

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Welcome to Uruguay!

Officially known as the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, Uruguay is a South American country located on the eastern coast of the Southern Cone. It borders Brazil and Argentina and its coastline borders the Atlantic Ocean and the Río de la Plata. Its surface area covers 176,000km², making it the second smallest country in South America after Surinam. Its population totals 3,286,314 inhabitants. It is a democratic republic with a presidential system divided into 19 administrative divisions and the current president is José Mujica. The capital and most populated city is Montevideo, with 1,300,000 inhabitants.



Montevideo

Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, was founded by the Governor and Río del Plata Captain Don Bruno Mauricio de Zabala. It was founded between 1724 and 1730, the years in which the first colonists began to arrive from Buenos Aires and the Canary Islands.

Its architecture combines modernity with tradition. Architectural treasures, styles like art nouveau and art deco, and modern avant-garde buildings give the city its unique identity.

The Rambla, an avenue that stretches 30 kilometers along the shore, is one of the main attractions of the city and a common spot for locals to walk or linger. The city also boasts many green spaces, including parks and gardens that give the city plenty of outdoor options.

Montevideo also has an active cultural agenda. It offers many diverse theatrical productions, from classic plays to modern and alternative performances.

The city's museums, cultural centers, art centers and exhibition spaces show the work of a wide variety of internationally renowned artists such as Juan Manuel Blanes, Rafael Barradas, Pedro Figari, Joaquín Torres García, José Cúneo, Carlos Páez Vilaró and Ignacio Iturria, among others.

Two of the most popular cultural expressions in Uruguay include carnival and candombe. The typical drink is mate, a special tea drunk through a metal straw. It is common to see people carrying their mate and thermos on the street. Soccer is the most popular sport.

How to Get There

By Air

Major international airlines fly into the country's international airports, with regional flights coming in from Buenos Aires, Argentina; Porto Alegre, San Pablo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Asuncion, Paraguay; Panama



City; Santiago, Chile; and Lima, Peru. There are also international flights to and from the United States and Europe. The main airports include Carrasco International Airport (18 kilometers from downtown Montevideo); Laguna del Sauce International Airport in Punta del Este (Maldonado) and the Colonia de Sacramento Airport (Laguna de los Patos International Airport).

The new Carrasco International Airport was inaugurated in 2009 and it is considered one of the most modern and attractive airports in the world. From the airport, it is easy to reach downtown Montevideo by van, taxi or rental car.

By Water

Numerous ships and ferries connect Buenos Aires with Colonia, Carmelo and Montevideo and offer travelers the possibility of taking their vehicle along with them.

By Land

Bus

Since Uruguay is a relatively flat country with even terrain, it is easy to get from place to place. A far-reaching and safe road infrastructure allows you to travel across the country by bus, taxi or rental car.

The Tres Cruces Terminal in Montevideo is the largest transportation hub in the country, with short and long-distance buses traveling to and from the country's main cities as well as several regional destinations.

Car

The road network, which fans out from the capital to the rest of the country, allows visitors to reach tourist destinations by car. It has a dozen toll stations with tolls costing around US\$2.50 for cars or trucks. In Uruguay, people drive on the right and the use of seatbelts is mandatory. The speed limit on highways is 110 km/h.

Travel Documents

Foreign visitors simply need a passport to enter Uruguay; there are no visa requirements. For citizens of Argentina and Brazil, a national identity card suffices.

Travel Vaccinations

There are no major health issues or epidemics in Uruguay and thus no vaccines are required of travelers.

Climate

The climate is warm and humid (average 17°C) with warm summers and more or less even rainfall over the course of the year. The country latitude is between 30-35°S and there are four distinctive seasons. The southern and eastern parts of the country (Montevideo, Maldonado, Rocha and Lavalleja) are a bit cooler than the rest of the country, with an average temperature of around 16°C and 1,000mm of annual rainfall, with a "maritime temperate climate" (cfb).

Language

The country's official language is Spanish.

