A WORD FROM THE FOUNDERS

SouthAmerica.travel is proud of its energetic Team of travel experts. Our Travel Consultants come from around the world, have traveled extensively throughout South America and work "at the source" from our operations headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, Lima and Buenos Aires, and at our flagship office in Seattle.

We are passionate about South America Travel, and we’re happy to share with you our favorite Buenos Aires restaurants, our insider’s tips for Machu Picchu, or our secret colonial gems of Brazil, and anything else you’re eager to know.

The idea to create SouthAmerica.travel first came to Co-Founders Juergen Keller and Bradley Nehring while traveling through Brazil’s Amazon Rainforest. The two noticed few international travelers, and those they did meet had struggled to arrange the trip by themselves. Expertise in custom travel planning to Brazil was scarce to nonexistent. This inspired the duo to start their own travel business to fill this void and help travelers plan great trips to Brazil, and later all South America.

With five offices on three continents, as well as local telephone numbers in 88 countries worldwide, the SouthAmerica.travel Team has helped thousands of travelers fulfill their unique dream of discovering the marvelous and diverse continent of South America. Where will your dreams take you? Let's start planning now...

“Our goal is to create memories that will last our clients a lifetime.”

Juergen Keller
President

Bradley Nehring
C.O.O
THE ESSENTIAL URUGUAY TRAVEL GUIDE

ESSENTIAL URUGUAY TRAVEL TIPS
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THE HIGHLIGHTS OF URUGUAY
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THE BEACHES OF URUGUAY
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ADD ARGENTINA, BRAZIL & PARAGUAY
Combine Buenos Aires
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THE BEST URUGUAY TRAVEL PACKAGES
Argentina, Brazil & Uruguay Tour
South America Golf Tour
Uruguay Bird Watching Tour & Montevideo
Horseback Riding Tour in Uruguay
The South America Wine Tour
The Rhythm of Buenos Aires & Uruguay Tour
Montevideo & Punta del Este Uruguay Tour
URUGUAY is the underdog that always prevails!

Resting between Brazil and Argentina, Uruguay is often overlooked and outshined by its neighboring powerhouse countries. However, Uruguay is truly a hidden gem of South America. Uruguay has beautiful beaches, rolling green hills, farmlands and an authentic gaucho culture. Find yourself in the metropolitan capital Montevideo or walking along the charming cobblestone streets of Colonia, or relaxing on the glamorous beaches of Punta del Este. There is so much packed into this little country, and it's your turn to dive in.

Best Times to Visit Uruguay

With the temperate climate and no extreme weather conditions, Uruguay is the perfect travel destination year round. The spring and early summer months, from September to December are delightfully warm, and the chance of precipitation is lower than usual. The autumn months are also pleasant from late April to early June. If you don't mind the cooler weather, visit Uruguay's countryside during the winter. Though it may be chilly, the winter season provides especially stunning landscapes and suitable conditions for horseback riding and sightseeing. Please note before making arrangements to visit Uruguay; you must have 6 months validity on your passport to enter the country.

Staying Safe in Uruguay

You are very unlikely to run into any problems in Uruguay, as it has one of the lowest crime rates in Latin America. However, just like you would in other countries, leave valuables at home, and use the hotel safe to hold your passport and other important documents. You should always be aware of your surroundings, but for the most part, you won't find much trouble in this charming country.

Recommended Foods & Drinks

Uruguayan cuisine is tinted with European influences, mostly from Italy and Spain. Uruguay has fantastic bakeries for "merienda", a light meal of either delicious sweet or savory pastries and cafe con leche. Yerba mate is the choice of tea for the afternoon, as it is popular in most South American countries. Locals walk around with a thermos of this delicious tea. For lunch or dinner try asado de tira (short ribs and other barbecued meats), or chivito, a traditional Uruguayan meat and cheese sandwich. Finish any meal with a sip of Uruguay's most notable Tannat wine, perfect for any of these savory dishes. Some of the most popular restaurants in Uruguay are Primuseum, Foc, Arcadia, and Mercado del Puerto. Choose one of these, and your taste buds will have a party.

