

# REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY

Smart Card



Produced by the **TRADOC Culture Center**  
 550 Cibique Street, Suite 111  
 Fort Huachuca, Arizona 85613  
 Comm: (520) 538-5502


JULY 2017  
<http://atn.army.mil>  
 Search: Cultural Competency

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited


## OVERVIEW

**Official name:** Republic of Paraguay  
**Government:** Constitutional Republic  
**Population:** 6,862,812 (2016 est.)

**Primary languages:** Mostly bilingual country; Spanish and Paraguayan Guaraní (an indigenous language achieving the position of official state language) are the primary languages.



**Ethnic groups:** Ethnically, culturally, and socially, Paraguay has one of the most uniform populace in South America. About 95% of the population is mestizo (mixed Spanish and Amerindian, principally Guaraní).



**Literacy:** 93.9% (age 15 and over can read and write)

**Religion:** 90% Roman Catholic; 6% Protestant; 1% other Christian; 2% other or unspecified; 1% none

**Size comparison:** A little smaller than the state of California

## GEOGRAPHY

The word "Paraguay," which means (born from water) originates from the river that separates the western Chaco portion of the country from the eastern Paraneña area.

### Chaco Region

#### Western Paraguay / Northern Paraguay

This part of Paraguay forms the inhospitable Chaco region. Chaco accounts for close to 60% of the country's size, but holds less than 3% of the population due to its uncultivable land.

- The Chaco of Paraguay is divided into two parts:
1. The Alto Chaco (Upper Chaco) / Chaco Seco (Dry Chaco)
  2. The Bajo Chaco (Lower Chaco) / Chaco Húmedo (Humid Chaco)

The Guaraní are a group of culturally related indigenous peoples of South America who have persisted in the Chaco region. Nearly all of the forest tribes that live on the Northern border of Paraguay are Guaraní.