Currency

The Uruguayan peso is the legal currency used for all commercial transactions. Personal checks drawn on local banks are also accepted, though the bearer must present ID. The U.S. dollar is commonly accepted at stores, supermarkets and restaurants, as are credit cards. At the same time, there are exchange offices across the country with similar exchange rates. To check the going rate, visit:

<http://www.brou.com.uy/>

Tourist benefits

Uruguay offers a VAT return on tourist services through 31 July 2014 for non-residents, provided they are paid for with a foreign debit or credit card. The card company is required to include the tax discount that is detailed on the POS receipt.

The services included are:

A) Drinking and dining services at restaurants, bars, cantinas, coffee shops, cafes, tea houses and similar establishments or by hotels, motel, aparthotels, hostels, tourist ranches, rural hotels, tourist farms, country inns, bed and breakfasts and campsites, provided the services do not fall under the category of accommodations.

B) Catering services for parties or other events.

C) Services for parties and events not included in the previous item.

D) Car rentals.

E) 10.5% return on the rental of real estate properties by non-residents, provided the rental is done at a registered real estate office and paid for with a foreign debit or credit card. This return shall remain valid until 31 July 2014. The card company is required to include the tax discount that is detailed on the POS receipt.

Other valid tourist benefits:

1. Tax-free shopping for certain products, provided they are purchased at participating stores. The buyer must request the tax-free status when the purchase is made and shall receive the reimbursement when exiting the country from one of the following locations: Carrasco International Airport, Laguna del Sauce Airport, Port of Montevideo, Port of Colonia, Punta del Este Cruise Ship Terminal, Salto – Concordia Bridge, Paysandú – Colón Bridge and Fray Bentos – Puerto Unzué Bridge. When exiting the country, the buyer must request the reimbursement at the tax-free booth.

2. Zero VAT at Hotels – This benefit is valid for all foreigners who present an ID.

3. Tolls can be paid with the Uruguayan peso, Argentine peso, Brazilian real or U.S. dollar.

4. 24% off the sale price of fuel (gas) paid with credit or debit card at gas stations located within 20 km of the following Uruguay-Argentina border crossings: Fray Bentos – Puerto Unzué, Paysandú – Colón, Salto – Concordia; and with the following Uruguay-Brazil crossings: Chuy, Río Branco, Aceguá, Rivera: Artigas and Bella Unión.

Tabaco Laws

Uruguayan Law No. 18,256 (from 2008) prohibits smoking in closed public spaces, closed work spaces and both closed and open health establishments or institutions or any kind, both public and private, and at all teaching and educational centers.



Hotels

Uruguay has an extensive selection of hotels; here is a list of some of the hotels located near the conference center.

Radisson Montevideo Victoria Plaza Hotel (www.radisson.com/montevideo-hotel-uy-11100/urumont)

Esplendor Cervantes Montevideo (http://www.esplendormontevideo.com/el_hotel/)

Four Points Sheraton (<http://www.fourpointsmontevideo.com/>)

Hotel Orpheo Express (<http://www.orpheohotel.com/es/index>)

Balmoral Plaza Hotel (<http://www.balmoral.com.uy/>)

Crystal Palace Hotel (<http://www.crystalpalacehotel.com.uy/>)

Hotel NH Columbia (<http://www.nh-hoteles.es/nh/es/hoteles/uruguay/montevideo/nh-columbia.html#ad-image-0>)

Oxford Hotel (<http://www.hoteloxford.com.uy/>)

Hotel Klee (<http://www.klee.com.uy/>)

Hotel California (<http://www.hotelcalifornia.com.uy/es/>)

Fifteen minute drive from the conference center:

Sheraton Montevideo Hotel
(<http://www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/overview/index.html?propertyID=1238>)

Cala di Volpe (<http://www.hotelcaladivolpe.com.uy/>)

More than a thirty minute drive from the conference center:

Belmont House (http://www.belmonthouse.com.uy/index_castellano.php)

Regency Hotels (<http://www.regency.com.uy/>)