Read More: Uruguay Food & Drink
HIGHLIGHTS OF URUGUAY

Colonia del Sacramento

On the east bank of the Rio de la Plata is Colonia del Sacramento, a picturesque colonial gem deemed a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Travelers and locals alike escape from the metropolitan city of Buenos Aires to Colonia for a relaxing getaway. Take the ferry across the Rio de la Plata for a day trip or weekend stay.

There is no need for bikes or cars in Colonia; visitors can walk the entire city in a single day. Stroll around the cobblestone streets and tree-lined pathways past delightful city vendors. Everything in this quaint town offers the perfect photo op. Take in the slower pace of life and enjoy a coffee at a local cafe. Explore Barrio Historico (the historic quarter) without any disruptions, and venture to the walled part of town, painted with a fusion of Spanish, Portuguese and post-colonial architecture.

End the day or weekend adventure with riverfront Uruguayan cuisine and cocktails, as the coast of Uruguay provides some of the most spellbinding sunsets in the world.

View Tour: Colonia del Sacramento

Insider's Tip

The Lighthouse in Colonia del Sacramento dates back to the 1850’s. From the top of the tower, guests can enjoy fantastic views of the peninsula that juts into the riverfront. Climb to the top during sunrise or sunset for the best view!
Montevideo

Montevideo, the nation’s capital, is the bayside destination that most Uruguayans call home. While it may not be as large as Lima, Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo still offers unique qualities creating its own city vibe.

Visit Ciudad Vieja (the old town), packed with art deco buildings, colonial homes and landmarks. On Sunday make sure to visit the Tristan Narvaja Street Market in the neighborhood of Cordon to find some perfect souvenirs for your loved ones back home.

Possibly the best-kept secret in Montevideo is Plaza Virgilio, located in the neighborhood of Punta Gorda. Spend an evening here and watch the sunset with a delicious bottle of wine. The Plaza extends outward and rewards visitors with unobstructed views of the beach, river and upscale neighborhoods. The plaza is a popular spot where locals relax on the grass and enjoy yerba mate. Uruguayans love to make time for each other and it is common to meet in a plaza to catch up, play soccer or enjoy a meal.

Read More: Top 5 Things to do in Montevideo
Wineries & Vineyards

Uruguay is the fourth-largest producer of wine in South America. Its signature wines are reds produced from Tannat grapes, although several whites including Albarino and Coco are popular. The red wines are made with darker fruits, spices, aromas and flavors. The Tannat grape is said to be the healthiest red grape as it contains a lot of antioxidants. A glass of Tannat wine paired with beef or other red meat makes for a perfect Uruguayan meal.

The majority of vineyards in Uruguay are in the hills, just north of the capital, particularly in the departments of Canelones, Montevideo, Colonia and San Jose. Since 2005, 15 family owned wineries have joined to create Los Caminos del Vino, The Wine Roads of Uruguay.

Travelers can choose between taking a day trip from Montevideo or a multi-day wine tour through the region. Uruguay also has a few smaller, family-owned vineyards influenced by European wine-making traditions. Bodegas Carrau, Juan Toscanini E Hijos, Establecimiento Juanico, Bouza Bodega, Vinedo de los Vientos and Alto de la Ballena are amongst some of the best.

Read More: The 6 Most Authentic Wineries in Uruguay
Estancias

An estancia visit in Uruguay is a fantastic way to get to know the country and its culture while experiencing an authentic "gaucho lifestyle." In the last few years, many agricultural farms and estancia's have opened their doors to visitors. Stay at a charming estancia and connect with the traditions of the unexplored countryside. Take a morning horseback ride past vibrant green fields, and watch gauchos show off their equestrian skills. Sip on delicious local wine and find hidden treasures as you take the paths less traveled.

