

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Paraguay  
**CAPITAL:** Asuncion  
**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Multiparty Republic  
**AREA:** 406,752 Sq Km (157,048 Sq Mi)  
**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION:** 5,434,400

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**LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY:** Paraguay is a landlocked country located in the heart of South America. It is bound by Bolivia and Brazil to the north and Argentina to the south. The country is divided into two topographical regions by the Paraguay River, with 60% of the land west and north of the river. (1.) Occidental or Western Paraguay which is a waterless prairie covered by dry grass and shadeless trees. (2.) Eastern Paraguay also known as Paraguay Proper consists of sparse plains, broad valleys and rolling hills. Rivers dominate the country's natural features and the three principal rivers are the Paraguay, Parana and Pilcomayo while the largest lakes are Lake Ypoa and Lake Ypacarai. Major Cities (pop. est.); Asuncion 502,400, Ciudad del Este 133,900, San Lorenzo 133,300, Lambare 99,700, Fernando de la Mora 95,300 (1992). Land Use; forested 32%, pastures 55%, agricultural-cultivated 6%, other 7% (1993).

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**CLIMATE:** Paraguay has two climatic zones. (1.) A temperate climate which is experienced by 66% of the country and is characterized by mild conditions. (2.) A tropical climate with hot and humid conditions which is experienced by 33% of the country. The prevailing summer wind is the hot Sirocco from the northeast while the cold Pompero is experienced in winter. Average annual precipitation in the east is around 2,030 mm (80 inches) and diminishes westward to an average of 1,190 mm (47 inches). Average temperature ranges in Asuncion are from 12 to 22 degrees Celsius (54 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit) in June to 22 to 35 degrees Celsius (72 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit) in January.

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**PEOPLE:** The principal ethnic majority are the Mestizos who account for 91% of the population and are of mixed AmerIndian and Spanish descent. The remainder are divided amongst the Europeans mainly Spanish, AmerIndians and Black Africans. The two main ethnic alien groups are Japanese and German Mennonites.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 11 persons per sq km (28 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 46.1% urban, 53.9% rural (1988). Sex Distribution; 50.6% male, 49.4% female (1988). Life Expectancy at Birth; 64.8 years male, 69.1 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 41% under 15, 29% 15 to 29, 17% 30 to 44, 8% 45 to 59, 4% 60 to 74, 1% 75 and over (1988). Birth Rate; 34.8 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 6.6 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 28.2 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 42.0 per 1,000 live births (1990).

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**RELIGIONS:** The official religion is Roman Catholicism which accounts for 96% of the population. Other religious minorities include Protestants and Jews.

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**LANGUAGES:** The official languages are Spanish, which is spoken by 75% of the population, and Guarani, an AmerIndian language understood by 90% of the population, while almost 50% of the population are bi-lingual.

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**EDUCATION:** Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 13.6%, primary 64.7%, secondary 15.5%, higher 3.4%, unspecified 2.8% (1982). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 90.1% (1990).

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**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** In 1947 civil war broke out in Paraguay as rebels attempted to overthrow Pres. Gen. Higinio Moringo who had ruled as a dictator since 1940. From 1948 to 1954 seven presidents held office for short periods of time. In 1954 the military led by Gen. Alfredo Stroessner took control of the government. During Pres. Stroessner's 35 year dictatorship, he used military and police forces to keep control of the Paraguayan government through the imprisonment of many of his opponents while others were sent into exile. In Feb. 1989 the military led by Gen. Andres Rodriguez ousted Stroessner and forced him into exile. In May 1989 Rodriguez convincingly won presidential elections. In Mar. 1991 Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay signed an accord to create a common market between them by 1994. In June 1991 the opposition Partido Liberal Radical Autentico (PLRA) made considerable gains in local municipal elections. On June 12, 1991 the National Assembly approved full reforms of the constitution and in July 1991 the Colorado Party approved a statute for the establishment of an electoral tribunal and an ethnic tribunal, independent of the party authority. On Dec. 1, 1991 the ruling Colorado Party won legislative elections. During 1991 the government announced privatization plans for the national airline, telecommunications and state steel and cement firms. In June 1991 the National Assembly approved steps in which Pres. Rodriguez was included in the constitutional ban on the reelection of Presidents for two consecutive terms. The inclusion of Pres. Rodriguez fueled fears that his supporters were planning a military coup, although fears diminished after Pres. Rodriguez sworn allegiance to the new constitution during a ceremony on June 22, 1992. On Dec. 27, 1992 the Colorado Party elected Luis Maria Argana as their presidential candidate, although his opponent Juan Carlos Wasmosy alleged vote fraud and announced he would contest the results while the PLRA elected Domingo Laino as their candidate. In the running up to presidential elections the ruling Colorado government increased the country's minimum wage while Pres. Rodriguez called on civil servants to vote for the Colorado Party candidate. May 9, 1993 Juan Carlos Wasmosy of the Colorado Party was elected President and became the first elected civilian head of state since 1954. Observers from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the OAS

announced the elections as fair, although some fraud and irregularities were reported during voting.

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**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the Guarani (G) divided into 100 Centimos.

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**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$6,995,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$1,309,000,000 (1993). Imports; USD \$2,140,400,000 (1994). Exports; USD \$816,833,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$204,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; USD -\$752,300,000 (1993). Economically Active Population; 1,039,258 or 51.5% of total population (1982). Unemployed; 9.2% (1989).

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**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partners are Argentina, the USA, Germany and the Netherlands.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Cassava, Cattle, Coffee, Cotton, Fruit, Iron Ore, Maize, Manganese, Rice, Soya Beans, Sugar Cane, Timber, Tobacco.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Agriculture, Cement, Food Processing, Forestry, Textiles, Timber Products, Vegetable Oil Refining.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Cotton, Fruit, Meat Products, Soya Beans, Timber, Tobacco, Vegetable Oils, Vegetables.

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**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; route length 441 km (274 mi) (1988), passenger-km 21,843,000 (13,573,000 passenger-mi) (1988), cargo ton-km 19,826,000 (13,579,000 short ton-mi) (1988). Roads; length 25,681 km (15,957 mi) (1988). Vehicles; cars 34,015 (1988), trucks and buses 4,968 (1988). Merchant Marine; vessels 39 (1990), deadweight tonnage 41,603 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 571,349,000 (355,020,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 3,543,000 (2,427,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 5 with a total circulation of 203,000 (1994). Radio; receivers 700,000 (1994). Television; receivers 350,000 (1994). Telephones; units 142,300 (1993).

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**MILITARY:** 20,300 (1995) total active duty personnel with 73.9% army, 17.7% navy and 8.4% air force while military expenditure accounts for 1.8% (1992) of the Gross National Product (GNP).