



OSAC Country Security Report

Uruguay

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This report is intended to supplement the U.S. Department of State Uruguay Travel Advisory and [Uruguay International Travel Information Page](#).

Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

U.S. Embassy in Montevideo

Lauro Müller 1776 Montevideo, Uruguay

+ (598) 1770-2000

Emergencies: + (598) 1770-2000. Hours 0800 – 1730.

OSAC Country Chapter

The Montevideo Country Chapter is active.

Contact [OSAC's Americas team](#) with any questions.

Uruguay Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication assesses that travelers should exercise increased caution due to crime.

Review OSAC's report, [Understanding the Consular Travel Advisory System](#).

Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Montevideo as being a CRITICAL-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has included a Crime "C" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Uruguay, indicating that widespread violent or organized crime is present in areas of the country; local law enforcement may have limited ability to respond to serious crimes.

The crime emergency line in Uruguay is **911**. Review the U.S. Department of State's Crime Victims Assistance [brochure](#).

Crime: General Threat

Crime remains the primary security concern in Uruguay. Over the last ten years, Uruguay has experienced a significant increase in crime, to include armed robberies, homicides, vehicle

break-ins, theft, residential break-ins, and assaults. Criminals are well-armed, brazen, and do not hesitate to resort to violence if victims resist or if the police attempt to intervene. Homicides have increased significantly over the last ten years, but have plateaued somewhat following the coronavirus pandemic. Despite the general increase, some 2025 data shows improvement. First-half of 2025 data showed 4.3% of households reported crimes (down from 5.2% in late 2024). The first half of 2025 indicated a decrease in reported victimization, with 4.3% of households and 3.0% of individuals reporting crime, showing a reduction in, or a change in, the perception of insecurity compared to late 2024. Despite some lower overall crime indicators, violent crime continues. September 2025 saw a "very violent" week with 12 homicides, highlighting ongoing challenges Uruguay is increasingly acting as a transit point for drug trafficking, with groups like Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) operating in the region. In 2024–2025, there was a rise in identified human trafficking victims, with 286 victims identified in 2024, many in forced labor. Violent attacks on police officers and private guards sometimes occur, many with the intention of stealing their service weapons, vehicles, and bulletproof vests. Despite these challenges, analytical reports for 2025 still often rank Uruguay among the safer countries in South America, frequently placing it first or second for safety in the region in some comparative studies, even while acknowledging issues.

During the summer tourism season, certain types of crime will typically migrate with the population to other popular vacation destinations (e.g., Punta del Este, Colonia del Sacramento). Criminals prey on targets of opportunity: tourists openly carrying valuables, motorists stopped at traffic lights with valuables visible within the vehicle, vacant homes, and unattended parked vehicles. Criminals operate in all parts of Montevideo, including popular tourist areas such as Ciudad Vieja, Avenida 18 de Julio, Plaza Independencia, and Mercado del Puerto, as well as other high-traffic areas within the country. Police increase patrols during periods of high tourist activity in these areas, especially during the visits of cruise liners in the summer. Police have also greatly increased traffic and security camera networks in Montevideo, Canelones, Colonia and Maldonado which have allowed the police to operate greater traffic controls and surveillance support in high crime, high violence areas.

Criminals commonly use a motorcycle when committing a robbery in Montevideo. Motochorro is the term used to describe a criminal who uses a motorcycle to commit a robbery, combining the local Spanish words for "motorcycle" and "thief." Motochorros generally work in pairs. The driver will approach a victim while the companion steals wallets, purses, phones, or other items and rapidly escapes. During recent incidents, motochorros targeted victims at stoplights, parking lots, and ATMs, outside apartment buildings and outside of hotels while waiting for transportation. Motochorros have also targeted vehicles by puncturing a victim's vehicle tire and waiting for them to pull over to change the tire to rob them.

Residential burglaries remain a problem in Uruguay. Single-family residences are more vulnerable to burglary than apartments. The neighborhoods of Carrasco, Punta Carretas, and Pocitos have recently been targets of residential burglaries due to the affluence of residents. Most incidents occur while the occupants are away, both day and night, though burglaries of occupied residences are not uncommon.

Crime: Areas of Concern

While there are no "off limits" areas for U.S. embassy personnel in Uruguay, there are neighborhoods within the Montevideo metropolitan area where most violent crimes (e.g., homicides, carjackings, armed robberies) occur. According to the Interior Ministry, neighborhoods in Montevideo that suffered the highest crime rates in 2022 include Casavalle, Union, Nuevo Paris, Penarol Lavalleja, Colon Centro and Northwest, Cordon, La Paloma Tomkinson, Villa Garcia Manga Rural, Cerror, Las Acacias, Casabo Pajas Blancas and Punta Rieles Bella Italia. More recently, Ciudad Vieja has seen an increase in crime across the board (theft, robberies, homicide) and is now considered an area of concern. Other commonly visited locations like Plaza Independencia and surrounding pedestrian streets, and the Port Market are still generally considered safe.

