INTRODUCTION
Montevideo, founded by the Spanish in 1726 as a military stronghold, soon took advantage of its natural harbor to become an important commercial center. Claimed by Argentina but annexed by Brazil in 1821, Uruguay declared its independence four years later and secured its freedom in 1828. Uruguay's political and labor conditions are among the freest on the continent.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
President Luis Alberto LACALLE POU
Head of Government
President Luis Alberto LACALLE POU
Government Type
presidential republic
Capital
Montevideo
Legislature
bicameral General Assembly or Asamblea General consists of the Chamber of Senators or Camara de Senadores (31 seats) and the Chamber of Representatives or Camara de Representantes (99 seats)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
3.4 million (July 2021 est.)
Population Growth
0.26% (2021 est.)
Ethnicity
White 87.7%, Black 4.6%, Indigenous 2.4%, other 0.3%, none or unspecified 5%; note: data represent primary ethnic identity (2011 est.)
Language
Spanish (official)
Religion
Roman Catholic 47.1%, non-Catholic Christians 11.1%, nondenominational 23.2%, Jewish 0.3%, atheist or agnostic 17.2%, other 1.1% (2006 est.)
Urbanization
urban population: 95.6% of total population (2021)
rate of urbanization: 0.4% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
high-income, export-oriented South American economy; South America's largest middle class; low socioeconomic inequality; growing homicide rates; growing Chinese and EU relations; 2019 Argentine recession hurt; key milk, beef, rice, and wool exporter
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $75.06 billion (2020 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $21,600 (2020 est.)
Industries - food processing, electrical machinery, transportation equipment, petroleum products, textiles, chemicals, beverages
Agricultural products - soybeans, milk, rice, maize, wheat, barley, beef, sugarcane, sorghum, oranges
Exports $13.55 billion (2020 est.)
sulfate wood pulp, beef, soybeans, concentrated milk, rice (2019)
partners: China 29%, Brazil 12%, US 5%, Netherlands 5%, Argentina 5% (2019)
Imports $11.29 billion (2020 est.)
 crude petroleum, packaged medicines, cars, broadcasting equipment, delivery trucks (2019)
partners: Brazil 25%, China 15%, US 11%, Argentina 11% (2019)

GEOGRAPHY
Area
Total: 176,215 sq km
Land: 175,015 sq km
Water: 1,200 sq km
Climate
warm temperate; freezing temperatures almost unknown
Natural Resources
arable land, hydropower, minor minerals, fish

as October 2021