

PARAGUAY



BASIC FACT

Area: 406,752 sq. km/ 157,006 sq. ml.

Capital: Nuestra Señora de la Asunción

Population: 5.18 million (Census 2002)

Currency: Guarani

Language: Spanish and Guarani, both official

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Paraguay is one of the two landlocked countries in the heart of South America and rivers are determining factor even the country name is derived from one, the Paraguay River, four of them define most of his boundaries. Two great river basins, the Panama and Paraguay with its tributaries forms the second largest drainage system in South America, affords direct access to the Atlantic Ocean.

Position: Latitude 23° Longitude 58°

Independence was gained on May 15th 1811 without bloodshed, and the Spanish Governor was peacefully replaced.

ECONOMY INDICATORS

GPD growth: 2.6% (2003)

GPO USD per capita: 1,053

Exports (% of GPD) 23.1

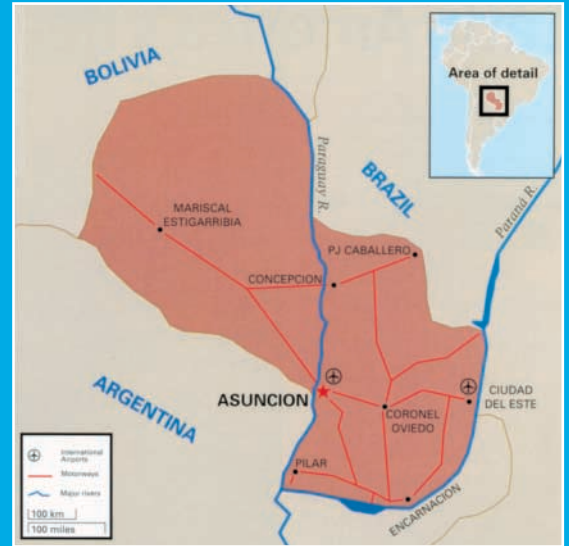
Imports (% of GPD) 33.6

Paraguay economy has been traditionally based on agriculture. Main production is: soy bean, cotton, maize, sugar, tobacco and vegetable oils.

Organic products: sugar, fruit juice and Ka'a he'e (Stevia Rabaudiana Bertoni: natural sweetener with no calories) are valuable export items.

Beef production is an important economy activity; there are 6 million head of beef cattle on 10.3m hectares (25.4% of total area of the country) of pasture.

Paraguay is one of the largest single producers and net exporters of electric power. Owns Acaray dam, Yacyreta dam jointly with Argentina and Itaipu dam was built with Brazil on the Panama River with 18 turbines in operation is the largest scheme of its kind. In 2000, the Itaipu Power Plant produced close to 93,248 GWh a new world record.



MUSIC PART OF THE CULTURE

Music is part of the soul of every Paraguayan, the majority of the people speak Guarani, the native language, but its music is entirely of European origin. In the seventeenth century the Jesuit Missionaries discovered that music was part of the lives of the Guarani natives and they soon developed to become very talented interpreters. They learned European music rapidly and also were very skilled in sculpturing, painting and building musical instruments, specially guitars and the Paraguayan harp, a tradition that continues today. Composer and guitarist Agustin Barrios "Mangore" (1885-1944) works is well accepted by many of the famous classical guitarists. Well known widely around the world are Paraguayan conductors, Luis Szaran and Florentin Gimenez, classical guitarist Berta Rojas and Luz Maria Bobadilla and young tenor Jorge Castro.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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