Choose from two fabulous estancia tours: The Montevideo & Estancias of Uruguay Tour, as well as the Horseback Riding Tour in Uruguay. Enjoy the colonial highlights of Montevideo and Colonia del Sacramento or stay at a seaside inn during one of these estancia tours.

Read More: Montevideo & Estancia's of Uruguay Tour
Punta del Este

Punta del Este has a binding reputation for being South America's most glamorous and exclusive beach town outside of Brazil. The region sits on a peninsula that divides the Rio de la Plata from the Atlantic Ocean. Tourists from around the world visit for its sandy beaches, nearby islands and lively local lifestyle.

Each beach offers a different vibe. For a mix of surfing, delicious food, outdoor art and a youthful crowd, visit Playa Brava. It's translated name, "Fierce Beach", has the youth running towards its wind infused surf. For a more relaxed atmosphere, head to Bikini Beach where celebrities and socialites relax. Punta del Este is the perfect starting point for island hopping. Isla Gorriti and Isla de los Lobos are two lively islands just a short boat ride away. For travelers looking for a laid-back fishing village, head to José Ignacio. And of course, no trip to Punta del Este would be complete without visiting the La Mano statue, iconic for its simple modern adaptation of a hand emerging from the sand.

Read More: Top 5 Things to do in Punta del Este
Piriapolis

Piriapolis is a sweet combination of beachfront walkways and mountainous countryside. The easy-going coastal city sits on Uruguay’s southern Atlantic Coast and favored for its Mediterranean-style beach town and belle époque–style buildings.

Developed for tourism, travelers can be found walking along the picturesque 10-block stretch facing the seaside waves. There are plenty of shops and restaurants. Take a peek at the waterfront Argentino Hotel, a beautiful example of colonial architecture. Besides the relaxing strolls, guests love to venture out to the surrounding countryside. Often, many take the chairlift up Cerro San Antonio, a hill with a small whitewashed chapel and spectacular vantage point.

Like Punta del Este, Piriapolis is a beach town that keeps busy with tourism between December and March. But once the temperatures start to drop, crowds and prices follow. The low season is a great time to come to Piriapolis if you’re not solely drawn to the beach. You can still take part in the hilltop views, gorgeous sunsets, relaxing strolls and nostalgic architecture.

View More: Montevideo & Piriapolis Vacation Package

**Insider’s Tip**

Make sure to head to the top of Cerro San Antonio Hill on a clear day. With a view of the horizon, you should be able to see Punta del Este’s beautiful condos from 30 miles away!
**Cabo Polonio**

Cabo Polonio is transforming from the best-kept secret to the secret that is slowly leaking out. This quaint beach town, 32 km from Punta del Diablo, is situated in the Rocha Department of Uruguay. Without roads, power-lines, electricity, or an Internet cafe in sight, Cabo Polonio has created its own floating oasis of treasure.

Stroll along the clean beach colliding with the Atlantic Ocean, peruse local handicrafts, say hello to the happy dancing sea lions, visit the grand Lighthouse nestled atop two rocky islands, or simply bask in the unrivaled individuality of the town.

**Insiders Tip**

*Cabo Polonio has just been added to Uruguay’s National System of Protected Areas. This means that no further development on the land will happen, saving the charming coastal flare from turning into another seaside resort town.*

Exempt from the pressures of hustling city life, found in many tourist destinations, Cabo Polonio is the perfect place to escape and find inner peace.

**Getting there:** There are no roads that lead to Cabo Polonio, enhancing its tranquil isolation. With a highway nearby (7 km away), you can take a bus from Montevideo that will drop you at an outpost, where you can transfer once again, this time by truck to the remote destination.

