

Welcome to Uruguay!

We are really happy you have chosen us for your exchange year!

This is going to be an incredible experience for you, and we are really excited about shearing our life and culture with you.

What about the weather?

The weather is fairly uniform nationwide, since the country is located entierly within temperature zone. Seasonal variations are pronounced, but extremes in temperature are rare. Average temperature in summer is 25°C (75°F) and its very bright and sunny. In winter, temperatures drop to an average of 9°C (48°F), but although it may be rainy and windy, it never snows.

So it will be necesary to bring clother for both cold and hot weather! Keep in mind uruguayan homes dont usually have central heating, so remember to bring warm clothes for indoors as well. You must also take into account that you wil be arraiving on the opposite season you leave in your country.

Uruguayans dress casually in mosts situations, and when they dress up are not very extravagant, so don't worry about what to pack in your suitcase; Uruguayans are not big fashonistas!



What lenguage do we speak How fast will I learn it?

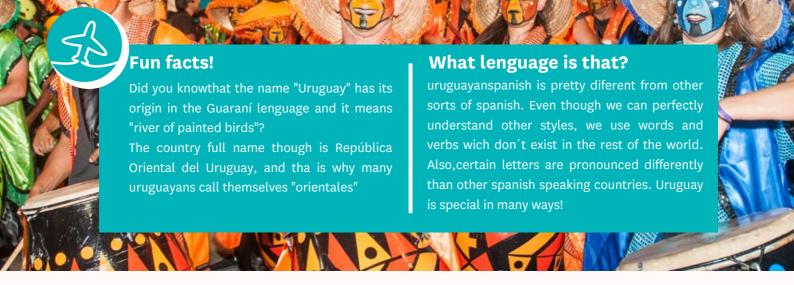
Spanish is the official lenguage in Uruguay and the most commonly spoken. Those who live close to the Brazilian border also speak "Portuñol", which is a mixture of spanish and Portguese.

After your arrival and once you are feeling settled at your new home, you will take 40 hours of **spanish classes** in order to learn our lenguage. This classes are porvided by YFU Uruguay free of charge.

if you have never learnt anyspanish at school, don't worry! You will learn it soon enough! Usually by the third month of the exchange year, students can already communicate in spanish, so leave your fears behind and be assured that you will rapidly learn our lenguage.

What is very important to remember is that the least you speak your native lenguage the fastest you learn a new one. So keep in mind that this experience is a unique opportunity to inmerse yourself in a completely new culture, so embrace it!





What are uruguayans family like?

As in every other country in the world, every family is different, so you must be open minded about what kind of family you will live with. As we say in YFU Uruguay:

"It may not be better, it will not be worse, it will be just different".

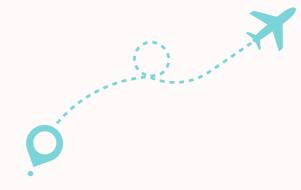
In some host families, both parents work full-time. in others one parentremains at home and stays with the children while the other one holds a full-time job. Some families might also have a single parent. The same goes for children, even though most families tend to hace a child living at home, it is also possible that there will not be any.

Some families share most of the meals or at least one a day, where they talk about the things they did and experiences they had that day. In Uruguay family life is very important, so you must try to communicate with them as often as you can. The are also very affectionate between them, so don't find it strange if your mom hugh you a lot! Uruguayan families are very warm!

Expect your host family to have different rules from your own family. You may find it to be more conservative than yours, but keep in mind that these people are opening their home to you and they will be very protective of your safety for the first few months, as you will not know much about our culture at first.

We will respect you as a product of your culture, but we also expect you to come understand our values and accept those of your host family while you are here. They are all excited about your arrival and what they will get from hosting you will be your enthusiasm, your apprecitation and the development of cultural insights. Host families receive no financial support forsharing their home and opening their hearts and lives to you while they welcome you as part of ther family, so keep in mind that they agreed to be honest family because they are very excited to get to know you and interact with you as if you were their natural child.

You will be expected to help with household chores -just like you are back home- such us washing dishes, preparing food, vacuming, taking care of your own room and your own clothes. This is because you will become a part of their family and you must act accordingly so. Of course that the chores may vary from family to family, as it happens in every part of the world. It is recommended though to always offer your help and ask your host parent what you can do around the house.



Uruguayan schools: how are they like?

In Uruguay there are oublic school and private schools. Students generally attend the same high scoolas their siblings. In some public schools, studentscan wear their own clothers, but in private schools they most usually wear a uniform. There are many factors involved on deciding what kind of school you will atending to, such as location, your host family's opinion etc.

All YFU students must go to class every day

during their stay. You will be expected to take the same number of subjects as your uruguayan classmates, so you must study hard. This is not only important because of academic reasons, but also because going to school is the fastest way to make friends and get to know our culture, so don't be shy!

You might go to school in the morning or in the afternoon, but our school days are not very long so yoou will have time to do other extra activites. We really recommend you to try doing new thing oustide school as well, make new friends and have the opportunity to take lessons on things that would be impossible to learn in your country.

In Uruguay is not very common to have exchange students classmates, so you will be asked a lot of questions, and most important, others kids will be very excited about getting to know more about you and you country. Uruguayans are in general very friendly and outgoing and like to make plans with you and invite you to go to places with them from the beginning; it is simply a part of our culture, so don't worry about not knowing anybody at first, because you will have many friends in no time.

We know you are going to be nervous on your first months of school, trying to understand our life and our language.

Teachers also know that so dont worry if in the beginning you don't understand what is going on in class. The will help you and have lots of patience with you!







How much money do I need? What currency do we use?

IFor your personal expense we believe that an amount of U\$S 280 per month shoul be enough. Major credit cards are also accepted (VISA, MASTERCARD, and DINERS).