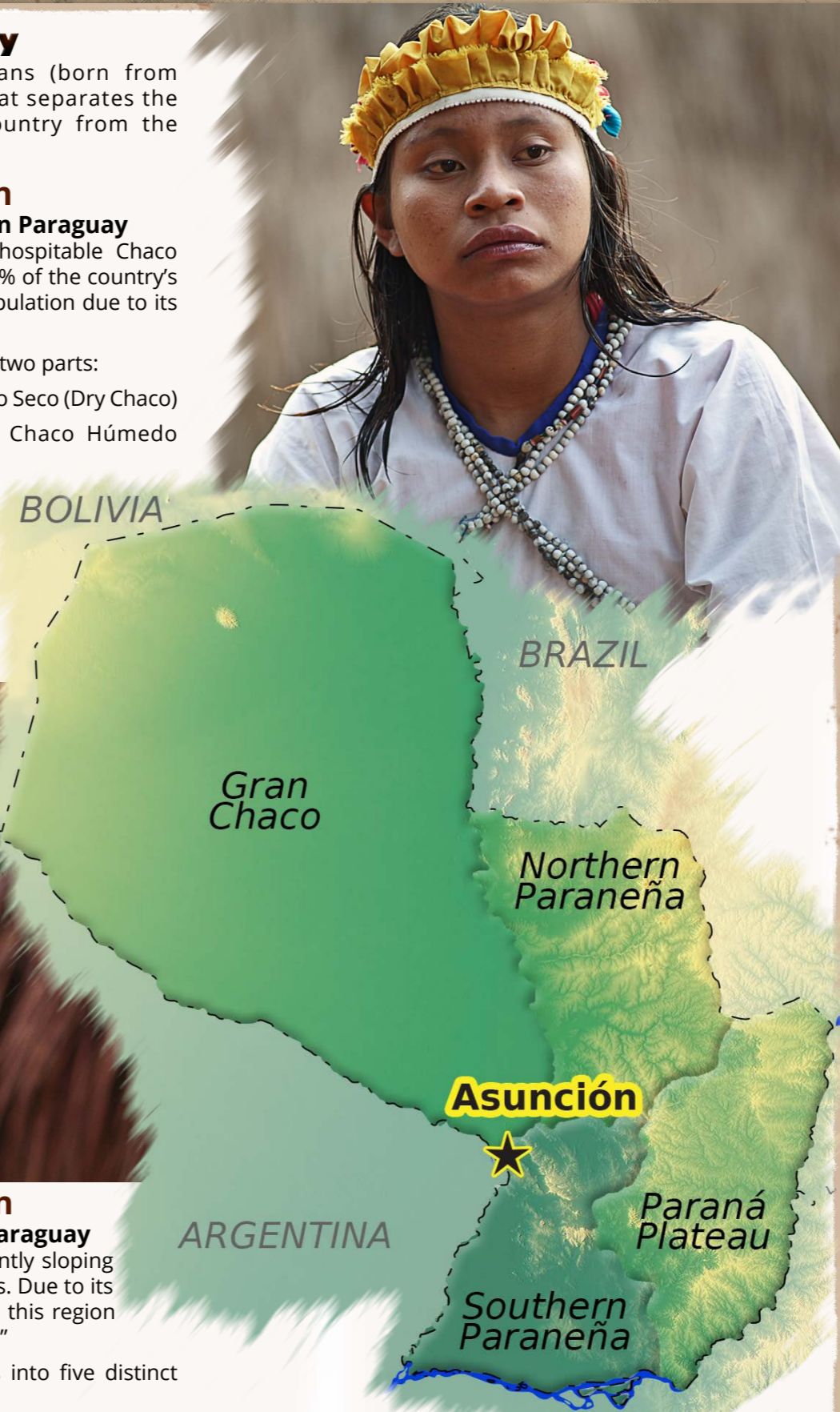
### Paraneña Region

#### Eastern Paraguay / Southern Paraguay

This area of Paraguay ranges from gently sloping grasslands to lush semi-tropical forests. Due to its beauty, early explorers and visitors to this region of Paraguay called it the "second Eden."

This eastern section naturally divides into five distinct zones:

1. Paraná Plateau - heavily wooded
2. Northern Upland - rolling plateaus
3. Central Hill Belt - uneven rolling terrain
4. Central Lowland - low elevation and relief
5. Ñeembucú Plain - alluvial flatland



The Aché people are a traditional hunter-gatherer tribe living in eastern Paraguay. Beginning in the 1960s, vast amounts of Brazilian immigrant farmers relocated to the eastern part of the country and made this area the soybean export center.

## HISTORY

With no archaeological research, not much is known of Paraguay's pre-Columbian history. What was later discovered is that the eastern region of Paraguay was inhabited by the Guaraní tribe approximately 1,000 years prior to the Spanish arriving to colonize the country.

### Pre-Columbian era to Independence

**1530:** During the Assumption of Mary feast day, Asunción is founded on the side of the Paraguay River, which later becomes the capital of Paraguay.

### Jesuit period

**1588:** Jesuits arrive in the country of Paraguay, seize authority; Guaraní integrate with the Spaniards.

### Royalist time

**1790: -1810** The Spanish use of excessive taxes forces a large-spread popular revolt.

**1811:** Paraguay declares independence

### War of the Triple Alliance

**1864:** Announce war on Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. Paraguayan War is set in motion.

**1870:** Battle of Cerro Cora. The Paraguayan Army is completely destroyed, with approximately 300,000 of the population dying during the war.

### The Stronato

**1954:** General Alfredo Stroessner seizes power in coup. Eradicates numerous civil human rights from the public.

**1974:** The United States and the international community become aware of human rights violations committed by Stroessner.

### Modern Paraguay

**1989:** General Andrés Rodríguez launches a successful rebellion against Stroessner.



Alfredo Stroessner

**1992:** A new constitution institutes a representative system of government.

**1993:** The first civilian president of Paraguay was elected from the Colorado party, ending forty years of military rule.

**2005:** US involvement begins by sending military equipment and personnel into the city of Mariscal Estigarribia.

**2008:** Political change occurs when Fernando Lugo, a former bishop, resigned his priesthood and is elected President.

**2017:** The population of Paraguay reaches seven million.

## NATIONAL NARRATIVE

**Regional Relationships:** For Paraguay to grow its economy, it needs to mend then develop ties with Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela. Paraguay is actively engaged in programs to enhance counternarcotic collaborations, and fight illegal cross-border activities.



**Poverty and Inequality:** According to the United Nations, Paraguay is "South America's poorest and most unequal nation." Close to 35% of the population lives in poverty. Females in Paraguay earn between 30% to 50% less than males for the same work.

**Government and Corruption:** The extreme corruption that existed in past Paraguayan governments has been so severe that the people of Paraguay do not believe and trust in their government. External government agencies claim that corruption in Paraguay remains a major obstruction in their development as a stronger democratic institution.

**Drug Trafficking and International Crime:** Paraguay continues to fight against narcotics trafficking. Limited governmental and security enforcement in the country significantly decreases the effectiveness of stopping the flow of narcotics and international crime.

## FAMILY

Life in Paraguay is centered on the family. Family members are routinely counted on to help when needed and to always be supportive. Paraguayans value family above all other factors. No matter how rich or poor one is, family is the number one priority.



**Gender Roles:** Paraguay is a conservative and male-dominated society in which formal rights and privileges were, until recently, denied to women. Paraguay became the last country in Latin America to give women the right to vote.

**Domestic Unit:** Most people live in a traditional family environment. The husband maintains authority within the family. The wife is in charge of caring for the children and maintaining open communications with extended kin.