**Read more:** Beautiful Coast of Uruguay
ADD ON ARGENTINA

Buenos Aires, Argentina

With the Rio de la Plata connecting Argentina and Uruguay, it's almost too easy not to combine the two countries. Travel by ferry to Buenos Aires from Colonia. Delight in the city of romance as you gallivant around one of the most passionate cities in South America. Enjoy a steak meal paired with a glass of Argentina's Malbec wine. When the sun sets, enjoy a Tango Show and dinner with live music. Explore some of the highlights such as the President’s Palace, Casa Rosada and Plaza de Mayo. Venture outside the city and spend the day at an Estancia and compare the Uruguayan countryside with Argentina. Learn more about the Gaucho way of life, and enjoy a traditional meal with Argentine wines.

Mendoza, Argentina

If you’re a real wine enthusiast, venture to Mendoza, Argentina’s most famous wine region. Enhance your palate with the taste of Argentine Malbec, Torrontes, and Tannat and learn about their production process on The South America Wine Tour. Or sample more than one glass on the Wineries of Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay Tour.

Read More: Argentina & Uruguay Tours
**Florianopolis, Brazil**

With Uruguay sandwiched between Argentina and Brazil, it is easy to combine Brazil and Uruguay. Continue beach hopping in Uruguay up into Florianopolis in southern Brazil, a simple commute (via bus) from Uruguay. If you’re ambitious, you can travel all the way up the coast to Rio de Janeiro.

Florianopolis is famous for its white sandy beaches and popular resorts. Spend a couple of days here relaxing or visit the Lagoa da Conceição, a saltwater lagoon, popular for windsurfing and boating.

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**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

For those traveling farther north to Rio de Janeiro, the "Marvelous City". There is a multitude of things to do in and around the city. The must-see destinations include Sugarloaf Mountain, Christ the Redeemer Statue atop Corcovado Mountain and Copacabana Beach.

Aside for tourist havens, visit the city's colonial gems, the beautiful green botanical gardens and nearby parks. Easily restructure your Uruguay tour to a multi-country adventure with Argentina and Brazil.

Read More: [Argentina, Brazil & Uruguay](#)
Iguazu Falls

Seamlessly combine Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina with Iguazu Falls. The falls are easily accessible from either side of the Argentine-Brazilian border, as well as from nearby Paraguay, and both areas have an array of accommodations for guests.

If you’re staying in Argentina or Brazil, there’s no reason not to visit the falls, as they are one of the planet’s most awe-inspiring sights and now considered a world wonder. The power and size of the falls combined with the ability for visitors to get up-close and personal from all angles will leave even the well-traveled guests in awe.

To capture all of the natural beauty, spend at least two full days, to ensure plenty of time to explore the Argentine and Brazilian sides.

Choose from four different circuits for the most optimal views: The Circuito Inferior (Lower Circuit), The Circuito Superior (Upper Circuit), The Garganta del Diablo (Devil’s Throat), or the Isla San Martin (San Martin Island). Each of these circuits gives travelers a unique and different perspective.

Read More: Iguazu Falls Tours

Insider’s Tip

Iguazu Falls Park allows you to bring in your own food. So pack a lunch and have a picnic, or pick from one of the (surprisingly large amount) of food options available. You’ll want a snack for the sight you’re about to see.
Jesuit Ruins of Trinidad, Paraguay

Make your South America Tour complete by combining Paraguay and Uruguay! Paraguay is a perfect destination for those who wish to take the road less traveled to see South America’s hidden gems.

As Paraguay shares a border with Brazil and Argentina near Iguazu Falls, it is common to visit Paraguay to see the “3 Borders Monument”. But to explore Paraguay further, you can visit the Jesuit ruins of Trinidad, which were built and abandoned hundreds of years ago.

Asunción, Paraguay

For city and history lovers, visit Asunción, the capital of Paraguay. Brush up on your history with visits to Casa de la Independencia, Palacio de Gobierno and Panteón Nacional de Los Héroes. Visit one of Paraguay’s most famous eateries, Lido Bar, for some scrumptious empanadas. At night, Asunción’s contemporary scene won’t let you down. Here, you will find that there is a bar for everyone. Check out Britannia Pub for their extensive beer selection, Casa Clari for a laid-back cocktail lounge or Pirata bar for some live music.

