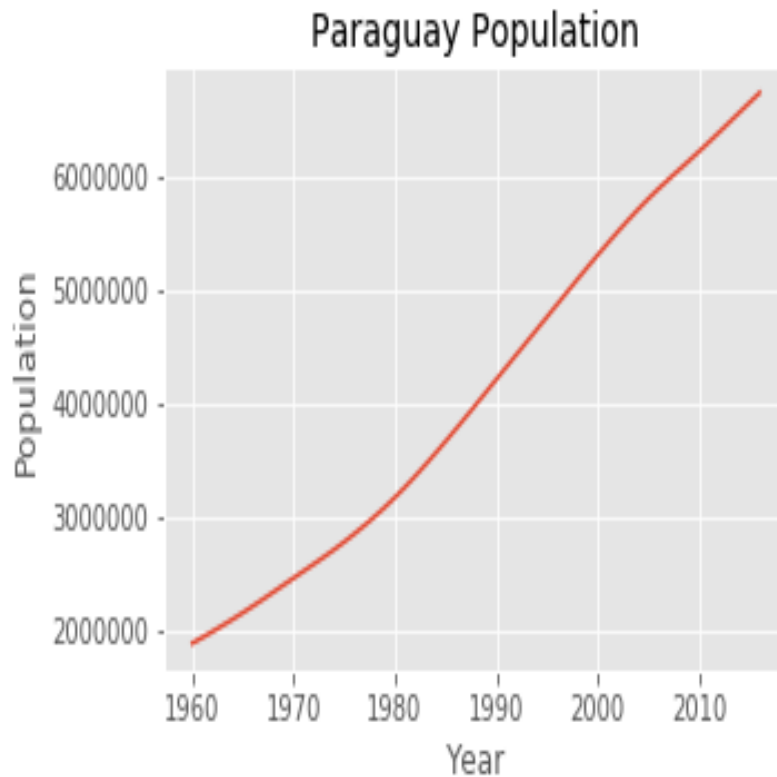


Paraguay



Coordinates: 23°S 58°W﻿▯﻿▯23°S 58°W﻿▯﻿▯ / -23; -58﻿▯﻿▯in South America (grey)Paraguay (/ˈpærwɑː/; Spanish pronunciation: [paˈaːwaj]; Guarani: Paraguái, [paˈaːwaj]), officially the Republic of Paraguay (Spanish: República del Paraguay; Guarani: Tetã Paraguái), is a landlocked country in central South America, bordered by Argentina to the south and southwest, Brazil to the east and northeast, and Bolivia to the northwest. Paraguay lies on both banks of the Paraguay River, which runs through the center of the country from north to south. Due to its central location in South America, it is sometimes referred to as Corazón de Sudamérica ("Heart of South America"). Paraguay is one of the two landlocked countries (the other is Bolivia) outside Afro-Eurasia, and is the smallest landlocked country in the Americas. The indigenous Guaraní had been living in eastern Paraguay for at least a millennium before the Spanish arrived in the 16th century. Western Paraguay, the Gran Chaco, was inhabited by nomads of whom the Guaycuru peoples were the most prominent. In the 17th century, Jesuit missions introduced Christianity and Spanish culture to the region. Paraguay was a peripheral colony of the Spanish Empire, with few urban centers and settlers. Following independence from Spain in 1811, Paraguay was ruled by a series of dictators who generally implemented isolationist and protectionist policies.