



Uruguay

598 / POP 3.3 MILLION / AREA 176,215 SQ KM

Includes ➔

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Punta del Este	553
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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Charco Bistró (p542)
- ➔ Café Picasso (p552)
- ➔ Bodega y Granja Narbona (p545)
- ➔ Parador La Huella (p560)

Best Places to Stay

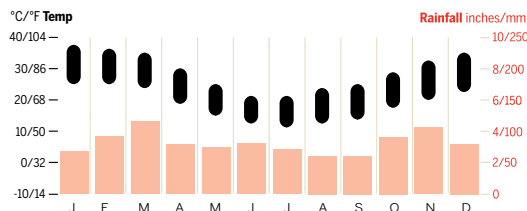
- ➔ La Posadita de la Plaza (p541)
- ➔ El Galope Horse Farm & Hostel (p542)
- ➔ Estancia Panagea (p551)
- ➔ Posada Lunarejo (p566)

Why Go?

Wedged like a grape between Brazil's gargantuan thumb and Argentina's long forefinger, Uruguay has always been something of an underdog. Yet after two centuries living in the shadow of its neighbors, South America's smallest country is finally getting a little well-deserved recognition. Progressive, stable, safe and culturally sophisticated, Uruguay offers visitors opportunities to experience everyday 'not made for tourists' moments, whether caught in a cow-and-gauche traffic jam on a dirt road to nowhere or strolling with *mate*-toting locals along Montevideo's beachfront.

Short-term visitors will find plenty to keep them busy in cosmopolitan Montevideo, picturesque Colonia and party-till-you-drop Punta del Este. But it pays to dig deeper. Go wildlife-watching along the Atlantic coast, hot-spring-hopping up the Río Uruguay, or horseback riding under the big sky of Uruguay's interior, where vast fields spread out like oceans.

When to Go Montevideo



Feb Street theater and drumming consume Montevideo during Carnaval celebrations.

Mar Tacuarembó's gauche festival, plus lower prices on the still-sunny Atlantic coast.

Oct Soak in Salto's hot springs, or channel Carlos Gardel at Montevideo's tango festival.

Uruguay Highlights

1 Dancing to a different drummer during Montevideo's month-long **Carnaval** (p534).

2 Catching a wave or a late-night beach party along the untamed shoreline at **Punta del Diablo** (p565).

3 Soaking your weary traveling muscles in the **thermal baths** (p549) near Salto.

4 Getting way off the beaten track in the rural nature preserves of **Quebrada de los Cuervos** and **Valle del Lunarejo** (p566).

5 Sunbathing on the 18th-century town wall, or wandering the leafy plazas and cobbled streets of picturesque **Colonia del Sacramento** (p537).

6 Losing yourself in the sand dunes and surveying the sea lions from atop the lighthouse at **Cabo Polonio** (p563).

7 Touring Uruguay's newest Unesco World Heritage site, the historic El Anglo meat-processing factory in **Fray Bentos** (p546).

8 Hitting the beaches by day and the clubs by night in glitzy **Punta del Este** (p553).

9 Herding cattle on horseback and discovering the simple joys of *estancia* living under the starry skies around **Tacuarembó** (p550).

