



YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING
Programas de Intercambios Culturales

All about Paraguay



All about Paraguay

Awesome that you are considering spending your exchange here in Paraguay and we are happy to help in any way we can! To begin with we would like for you to have the opportunity to get to know a bit more about our country, exchange programs and what it's like to live here. If you have any further questions, feel free to contact us.

Warm greetings
YFU Paraguay!

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Paraguay as a country



BASIC INFORMATION

- **Official name:** Republic of Paraguay
- **Capital:** Asunción
- **Official languages:** Spanish and Guaraní
- **Population:** 6 725 000
- **Currency:** Guaraní (PYG)
- **Area:** 406,752 km²

Paraguay is located in the heart of South America between Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia. The country looks relatively small next to its giant neighbors. About a third, 2,2 million of the Paraguayan population lives in the capital and the areas around it. The name Paraguay is derived from an ancient word in Guaraní, and while no one knows the exact translation, many translate it as "many rivers" or "river of many inhabitants". This is very lucky for the locals in Paraguay since it is one of the two landlocked countries in South America!

Background

Paraguay is a fast developing country. In fact, Paraguay has the fastest growing economy in the Americas. However, there's a huge gap between the rich and the poor. Despite of this, the Paraguayan people have been elected to be the happiest people in Latin America and Paraguay is one of the safest countries in South America. Paraguayan culture stands out from the culture of other South American countries in many ways. This is partially due to the huge influence of the indigenous Guaraní people. Unlike in the other colonized countries in South America, European culture formed around Native American culture, instead of the opposite. This also means that Paraguay as the only country in South America maintained the native language, Guaraní. Guaraní is spoken by 90 % of the population.

Paraguay is the country with the highest percentage, 88 %, of Catholics in South America



Paraguayan families

Paraguay and its people are known for their great kindness and hospitality. The spirit of solidarity, dedication, effort, sacrifice, friendship and brotherhood are recognized and evident in social relations. Anyone can feel and enjoy the simplicity and the warmth in the relationships with family, friends and school mates. It is also common to see mothers, fathers, sons, daughters and grandparents all living under the same roof. Family is very important in Paraguay. Social life revolves largely around an extended family of parents and blood relatives, as well as god-parents. The Paraguayan's chief loyalty is to their family, and it is their main support system.



In families, taking care of the children and managing the household is typically, but not always, the responsibility of wives while husbands are more occupied with work outside the homes. Paraguayans are usually protective of their children, especially daughters. Parents expect to know when their children are going out and where they are going even when they are considered adults. Many of the social activities, vacations, and activities on weekends are family events.



"To me, Paraguay is a unique place. From the warm and welcoming people, to the beautiful nature. Paraguay has its flaws as well, as any country does. As I see it though, the good spirit of the people, together with the general approach to life just seems to overshadow the flaws. That's why I look back at my time in Paraguay with a smile, and a big desire to return one day."

Mads from Denmark, 15/16



FUN FACTS

Food and drinks

Paraguay has the Guinness world record of the biggest group drinking tereré, which is a drink based on yerba mate served with ice-cold water that originated from Paraguay and the Guaraní people. Almost anywhere you go you will see people with their thermos drinking tereré, most often together with others. Many of the traditional and typical dishes in Paraguay also originated from the Guaraní people and are very hard to find outside of the country.

Sports

The Paraguayan national football team is seen as the fourth most successful football team in South America. It's also, without a doubt, the most important sport for the Paraguayans and means so much that it can be considered part of the culture. Everyone has a favorite team, and it usually means a great deal to them.



Climate

For the summer and sun lovers this is the place to be! The climate consists of a tropical climate in the north and a subtropical climate in the south, where the capital Asunción is located and the majority of the population lives. The warmest month is January, where the temperature averages around 28 °C but it's common that the temperature reaches 40 °C in the day time. The coolest month is July when the temperature averages around 18 °C.

ParaguWHY?