Review OSAC's reports, [All That You Should Leave Behind](#), [Hotels: The Ins and Outs](#), [Considerations for Hotel Security](#), [Taking Credit](#), and [Our Two Cents: Petty Crime Basics and How to Minimize the Risk](#).

Kidnapping Threat

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Kidnapping "K" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Uruguay.

The threat of kidnapping in Uruguay remains low and primarily pertains to extortion or criminal activity among rival gangs. Travelers should exercise the same common-sense precautions as in any large cosmopolitan area, such as maintaining a low profile and always remaining aware of surroundings.

Review OSAC's reports, [Kidnapping: The Basics](#) and [Active Shooter and Kidnapping Response Tips](#).

Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Montevideo as being a LOW-threat location for terrorism directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Terrorism "T" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Uruguay.

Although the general threat of terrorism in Uruguay remains low, authorities remain concerned about regional activity. The Lebanon-based and Iran-backed terrorist group Hizb'allah continues its long history of activity in the Western Hemisphere, including its use of supporters and financiers who operate in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) of South America, where Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet. The United States continues to be vigilant about individuals affiliated with international terrorist groups, including al-Qa'ida and ISIS, who have made attempts to exploit the region.

Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Montevideo as being a LOW-threat location for political violence directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Civil Unrest "U" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Uruguay. Civil unrest can develop quickly without prior notice, often interrupting logistics and services. Avoid demonstration activity, as even those planned to remain peaceful have the potential to turn violent.

Elections/Political Stability

The Oriental Republic of Uruguay is a constitutional republic with a democratically elected president and a bicameral legislature. In the November 2024 national elections, Broad Front candidate Yamandú Orsi won a five-year presidential term after a run-off vote. No coalition won an absolute majority in the lower house, but the Broad Front won 16 of 30 Senate seats.

Protests & Demonstrations

Demonstrations, some expressing anti-U.S. sentiment, occasionally occur in Uruguay, particularly near the U.S. Embassy, Legislative Palace, Independence Plaza, City Hall, Batlle Park, Liberty Plaza, and universities in Montevideo. While most demonstrations are peaceful and non-violent, avoid large gatherings or events where crowds have congregated to demonstrate, protest, or cause damage as a byproduct of celebrating an event, such as after soccer matches. On September 29, the U.S. Embassy in Montevideo issued an [alert](#) for the anniversary of the founding of the Club Atletico Peñarol, stating that similar past events had resulted in disruptions and conflict between rival clubs. Although public law requires a permit to demonstrate, local police typically do not enforce this rule.

Review OSAC's report, [Surviving a Protest](#).

Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

While there is anti-U.S. sentiment in some circles, this sentiment rarely, if ever, takes violent form. Occasional political protests target the U.S. government, but political violence against the Embassy or other U.S. interests has been non-existent in recent years.

Law Enforcement

The Interior Ministry (MOI) maintains the executive order to govern, execute, control, and evaluate policies, plans, and programs related to public security. Within the MOI, the National Police are responsible for maintaining public order and preventing crimes in Uruguay.

Under the Defense Ministry, the National Naval Prefecture maintains the executive order to maintain public order, prevent crime, and exercise control of Uruguay's maritime, river and lake jurisdictions.

Police Response

The emergency line in Uruguay is **911**. The Uruguayan National Police have a well-trained and capable response force. It has significantly increased the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras throughout the country to monitor for potential criminal activity. While the National Police are an effective force, the lack of patrol resources, understaffed local police stations, and high rates of criminal activity often provide significant delays in response, especially for non-violent property crimes.

Transportation Security

Road Safety

Uruguay continues to experience a high rate of transit-related fatalities, which are among the most common causes of death in the country. According to the Uruguayan National Road Safety Unit, motorcyclists and bicyclists account for 49% of transit-related fatalities and 65% of injuries. Uruguay enforces speed limits through camera enforcement and has strict penalties for violations of driving above the 0.0% legal alcohol limit.

Poor lighting, inadequate pavement markings, and substandard road surfaces are contributing factors to traffic accidents throughout the country. Several of the main highways are particularly accident-ridden because of heavy tourist traffic and speed-related accidents including Route 1 (between Montevideo and Colonia); Ruta Interbalnearia (between Montevideo and Punta del Este); Route 9 to the east (leading to Punta del Diablo, La Paloma, La Pedrera, and Cabo Polonia); and Route 2 (between Rosario and Fray Bentos). The frequency of road accidents rises during the summer beach season (December to March), Carnaval (mid-to-late February), and Easter week due to an increased volume of tourists and holiday-related alcohol consumption. In 2022, the Ministry of Interior installed numerous traffic speed cameras along the main highways which has led to a reduction in traffic fatalities, albeit the numbers still remain high nationwide.

