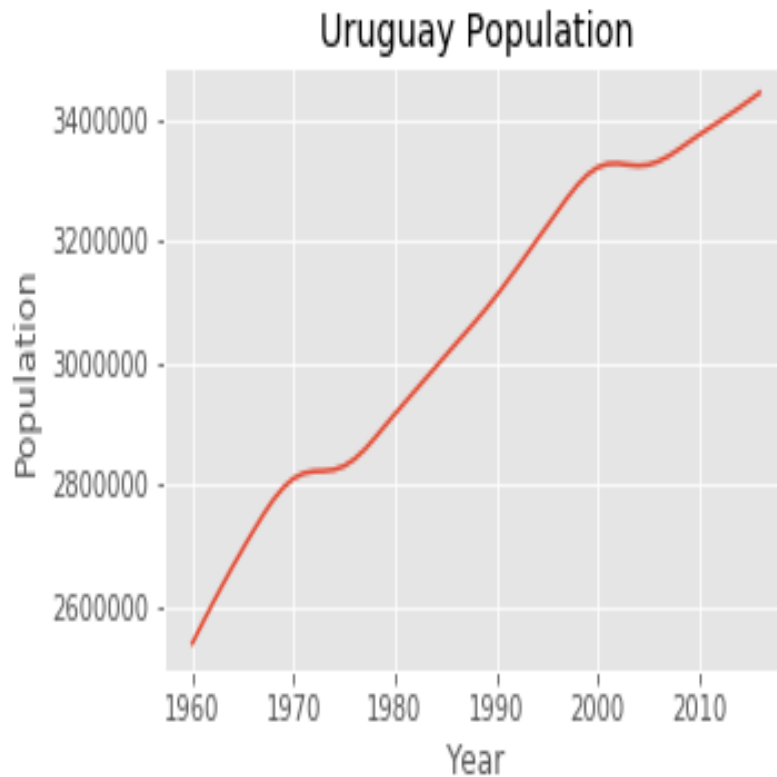


Uruguay



Coordinates: 33°S 56°W﻿▀﻿▀33°S 56°W﻿▀﻿▀ / -33; -56﻿in South America (grey)Uruguay (listen); Spanish pronunciation: [uˈɾuˈɡwai]), officially the Oriental Republic of Uruguay (Spanish: República Oriental del Uruguay), is a sovereign state in the southeastern region of South America. It borders Argentina to its west and Brazil to its north and east, with the Río de la Plata (River of Silver) to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the southeast. Uruguay is home to an estimated 3.44 million people, of whom 1.8 million live in the metropolitan area of its capital and largest city, Montevideo. With an area of approximately 176,000 square kilometres (68,000 sq mi), Uruguay is geographically the second-smallest nation in South America, after Suriname. Uruguay was inhabited by the Charrúa people for approximately 4,000[citation needed] years before the Portuguese established Colonia del Sacramento in 1680, meaning that Uruguay began to be colonized by Europeans relatively late compared with neighboring countries. Montevideo was founded as a military stronghold by the Spanish in the early 18th century, signifying the competing claims over the region. Uruguay won its independence between 1811 and 1828, following a four-way struggle between Spain, Portugal, and later Argentina and Brazil. It remained subject to foreign influence and intervention throughout the 19th century, with the military playing a recurring role in domestic politics until the late 20th century. Modern Uruguay is a democratic constitutional republic, with a president who serves as both head of state and head of government.