Sofitel Montevideo Casino Carrasco & Spa (<http://www.sofitel.com/es/hotel-7969-sofitel-montevideo-casino-carrasco-and-spa/index.shtml>)

Places to Go in Montevideo

Dining:

Mercado del Puerto

This is one of the main dining and cultural spots of Montevideo. It is no longer a market but instead houses numerous restaurants that serve Uruguay's most typical food, grilled beef (*asado*), making it an obligatory stop when visiting Montevideo's oldest district, Ciudad Vieja.

www.mercadodelpuerto.com.uy

Address: Piedras 237



Tandory

Tandory is one of the most distinguished restaurants in the city, with excellent service, an elegant setting and an impressive menu. Located in the neighborhood of Pocitos, it offers a dining experience wholly different from that of the city's usual restaurants. It is a restaurant for demanding gastronomes, those who enjoy delicious foods, flavors and aromas—a journey through world cuisine.

www.tandory.com.uy

Address: Libertad 2855 esq. Masini

La Estacada

La Estacada is a very special spot on the Montevideo map since it is right near the mythical Punta Carretas lighthouse.

www.laestacada.com.uy

Address: Camino del Faro s/n, Punta Carretas

Francis

Francis has become a point of reference on the Montevideo restaurant scene. The warm, relaxed atmosphere makes Francis the preferred spot of tourists, politicians, executives and both local and international celebrities.

www.francis.com.uy

Address: Luis de la Torre 502

Gardenia

Gardenia Restaurant is located in Montevideo's World Trade Center, in a warm, pleasant setting designed by architect Carlos Ott. It is known for its singular cuisine, unlike any other in Uruguay: the best of international cuisine with a Mediterranean flair and just a dash of Brazilian flavor. It is a restaurant like no other, with warm and professional service in a relaxed setting, minimalist decoration and the most innovative menu in the city.

www.gardeniamvd.com

Address: Luis A. de Herrera 1248, World Trade Center, Plaza de las Torres

Rara Avis

The renovated Solís Theater in the heart of Ciudad Vieja is home to the restaurant Rara Avis. The architecture of the original theater was maintained during the renovation, yielding a symbiosis between culture and fine dining. There are two different spaces within this restaurant where the spirit of theater lingers. The lower floor has a bar for informal gatherings after a long day at the office and dynamic executive meals.

www.raraavis.com.uy

Address: Buenos Aires 652

The fine dining department of the Montevideo Tourism Office has a website with many useful tips for visitors:

http://www.montevideo.gub.uy/sites/default/files/articulo/catalogo_gastronomico03.pdf

Free Time

Tourist Bus

Montevideo has a tourist bus that is on par with the buses of the world's most important cities. These double-decker buses will take you to the city's points of interest.

A **24-hour** ticket costs UR\$**416** and the **48-hour ticket** costs UR\$**640**. Sales booths are located at Stops 0 and 1 and at travel agencies, hotels and Abitab. They can also be purchased from COIT promoters who can be found at strategic points across Montevideo.



On the bus, audio guides offer details on the different stops in Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, Italian, German or Japanese.

The bus stops at the following points of interest:

- 0 - Rambla 25 de Agosto de 1825, corner of peatonal Yacaré (across from the port gates);
- 1 - Ciudad Vieja: Juncal and Sarandí
- 2 - Explanada de la Intendencia (Montevideo's main square)
- 3 - Palacio Legislativo, across from the José Artigas Building
- 4 - Prado: the Botanical Garden, across from the cultural center La Casita
- 5 - Tres Cruces: Goes, between Blvd. Artigas and Ferrer Serra
- 6 - Estadio Centenario (stadium): Av. Ricaldoni, across from the Soccer Museum
- 7 - Montevideo Shopping, Av. L. A. de Herrera and Lamas
- 8 - Punta Carretas Shopping: J. Ellauri between S. García and J. Núñez
- 9 - Parque Rodó: Rambla Wilson and J. Requena
- 10 - Return to point of departure.

