



# Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



## Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Punta del Este, Uruguay, at 35° S and 55° W.
- We have traveled 62,841 miles (101,174 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



## People and Culture

- Montevideo was founded by the Spanish in 1726 as a military stronghold. It soon became an important commercial center because its location in a natural harbor. Claimed by Argentina but annexed by Brazil in 1821, Uruguay declared its independence four years later and secured its freedom in 1828 after a three-year struggle.
- Uruguay's population is 3.3 million. The largest ethnic group is of European decent at 88%. Mestizo (mixed) and black make up 8% and 4% respectively. The Charruas Indians were the original inhabitants. There are very few people of Indian descent living in Uruguay.
- Montevideo is the capital at 1.6 million. Ninety-two percent of the population lives in urban areas.
- Unemployment stands at 6.8 percent overall. This figure has dropped steadily since 2002. It is lowest it has been since 1986.
- Uruguay's economy is characterized by an export-oriented agricultural sector. The main industries are tourism, food processing, electrical machinery, transportation equipment, petroleum products, textiles, chemicals and beverages.
- To this day, gauchos wear the same traditional dress as they did generations ago. Complete with its own music and dance, the gaucho is a symbol of Uruguay's national identity.



*The Fingers, Punta del Este, Uruguay  
(source: [Wikispaces.com/portuques-ort](http://Wikispaces.com/portuques-ort))*

### Jose Artigas

General Jose Artigas is a national hero in Uruguay. He was born in Montevideo in 1764. Artigas led uprisings against the Spaniards and for a short time was ruler of most of Uruguay.



*sources: [Funtrivia.com](http://Funtrivia.com),  
[Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org)*



*Gauchos (source: [Flickr.com/Eduardo Amorim](http://Flickr.com/Eduardo Amorim))*



Coastline at Punta Del Diablo (source: [Flickr.com/ana\\_ge](http://Flickr.com/ana_ge))

## Bañados del Este Biosphere Reserve

This Bañados del Este Biosphere Reserve is a wetlands area near the border with Brazil. Bañados is rich with wildlife. This area includes several coastal lagoons. Most of these lagoons are separated from the sea by a narrow sand bar, which regularly opens allowing the entrance of seawater.

source:  
[UNESCO.org](http://UNESCO.org)



The wildlife of Bañados del Este Biosphere Reserve will surprise you (3:31)

## Nature and Environment

- Uruguay is the second-smallest South American country (after Suriname). Its size is slightly smaller than the state of Washington. Uruguay is bordered by Argentina and Brazil and has 410 miles (660 kilometers) of coastline along the Atlantic.
- Three-quarters of the country is made up of low-lying grassland. The highest point is Cerro Cathedral at 1,686 feet (514 meters).
- The climate of Uruguay is warm. Because of the absence of mountains, which act as weather barriers, all locations are particularly vulnerable to rapid changes from weather fronts. The pampero is a chilly and occasional violent wind that blows north from the Argentine pampas.
- The Río Negro (Spanish for "Black River") is the most important river in Uruguay. It originates in the southern highlands of Brazil and flows west across the entire width of Uruguay to the Uruguay River.



Capybaras are a semi-aquatic rodent of South America (source: [Flickr.com/Tambako the Jaguar](http://Flickr.com/Tambako the Jaguar))

## Our Plans

- We are spending a few days in Punte del Este after arriving from Brazil.
- We will continue on to Argentina, where we will travel overland for the next few weeks.
- What would you like to know about Uruguay and our upcoming time in Argentina? Send us your ideas and we will try to include them!

## More Information

- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uy.html>
- [http://www.discoveruruguay.com/about\\_uruguay\\_culture.htm](http://www.discoveruruguay.com/about_uruguay_culture.htm)
- <http://www.facts-about.org.uk/places-geography-uruguay.htm>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uruguay>

## Uruguayan Flag

The yellow sun on the Uruguayan flag bears a human face known as the Sun of May. It refers to the legend of the sun breaking through the clouds on May 25, 1810 as independence was first declared from Spain. The stripes represent the nine original departments of Uruguay.



source: [CIA.gov](#)

## Our Partners



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