**Kin Groups:** In Paraguay the customary practice of god-parenthood, which is also known as "compadrazgo," is culturally important. This social practice places great importance on whom one marries and the external family that comes with the marriage. Those godparents have special rights and responsibilities toward their godchildren.

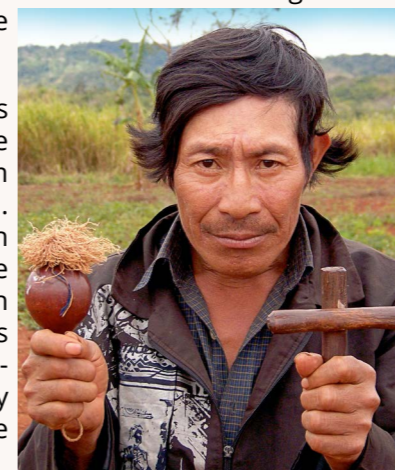
## RELIGION

The Constitution outlines the separation of church and state, recognizing responsibility of the Church in the cultural development of the nation. Because of this, Paraguayans enjoy freedom of religion.

Like most countries in the Western Hemisphere, Spain claimed Paraguay and began transforming their religion to Catholicism. Today, as is true throughout Latin America, Roman Catholicism is the primary religion.

Roman Catholic Paraguayans blend Catholic beliefs with Guaraní indigenous beliefs. For example, they believe in multiple Gods as well as believing that all plant life and wildlife have souls.

In Paraguay, religious rituals worship the evolution of life: from baptism to burial. During the month of December, there is a religious march to Caacupé. This pilgrimage is to celebrate the Virgin Mary and the Immaculate Conception.



Paraguayan Shaman

## MILITARY

Like in the United States, Paraguay's military is under civilian control. Paraguay's military is made up of the army, with a naval aviation force and the marine corps belonging to the navy, and the air force. US assistance in helping build the fragile democracy has started to flow into the country.



**Internal Order:** Article 180 of the constitution names the president as the commander in chief of the armed forces. The armed forces of Paraguay are controlled by the president, however, he directs action through the armed forces general staff.

**Responsibilities:** The nation also joined with the United States and 20 other Latin American nations to sign the Act of Chapultepec, in which each agreed to commit themselves to work toward the peaceful settlement of disputes and collective self-defense in the Americas.

**Current Role:** Paraguay has passed reforms expanding military powers in the fight against guerrilla insurgents. The senate approved changes to the National Defense Law that allow the president to have greater management of the military.

## GOVERNMENT

Since the end of the War of the Triple Alliance, two parties have dominated Paraguayan politics for nearly 61 years: the National Republican Association and the Radical Liberal Party. Both parties exemplify the uncompromising nature of Paraguayan politics and use their position to stifle the opposition. Consequently, changes of administration have been affected principally by armed revolt.



The National Republican Association Colorado Party (ANR-PC) is a moderately conservative political organization in Paraguay, established in 1887. They were defeated in elections held in April 2008 after 61 years in power, but the party regained the presidency in the 2013 presidential election.



The Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA) is a member of Liberal International. The liberales, as they are known, are the leading opponent to the dominant, conservative Colorado Party. This political organization has continued with their goal of ending the repressive government of the Colorado Party and incorporate new ideas and agendas that better the country of Paraguay.

## RAPPORT BUILDING

Good rapport is built through understanding, respect, and mutual trust. To better connect with your counterpart, you should appreciate several basic social practices.

**Understanding:** Speaking Spanish is an in-road toward building rapport and will be more important initially in building a relationship with Paraguayans than anything else. It is traditional to shake hands firmly with both men and women. Paraguayans greet each other at a much closer distance than in the United States. Do not back away when being greeted.

**Respect:** Respect is a reciprocal commodity and can be built with Paraguayans through generosity, politeness, honesty, and chivalry. Initially use their professional or personal titles unless instructed otherwise. Always show deference to elders.

**Mutual Trust:** Trust is built over extended periods of time and is necessary for lasting relationships. Building personal trust and demonstrating a willingness to work with Paraguayans is necessary before any business will be conducted.



## COMMON WORDS AND GREETINGS

ENGLISH	SPANISH
No	<i>no</i>
Yes	<i>sí</i>
Hello	<i>hola</i>
Welcome	<i>bienvenido</i>
Goodbye	<i>adiós</i>
OK	<i>bueno</i>
Please	<i>por favor</i>
Right (Correct)	<i>bien</i>
Wrong	<i>mal</i>
Good Morning	<i>buenos días</i>
Good Afternoon	<i>buenas tardes</i>
Good Evening/Night	<i>buenas noches</i>
How are you?	<i>¿cómo estás?</i>
Pleasure to meet you	<i>mucho gusto</i>
What is your name?	<i>¿cómo se llama?</i>
Thank you	<i>gracias</i>
Excuse me	<i>perdón</i>

## MILITARY RANK