On Sundays, there is an additional stop at Av. 18 de Julio and Tristán Narvaja, across from the National Library, to allow visitors to check out the Tristán Narvaja outdoor fair. The service is suspended in the case of a severe weather warning.

CASINOS

Casino Hotel Radisson Victoria Plaza

Colonia 760 - Centro

Casino Carrasco

Rbla. Rpca. de México esq. Arocena - Carrasco

Parque Hotel

Pablo de María 827 esq. Rbla. Wilson - Parque Rodó

Maroñas Entertainment

Sala 18 de Julio- Avda. 18 de Julio 1297 esq. Yí - Centro

Sala Montevideo Shopping - Av. Luis A. de Herrera 1290 - Pocitos

Cultural spots of interest:

Museo del Fútbol/Soccer Museum:

www.estadiocentenario.com.uy

Museo del Carnaval/Carnival Museum:

<http://museodelcarnaval.org/>

This website provides further museum options in the city:

<http://www.montevideo.gub.uy/ciudad/cultura/museos-y-salas>

Other free time options

El Milongón:

Visitors to El Milongón can experience the cultural tradition of Uruguay's most representative artistic expressions while enjoying typical dishes and delicious Uruguayan wines.

www.elmilongon.com.uy

Gaboto 1810

Wineries:

Senderos del Tannat

Senderos del Tannat will take you to visit the best wineries in the country.

It offers different options:

Regular Tours

- Visit to two wineries.
- Guided wine tasting at each winery.
- Days: Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday mornings.
- Duration: 5-6 hours
- Hotel pick up.
- Fleet of new vehicles.
- Reservations must be made by 5pm on the day before the visit.

Private Tours

If you would like a private tours you can decide:

- Wineries to be visited.
- Type of tasting.
- Route.
- Can be organized with 24 hours' notice.

- Price: to be confirmed. Varies by winery, type of tasting and route. English, Portuguese, Italian, German and Japanese speaking guides are available on request for an additional cost. The guides must be requested in advance.

www.senderosdeltannat.com

Address: San José 1280 apto105

**Paseo De Compras
Punta Carretas Shopping**

www.puntacarretas.com.uy

Address: José Ellauri 350

Montevideo Shopping

www.montevideoshopping.com.uy

Address: Luis Alberto de Herrera 1290

Portones Shopping

www.portones.com.uy

Address: Av Italia 5775

Mercado Agrícola

www.mam.com.uy

Address: José L. Terra 2220

Mercado de los Artesanos

www.mercadodelosartesanos.com.uy

Address: Plaza Cagancha 1365

Other Useful Information

Car Rentals

<http://www.welcomeuruguay.com/alquilerdeautos.html>

Other Destinations in Uruguay

Punta del Este

Punta del Este is known internationally as one of the top beach towns in South America and the most exclusive in the region. Located in the Maldonado district, it is just an hour and a half from the capital by car.

The meeting point of the city's most famous beaches, "La Mansa" and "La Brava", is where the Río de la Plata ends and the Atlantic Ocean begins.

The diversity of the coastline and the fine white sand make this an ideal destination for sports like surf, windsurf, jet-ski, sailing, motor boating, fishing and yachting. On dry land, tourists will also find that Punta del Este is the perfect place for other sports like golf, polo, tennis and rugby.



Colonia del Sacramento

Colonia del Sacramento is one of the most important tourist destinations in Uruguay, welcoming thousands of visitors each year. Just two hours from Montevideo





by car, it is a charming little town where the visitor will find culture, history and much more.

Founded in 1680 by the Portuguese official Manuel Lobo, the town switched back and forth between Portuguese and Spanish control several times until independence was finally declared in 1825.

These events took place in the town's historic district, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1995. It is a melting pot of urban layers and architectural styles, including typical Portuguese and Spanish constructions.

For all these options and many more, you can visit: www.descubrimontevideo.uy and www.turismo.gub.uy

We look forward to your stay in our country.