The exchange rate is always changing so if you want to check how it is when you leave your country you can check it out in the following website:

From US dolars to pesos: http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/

TUS dollars are accepted in banks or currency exchange offices, where you can change them for pesos. in the citites outside Montevideo, traveler checks are not really common and you will have to change them in Montevideo. If possible, avoid using them.

Expectations...

We are sure you will have many expectations about your experience as a YFU exchange student and your life in Uruguay. Even though it is impossible not to have these expectations, make sure they are realistic. We hope you not expect extra happy-golucky year, with no problems, no obligations, or a popular type of family which is similar to your own back home.

¿The reason why this is so important is that if you have certain preconceptions about your life in Uruguay, you might lead to you not appreciating your new reality simply because you were not opended to it.

Remember: it is impossible to have realistic expectations about a place you know nothing about yet, so try to keep your expectations to the limit! You will have a happier exchange experience if you do!

Furthermore your exchange is a home-stay program with school attendance and although you will have the chance to visit other places, you will not have the opportunity to "travel South America" with yor host family, because that is not the aim of the program. We are a small country but we have a lot to see and learn.

Nobody will try to make you give up your own culture or customs, butyouwill be asked to adapt toand respect those of this small country, so give it a try! This is a once in alife opportunity!

Activities and trips:

During the time period you will be staying in Uruguay YFU orgnaizes several activities, such as orientations where you get to meetand become friends with others exchange students from all over the world.

YFU coordinates optional trips and activities in differents parts of the country and also abroad. Even though you could get to travel with yourhost family, YFU gives you the possibility of doing short trips to neighboring cities.

We want you to understand clearly that your YFU exchange experience is a family living experience and not a travel program. Travelling requires YFU Uruguay's authorization.

You always need to inform your area representative or the national office. If your host family decides to take you to visit somewhere, there is no need for approval but you must inform appropriately. If traveling without your host family you need to send in travel permit. Students who do not seek an authorization may be subjected to dismissal from the program and early return to their home country. We do not allow students to travel during school time, except for organized school or YFU excursiones.

Please note that trips outside of Uruguay accompanied by a responsible adult, while on YFU exchange will only be permitted with natural parents and host family written approval and a request Form travel approval authorized by YFU Uruguay due to the fact that a minor permission procedure must be done at Migrations Office to be allowed to leave the country. Attached you will find the form to bring with you already signed by your natural parents in order to be able to travel abroad our country without any problem, due to the fact that you are a minor and Migration Officers are quite strict about that.*

Counseling and support:

During your exchange year in Uruguay you will have a Volunteer Area Representative that will help you and support you throughout your experience. It is important to create a trusful bond with him/her and get in contact at least once a month to let him/her know how are you doing. Since the representative is a volunteer there might be occaasions when they cannot come to se you inmediately when you want them to but they will always try to help you, guide you and be there for you. If you are not able to reach your Area Representative you can contact the office staff who will also be there for you. The office is open from Monday to Friday from 12 to 6 pm. In case of a real emergency you can also call the emergency line. The number will be given to you upon arrival.







Food

Uruguay is characterized by some main unique meals and flavours which are tipical of the Uruguayan culture. The main uruguayan meal and maybe the most worwilde known from Uruguay food is "asado". The uruguayan "asado" consists in a specific variety of meat called "tira de asado", with "chorizos" and other related elements, cooked over fire wood in special ovens called "parrillero" and typical in Uruguay. Uruguayans tend to include meat in their daily lunch or dinner options. As we also have European roots we include other options as avast variety of pastas, pizzas, pies, vegetables, etc.

The national drink is an infussion called Mate. The dried leaves and twigs of the yerba mate plant are placed in a small cup. Hot water is then poured into the gourd at near-boilling point so as not to burn the herb and spoil the flavour.

The drink is sipped through a metal or cane straw, known as bombilla. This drink is shared among friends and family and don't be surprised if whenever you go, you find someone sipping it, with flask under their arm...is a strong uruguayan tradition!

Note: your host family will provided you with all your meals throughout your stay in Uruguay so it could be a nice gesture to collaborate with it every now and then. You could buy a special dessert, something to share or even cook something typical of your home country.

Orientations

YFU Uruguay will conduct three orientations during your exchange year: the Arrival orientation that will start on the day you arrive to Uruguay, the Midyear orientation in February and the End of Year orientation in May. During the End of Year Orientation you will also take a spanish final test that will evaluate the level of acquired giving you the opportunity to reach a good and expected level that will grant you a Cervantes Cetificate. Attendance to Orientations is not optional as we consider it a very important and valuable moment to share and reflect on how everyone is living the experience.



YFU rules and recomentatoins

School

You are required to attend all clases listed in your class schedule and to show active participation. If you skip school, arrive late regulary or show a lack of interest, this might be lead to a sanction.

Alcohol

Regardless of your age, alcohol consumption is not allowd while on program.

Drugs

We don't tolerate the use of drugs.

Driving

You are not allowd to drive a car o motorbike in Uruguay.

Travel regulations

You are not allowd to travel during school term. You are allowd to travel with your host family inside Uruguay during vacation time but will always need to inform YFU with 4-5 day notice. We will need to know the time you are travelling and the exact location.

If you wish to travel with your host family outside Uruguay you will need a special permission from your natural parents so you would need to request this to YFU Uruguay with a week notice.

If you wish to travel without your host family it will always have to be with an adult in charge with previous authorization of your host family and YFU.

Note to parents

We encourage parents to help your sons and daughters to integrate with the new host family and start living the exchange experience. For this we recommend that you don't call them very frequently as this might make them feel homesick and we discourage visits to Uruguay while they are in the exhange year. Host families usually like to meet the students parents so try to find the time to write them an email, called them every now and then or meet them via Skype.

