fish, Grapes, Gold, Iron Ore, Lead, Limestone, Maize, Manganese, Mica, Oil and Natural Gas, Olives, Potatoes, Peanuts, Rice, Sheep, Silver, Sorghum, Soya Beans, Sugar, Sunflower Seeds, Timber, Tungsten, Tobacco, Uranium, Wheat, Zinc.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Cement, Chemicals, Fishing, Food Processing, Forestry, Machinery, Mining, Petroleum, Plastics, Refining, Steel, Textiles, Vehicles, Wood and Paper Pulp.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Animal and Vegetable Oils, Animal Foodstuffs, Chemicals, Fruit and Vegetables, Leather, Machinery, Maize, Meat, Soya Beans, Sugar, Wheat, Wool.

---

**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; route length 34,115 km (21,198 mi) (1988), passenger-km 10,221,200,000 (6,351,157,000 passenger-mi) (1988), cargo ton-km 9,010,600,000 (6,171,360,000 short ton-mi) (1988). Roads; length 211,369 km (131,339 mi) (1986). Vehicles; cars 4,088,000 (1989), trucks and buses 1,512,000 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 479 (1990), deadweight tonnage 2,872,288 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 8,431,000,000 (5,239,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 185,963,000 (127,366,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

---

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 190 with a total circulation of 4,780,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 21,500,000 (1994). Television; receivers 7,165,000 (1994). Telephones; units 4,115,000 (1993).

---

**MILITARY:** 67,300 (1995) total active duty personnel with 60.0% army, 26.8% navy and 13.2% air force while military expenditure accounts for 1.7% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).