Exercise extra caution when traveling outside of Montevideo. There is a reduced level of police patrols and first-responder availability in rural areas.

You may drive using your foreign driver's license in Uruguay. If you plan to obtain a Uruguayan driver's license, you must apostille your U.S. driver's license in the state of issuance, as the U.S. Embassy cannot provide consular certificates attesting to the validity of a U.S.-issued driver's license.

Use caution and drive defensively. Driving in Uruguay is on the right side of the road, as in the United States. Seat belts are mandatory. Always use headlights. Children under 12 years must ride in the back seat. Motorcyclists must wear helmets and reflective vests. The use of cellular phones, as well as texting, while driving is illegal. Drinking maté (a popular, caffeine-rich infused hot beverage) while driving is also illegal. Right turns at red lights are illegal. Drivers approaching an intersection from the right generally have the right of way, but drivers do not always respect this right. Drivers already in traffic circles generally have the right of way. Flashing high beams indicates intent to pass or to continue through unmarked intersections. Drivers often ignore lane markers, change lanes and make turns without signaling, ignore speed limits, and disregard traffic signs. Motorists may make frequent and sudden stops on any road, especially when driving along Montevideo's riverfront (Rambla). Motorcyclists often drive the wrong way down one-way streets, use sidewalks to avoid lengthier routes, or drive between vehicles when traffic stops. There is a prohibition on left-hand turns across traffic on main roads unless marked otherwise.

Those in an accident involving injury should stay in place until a police officer arrives. The insurance company will generally respond to the scene as well. Some major roads are centrally monitored via live camera feeds, and emergency response may arrive quickly. Contact 911 immediately to report an emergency and notify your rental company if in a rental car. For emergency roadside assistance, call the Automobile Club of Uruguay at 1707 or "Car Up" at 2628-1555; even non-members can use this fee-based service.

Uruguayan law requires your vehicle to contain a specific road safety kit (e.g., hazard cones, flares, reflective vest, fire extinguisher), which you can find at most grocery stores or gas stations. Rental vehicles should have these basic kits.

Cycling outside the capital or small towns is hazardous due to a scarcity of bike paths, narrow road shoulders, and unsafe driving practices.

Review OSAC's reports, [Road Safety Abroad](#), [Driving Overseas: Best Practices](#), and [Evasive Driving Techniques](#); and read the U.S. Department of State's [webpage on driving and road safety abroad](#).

Public Transportation Safety

Public buses are safe to use but can be crowded, and pickpockets and bag snatchers sometimes target patrons. The public bus system utilizes pre-determined routes and is generally dependable. Regular labor strikes can halt public transportation with minimal advance notice.

Taxis, ride-share car services, and *remise* (private car) services are safe to use. Use clearly marked taxi stands, phone-taxi service at **141**, and online apps such as VoyerTaxi, Cabify, and Uber over hailing a cab on the street. These options are usually reliable during mass shutdowns of public transportation. Most taxis do not have functioning seat belts in the back seat. There have been no security issues reported with the use of ride-share services. It is not recommended to get into a taxi if there is already another passenger.

Aviation Concerns

Uruguay's main international airport is the Carrasco International Airport (MVD), also known as the General Cesareo L. Berisso International Airport. It is located in the Montevideo metropolitan area.

Review OSAC's Report, [Security in Transit: Airplanes, Public Transport, and Overnights](#).

Maritime Security

There are no maritime security concerns.

Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in Uruguay, review the local laws and circumstances on the Department of State's Country Information Page.

- [Women Travelers](#)
- [Gay and Lesbian Travelers](#)
- [Accessibility Needs](#)
- [Studying Abroad](#)
- [Faith-Based Travel](#)

Rule of Law, Arbitrary Detention, Official Harassment, Corruption, & Transparency

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Risk of Wrongful Detention "D" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Uruguay.

Uruguay's law and constitution prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention and provide for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of his or her arrest or detention in court. The government generally observes these requirements. The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implements the law effectively.

There were isolated reports of government corruption during the year, and the government addressed them with appropriate legal action. Authorities sometimes lacked sufficient

enforcement resources and mechanisms to identify and address acts of administrative misconduct.

