

OFFICIAL NAME: Oriental Republic of Uruguay
CAPITAL: Montevideo
SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Multiparty Republic
AREA: 176,215 Sq Km (68,037 Sq Mi)
ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 3,309,600



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Uruguay is located in East South America. It is bound by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and southeast, Brazil to the north and Argentina to the west. The southern region of the country is a continuation of the Argentina Pampas while the northern region is a continuation of the basaltic plateau of Brazil. In between these regions are rolling plateaux with a low range of hills called Cuchillas. The two major Cuchillas are the Cuchilla Grande and the Cuchilla de Haedo which are separated by the basin of the Rio Negro. The country's principal rivers are the Rio Negro, Uruguay, Rio Yi and the Rio Cebollati, which flows into the country's largest lake, Laguna Merin. Major Cities (pop. est.); Montevideo 1,312,000, Salto 80,800, Paysandu 76,200, Las Piedras 58,300, Rivera 57,300 (1985). Land Use; forested 4%, pastures 77%, agricultural-cultivated 8%, other 11% (1992).

CLIMATE: Uruguay has a temperate climate characterized by warm summers and mild winters. Rainfall is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year with an average annual precipitation of 1,090 mm (36 inches). The coolest month is June and the warmest is January. The prevailing winds are the Zonda, a northerly hot wind that blows in summer and the Pampero, a cold southerly wind that blows in winter. Average temperature ranges in Montevideo are from 6 to 14 degrees Celsius (43 to 57 degrees Fahrenheit) in July to 17 to 28 degrees Celsius (63 to 82 degrees Fahrenheit) in January.

PEOPLE: Around 90% of the population are Europeans, of which 54% are of Spanish origin and 22% are of Italian origin. The remainder are ethnic minorities of Mestizos, Mulattoes and Black Africans.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 18 persons per sq km (46 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 85.5% urban, 14.5% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 48.7% male, 51.3% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 68.9 years male, 75.3 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 26% under 15, 23% 15 to 29, 19% 30 to 44, 16% 45 to 59, 12% 60 to 74, 4% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 18.3 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 9.9 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 8.4 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 20.0 per 1,000 live births (1991).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians with 66% of the population Roman Catholic and 2% Protestant while Jews constitute the largest religious minority.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Spanish which is spoken by nearly the entire population. English is the most popular second language followed by French.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 7.5%, incomplete primary 26.6%, primary 31.2%, secondary 19.9%, higher 14.8% (1985). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 95.0% (1985).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1945 Uruguay became a charter member of the UN. In 1951 Uruguay ratified a new constitution that abolished the presidential system of government and established a nine member National Council that allowed the Colorados and Blancos parties to share power. In 1967 a new constitution re-established a presidential system of government and Jorge Pacheco Aierco was inaugurated as President. In the late 1960's and early 1970's worsening economic conditions caused widespread unrest as well as an insurgency in the Tupamaro's terrorist activities. In Sept. 1971 special security laws were introduced to give the military broader powers. In 1972 Juan Maria Bordaberry was elected President and in June 1973 the military overthrew the government. In the early 1980's thousands of Uruguayans participated in anti-government protests and in Aug. 1984 the military agreed to return the government to civilian rule. In Nov, 1984 Julio Maria Sanguinetti was elected President. In Dec. 1986 the President granted an amnesty to military and police officers accused of human rights violations. In Mar. 1990 Luis Alberto Lacalle of the Blanco party was inaugurated as President after free elections. In 1990 there was an increase in labor unrest and several short general strikes. In 1991 there were further escalations in work stoppages and general strikes against economic austerity measures and the privatization of the public sector. In Dec. 1991 the National Confederation of Workers (CNT) with the support of the Inter Union Assembly (PIT) organized a 36 hour strike in protest to an insufficient 12% wage rise for public sector workers. In Jan. 1992 the CNT-PIT organized further strikes and stoppages in protest to the government's continued austerity and privatization plans. In Feb. 1992 the PIT-CNT with the support of the left-wing Frente Amplio opposition party had gathered a 12,000 signature petition necessary to hold a special poll to hinder the government's economic austerity plans. On July 5, 1992 a poll was held to determine if a referendum should be held. In Dec. 1992 a referendum was held on this issue in which the electorate rejected the government's plans to reduce the civil work force and privatise many state-owned enterprises. In 1993 Pres. Lacalle continued to push his government's austerity plans, although it continued to meet with opposition both from within his party and opposition groups. Labor unions and interest groups, such as pensioners, continued to call for strikes in protest to the government's plans throughout the year. On June 11, 1993 a governmental crisis erupted over the case of a Chilean secret agent, Eugenio Berrios Sagerdo, whom was connected to the murder of two Chileans in

Washington DC in 1976. Berrios was believed to have been kidnapped in 1991 as part of a joint Chilean, Argentine and Uruguayan military operation. The issue was resolved when the government agreed that any military member charged over the affair would face a court-martial as opposed to the civil courts.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Peso (UrP) divided into 100 Centisimos.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$12,314,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$4,629,000,000 (1993). Imports; USD \$2,772,600,000 (1994). Exports; USD \$1,913,400,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$447,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; USD -\$732,200,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 1,259,200 or 45.0% of total population (1992). Unemployed; 2.5% (1992).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the USA, the EU, Argentina and Brazil.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Amethysts, Cattle, Fish, Maize, Marble, Rice, Sheep, Topaz, Wheat.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Cement, Fishing, Meat Processing, Oil Refining, Tanning and Leather Goods, Tourism, Wool and Textiles.

MAIN EXPORTS: Canned Meat, Fish, Hides and Leather Goods, Meat, Rice.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 3,002 km (1,865 mi) (1988), passenger-km 140,600,000 (87,365,000 passenger-mi) (1987), cargo ton-km 210,700,000 (144,308,000 short ton-mi) (1988). Roads; length 52,000 km (32,311 mi) (1984). Vehicles; cars 252,329 (1988), trucks and buses 144,728 (1988). Merchant Marine; vessels 91 (1990), deadweight tonnage 156,892 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 459,000,000 (285,209,000 passenger-mi) (1987), cargo ton-km 2,000,000 (1,370,000 short ton-mi) (1987).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 32 with a total circulation of 750,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 1,850,000 (1994). Television; receivers 600,000 (1994). Telephones; lines 530,000 (1993).

MILITARY: 25,600 (1994) total active duty personnel with 67.2% army, 21.1% navy and 11.7% air force while military expenditure accounts for 2.0% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).