

Geography

Location: Southern South America, bordering the South Atlantic Ocean, between Chile and Uruguay

Map references: South America

Area:

total area: 2,766,890 sq km

land area: 2,736,690 sq km

comparative area: slightly less than three-tenths the size of the US

Land boundaries: total 9,665 km, Bolivia 832 km, Brazil 1,224 km, Chile 5,150 km, Paraguay 1,880 km, Uruguay 579 km

Coastline: 4,989 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

International disputes: short section of the boundary with Uruguay is in dispute; short section of the boundary with Chile is indefinite; claims British-administered Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas); claims British-administered South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands; territorial claim in Antarctica

Climate: mostly temperate; arid in southeast; subantarctic in southwest

Terrain: rich plains of the Pampas in northern half, flat to rolling plateau of Patagonia in south, rugged Andes along western border

Natural resources: fertile plains of the pampas, lead, zinc, tin, copper, iron ore, manganese, petroleum, uranium

Land use:

arable land: 9%

permanent crops: 4%

meadows and pastures: 52%

forest and woodland: 22%

other: 13%

Irrigated land: 17,600 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: erosion results from inadequate flood controls and improper land use practices; irrigated soil degradation; desertification; air pollution in Buenos Aires and other major cities; water pollution in urban areas; rivers becoming polluted due to increased pesticide and fertilizer use

natural hazards: Tucuman and Mendoza areas in the Andes subject to earthquakes; pamperos are violent windstorms that can strike the Pampas and northeast; heavy flooding

international agreements: party to - Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Marine Dumping, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands, Whaling; signed, but not ratified - Desertification, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation

Note: second-largest country in South America (after Brazil); strategic location relative to sea lanes between South Atlantic and South Pacific Oceans (Strait of Magellan, Beagle Channel, Drake Passage)