Health Concerns

The emergency ambulance services lines in Uruguay can be reached by dialing **911**. Private ambulance companies can be contacted by dialing **133** (SUAT), **147** (UCM), and **159** (SEMM). In Montevideo, the responsiveness of emergency, personal ambulance service is generally within U.S. standards, but there may be service delays if questions about health insurance coverage arise. Ambulances contain a medical doctor, enabling advanced treatment/care en route to the local hospital. Of note, in Montevideo and similar larger towns/cities, the medical care facilities are adequate, and most are comparable to U.S. standards. However, there may not be the same level of care or access to all services required in the interior of the country.

Travelers on cruise ships with stops in Uruguay should verify their overseas health insurance coverage. Most health care providers in Uruguay accept cash and credit card payments.

While rare, the Uruguayan summer can bring about an increase in diarrheal illness and mosquito-borne diseases, so use insect repellent.

Find contact information for available medical services and available air ambulance services on the [U.S. Embassy website](#). The U.S. Department of State strongly recommends purchasing international health insurance before traveling internationally. Review the U.S. Department of State's [webpage](#) on health insurance overseas.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Health "H" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Uruguay. Review the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) country-specific [Travel Health Notices](#) for current health issues that impact traveler health, like disease outbreaks, special events or gatherings, and natural disasters.

See OSAC's [Guide to U.S. Government-Assisted Evacuations](#); review OSAC's reports, [The Healthy Way](#), [Shaken: The Don'ts of Alcohol Abroad](#), [Health 101: How to Prepare for Travel](#), and [Fire Safety Abroad](#); and visit the U.S. Department of State's webpage on [Your Health Abroad](#) for more information.

Vaccinations

There are no special vaccination requirements for Uruguay.

Review the CDC [Travelers' Health](#) site for country-specific vaccine recommendations.

Issues Traveling with Medications

Carry prescription medication in original packaging with your doctor's prescription. There is no restriction on types of medication you can import for personal use. Some medications may not be available in Uruguay, so bring a sufficient supply for your stay.

Review OSAC's report, [Traveling with Medication](#).

Water Quality

Local city water is considered safe for drinking.

Review OSAC's report, [I'm Drinking What in My Water?](#)

Natural Disasters

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Natural Disaster "N" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Uruguay.

Uruguay experiences seasonally high winds (the pampero is a chilly and occasional violent wind that blows north from the Argentine pampas), droughts, and floods. Because of the absence of mountains, all locations are particularly vulnerable to rapid changes from weather fronts.

In 2024, heavy rain caused disastrous flooding primarily in Florida, San José, and Canelones. More than 100,000 individuals are estimated to have been impacted by the floods and over 6,000 people were displaced nationwide. Flash flooding occurred throughout the country.

If you are in an area where flooding is expected, follow any evacuations orders or recommendations as quickly as possible. If flash flooding occurs, get to higher ground and avoid walking or driving in flood waters, if at all possible.

Cybersecurity

Uruguay has one of South America's most-advanced tech sectors and is evaluating new oversight mechanisms for cybersecurity. CERTuy is the National Center for Response to Computer Security Incidents of Uruguay. According to CERTuy, Uruguay experienced a 63% increase in the total number of cybersecurity incidents between 2023 and 2024. Malware incidents continue to be among the growing trend, and several government offices and agencies have been the victims of malware and ransomware. Due to the increase in reliance on remote work or weak legacy information security protocols, there have been an increase in incidents pertaining to "improper access" and "collection of information."

Review OSAC's reports, [Cybersecurity Basics](#), [Best Practices for Maximizing Security on Public Wi-Fi](#), [Traveling Abroad with Mobile Devices](#), and [Guide for Overseas Satellite Phone Usage](#).

Counterintelligence Issues

The U.S. government advises its travelers to avoid leaving personal electronic items containing sensitive information unsecured in hotel rooms. Private-sector travelers should take similar precautions to safeguard sensitive, personal, and/or proprietary information. Do not bring any electronics (personal or work) with sensitive information you do not want compromised to Uruguay.

Import/Export Restrictions

Customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation or exportation of certain items. These include precious jewels, gold, firearms, pornography, inflammable articles, acids, prohibited drugs, plants, seeds, raw grains, and foodstuffs as well as antiquities and business equipment. The importation of plants, fresh produce, seeds, and most animal products (meat, dairy, live animals) requires specific health certificates, permits, and adherence to strict regulations for pets or commercial goods, even for passengers entering at airports. Uruguayan Customs also prohibits the importation of subversive materials aimed at overthrowing the government or promoting anarchy, genocide, or other globally condemned practices.

You may import and use satellite phones in Uruguay, but they must be declared when entering the country.

A country-specific listing of items/goods prohibited from being exported to the country or that are otherwise restricted is available from the U.S. International Trade Agency [website](#).

Additional resources and reports can be found in the [OSAC Traveler Toolkit](#).