Paraguay is a country that from the beginning of the colonial constitution has received and conserved a big part of the native culture, from the different guaranic communities to tribes that are almost forgotten today, the Manjui being one example. As the only country in the Americas, Paraguay has two official languages, Spanish and Guarani, that the majority of the population speaks. The Paraguayan culture developed differently than in most of the South American countries because the European culture was formed around the native culture. Even these days Paraguayan people live honoring the

memory of the original habitants of South America by the traditional food, language, attitudes, art and more. Therefore, the Paraguayan society will

- Mba'eteko pio?
- Ipora

Do you want to learn two languages, but are too lazy to study both?

Paraguay is your choice, here both Spanish and Guarani (as shown above) are spoken. You will most likely learn the mix of them both, jopara.

This is the true heaven for fruit and veggie lovers. There are huge mango trees in every block, fruit salesmen in all corners and the tastiest and biggest avocados than can be found.



bring the participant the opportunity to experience a more traditional way of living where the family is the center and heart of everyday life. History has taught the Paraguayan people to be hardworking, helping, openminded and curious about foreigners, even if there aren't that many nowadays. The friendliness and curiousness of Paraguayans make creating friendships and family bounds easier. They are always the first to invite you to places and the first ones to give you a helping hand if you need it. The lifestyle in Paraguay is very chill and spontaneous, and planning doesn't play too big of a part.

Paraguay is truly the heart of South America and being in exchange in the country gives you a chance to experience a flora and fauna that goes beyond the limits of the countryside but into the city as well.



The programs

YFU Paraguay was established in 2012. In 2013, the first exchange students were sent on their exchange from Paraguay. In 2014, YFU Paraguay received their first 6 inbound students and in 2016 the first community service participants. YFU Paraguay can be considered as one of the fastest developing YFU countries. The office is located in the center of Asunción. YFU offers two different programs, the high school program and community service program. In addition it is also possible to mix these two, five months of each.



All programs

Participants will live with host families for the length of their program. This will allow a better immersion into the Paraguayan culture, traditions, folklore, language, and food, among other important topics such as family values performed in Paraguayan homes. By this the participant will be a member of the family, sharing a truly intercultural experience.

The School Program

The student will have the opportunity to attend to and experience the Paraguayan school system, which is very different to its European equivalent, while getting to know the culture with friends and a host family all contributing in an eye opening experience.



The Community Service Program

YFU Paraguay is in cooperation with five different foundations offering young adults of 18 years old and older, an opportunity to take part in community service and development assistance to communities in the country. We offer this program in fields of Childhood, Health, Social Work and more. The field assignment will be done according to the participants' profile.

The volunteering work will be performed for Non Profit Organization. These activities will not only provide the students the benefit of learning through practical activities, but will also be a unique contribution to the society in which they will be living and working.

Half and Half

This program gives you the unique possibility to familiarize yourself with the Paraguayan school system, to learn and perfect your Spanish (and Guaraní) during the first half of your exchange and spend the other half working for an NGO and helping where help is really needed. If you're a junior or a senior in high school or have already graduated, you have the option to join our half-half program.

"It is an experience that is worth living, it is truly a dream and remains in the memories forever, creating bonds that last throughout time especially with the family and friends"

Sandra from Norway, 15/16



"When you ask somebody in Paraguay what they think about their country, they will probably tell you it's a kilombo which means it's a chaos. And in some terms it is true. The traffic for instance, though you get used to really quickly. But in other terms I completely fell in love with this country. Me, coming from Germany, where everything has to be in its order, it was such a blessing to live in this county where everybody just enjoys their life and lives it to its fullest. Almost everybody in Germany I spoke to about Paraguay did not know anything about it other than it is located in South America and I believe that is really sad, because this country has so much to offer. Especially the people who are the nicest and most open people I have met so far. The culture of Paraguay contains a lot of diversity. The modern side with its big shopping malls and the traditional side with its native language Guarani, their variety in traditional Paraguayan food or their typical Paraguayan dance. All in all Paraguay knows how to combine all of these things very well, although the elders sometimes complain about the younger ones losing their connection to the tradition, at least that is what my abuela always said. When it was time to go back to my home country, people asked me if I considered coming back to Paraguay, I always told them "Of course!" and I did. Twice. I noticed I am part Paraguayan now. Part of me belongs here and I would recommend it to everybody to come here because I tell you one thing: You will not forget what you experienced here and it will make your world conception a bit larger and the best part: You will always have another place to call home."

Valerie from Germany, 14/15