Read More: Paraguay the Hidden Gem of South America
TOP URUGUAY TOURS

Argentina, Brazil & Uruguay Tour
11 Days — Buenos Aires, Fiesta Gaucha, Iguazu Falls & Rio de Janeiro
Experience the best of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay; enjoy great dance shows with live music on our Tango, Candomble and Samba tour. Start in Buenos Aires, visit the must-see spots and experience the passion at an evening Tango show. Continue to Uruguay to visit Montevideo and Colonia. Fly to the magical Iguazu Falls and admire the falls from the Argentine and Brazilian sides. Finish this whirlwind tour in the bustling and beautiful coastal city of Rio de Janeiro.

South America Golf Tour to Brazil, Argentina & Uruguay
14 Days — Iguazu Falls, Buenos Aires, Colonia del Sacramento & Punta del Este
Golf your way through South America as you tee off at some of the best courses in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. Arrive in Iguazu Falls and stay at the 5-star Bourbon Iguassu Golf Club & Resort complete with an 18-hole course on 600,000m², Par 72 and 6982 yards. Continue to the city of Buenos Aires; golf at the Buenos Aires Golf Club by day and enjoy a passionate tango show by night. Finish this tour in Punta del Este, a peninsula with over 40 km of pristine beaches. Enjoy two 18 hole golf courses along the Atlantic Ocean, sure to impress the most seasoned golfer.

Uruguay Bird Watching Tour & Montevideo Tour
8 Days — Montevideo, Punta del Este, Isla de Lobos & Cabo Polonio
What better way to visit Uruguay than by admiring its beautiful wildlife? This small and peaceful country shows nature lovers a variety of ecosystems mainly concentrated in the Bañados Del Este Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO Site). Go birding in San Miguel National Park, the heart of the eastern wetlands, visit Isla de Lobos (Island of the Sea Lions), the Quebrada de los Cuervos and other birding highlights in Uruguay.
Horseback Riding Tour in Uruguay
8 Days — Seaside Inns, Gaucho estancias, Horseback riding & wine
This horseback riding adventure takes visitors past pristine beaches, over unique sand dunes, through shady woodlands and past the shores of wetlands. Stay at charming seaside inns and quaint 'estancias' (ranches). Along the journey, skirt the most diverse landscapes, sip delicious wines, enjoy excellent food and experience the hidden treasures of Uruguay.

THE South America Wine Tour
10 Days — Santiago, Mendoza, Colonia del Sacramento & Buenos Aires
Vinophiles know that Chile and Argentina have garnered the world’s respect as leading vinters of fine wine. From the Maipo Valley near Santiago comes Carmenére and other strains of the most elite French wines. From Mendoza comes the world-renowned Malbec, a delicious and full-bodied red. This multi-country Chile, Argentina and Uruguay tour is the perfect introduction to South America’s best wine.

The Rhythm of Buenos Aires & Uruguay Tour
8 Days — Buenos Aires, Colonia, Punta de Este & Montevideo
This 8 day Argentina and Uruguay tour includes an in-depth exploration of Buenos Aires Colonia del Sacramento and Montevideo. Take the ferry across the Rio de la Plata from Argentina to Uruguay. Feel the passionate rhythms of tango in Buenos Aires and dance candombe in Uruguay.

Montevideo & Estancias of Uruguay
9 Days — Montevideo, Punta del Este, Colonia del Sacramento
Travel from Montevideo to Colonia del Sacramento, along the Rio de la Plata. Spend a few days in Colonia del Sacramento, walking down the cobblestone streets and enjoy a mixture of architectural styles and fascinating history. Finish the trip at a pleasant gaucho-style estancia and learn about the rural life in this small yet diverse country!
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