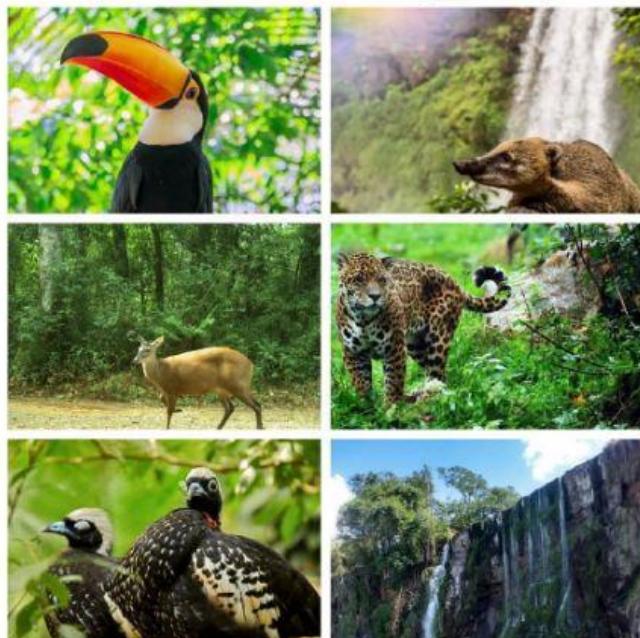


## Environment of Argentina



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The **Environment of Argentina** is characterised by high biodiversity.

Subtropical plants dominate the Gran Chaco in the north, with the *Dalbergia* genus of trees well represented by Brazilian rosewood **and** the quebracho tree; also predominant are white and black algarrobo trees (*Prosopis alba* and *Prosopis nigra*). Savannah-like areas exist in the drier regions nearer the Andes. **On the contrary**, Aquatic plants thrive in the wetlands of Argentina. In central Argentina the *humid pampas* are a true tallgrass prairie ecosystem.

The original pampa had virtually no trees; some imported species like the American sycamore or eucalyptus are present along roads or in towns and country estates (*estancias*). The only tree-like plant native to the pampa is the evergreen Ombú. **Moreover**, The surface soils of the pampa are a deep black color, known commonly as *humus*. This makes the region one of the most agriculturally productive on Earth; **however**, this is also responsible for decimating much of the original ecosystem, to make way for commercial agriculture. The western pampas receive less rainfall, this *dry pampa* is a plain of short grasses or steppe.

Most of Patagonia lies within the rain shadow of the Andes, so the flora, shrubby bushes and plants, is suited to dry conditions. The soil is hard and rocky, making large-scale farming impossible except along river valleys. Coniferous forests in far western Patagonia and on the island of Tierra del Fuego, include alerce, ciprés de la cordillera, ciprés de las guaitecas, huililahuán, lleuque, mañío hembra and pehuén, while broadleaf trees include several species of *Nothofagus* such as coihue, lenga and ñire. Other introduced trees present in forestry plantations include spruce, cypress and pine. Common plants are the copihue and colihue.

In Cuyo, semiarid thorny bushes and other xerophile plants abound. Along the many rivers grasses and trees grow in significant numbers. The area presents optimal conditions for the large scale growth of grape vines. In northwest Argentina there are many species of cactus. **Consequently**, No vegetation grows in the highest elevations (above 4,000 m (13,000 ft) because of the extreme altitude.

Many species live in the subtropical north. Prominent animals include big cats like the jaguar, puma, and ocelot; primates (howler monkey); large reptiles (crocodiles), the Argentine black and white tegu and a species of caiman. Other animals include the tapir, peccary, capybara, bush dog, and various species of turtle and tortoise. There are a wide variety of birds, notably hummingbirds, flamingos, toucans, and swallows.

The central grasslands are populated by the giant anteater, armadillo, pampas cat, maned wolf, mara, cavias, and the rhea (*ñandú*), a large flightless bird. Hawks, falcons, herons, and tinamous (*perdiz*, Argentine "false partridges") inhabit the region. There are also pampas deer and pampas foxes. Some of these species extend into Patagonia.

The western mountains are home to animals including the llama, guanaco and vicuña which are among the most recognizable species of South America. **Also** in this region are the fox, viscacha, Andean mountain cat, kodkod, and the largest flying bird in the New World, the Andean condor.

Southern Argentina is home to the cougar, huemul, pudú (the world's smallest deer), and introduced, non-native wild boar. The coast of Patagonia is rich in animal life: elephant seals, fur seals, sea lions and species of penguin. The far south is populated by cormorants.

The territorial waters of Argentina have abundant ocean life; mammals such as dolphins, orcas, and whales like the southern right whale, a major tourist draw for naturalists. Sea fish include sardines, Argentine hakes, dolphinfish, salmon, and sharks; also present are squid and king crab (*centolla*) in Tierra del Fuego. Rivers and streams in Argentina have many species of trout and the South American golden dorado fish. Well known snake species inhabiting Argentina include boa constrictors and a very venomous pit viper named the yarará. The hornero was elected the national bird after a survey in 1928.

## **Iguazú National Park**

The **Iguazú National Park** (Spanish: *Parque Nacional Iguazú*) is a national park of Argentina, located in the Iguazú Department, in the north of the province of Misiones, Argentine Mesopotamia. It has an area of 672 km<sup>2</sup> (259 sq mi).

The area of the park was inhabited 10,000 years ago by the hunter-gatherers of the *Eldoradense* culture. They were displaced around 1,000 CE by the Guarani, who brought new agricultural technologies, and were displaced in turn by the Spanish and Portuguese conquistadores in the 16th century, though their legacy is still alive in this area (the name of the park and the river is Guarani *y guasu*, "large water"). The first European to visit the zone was Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, in 1542; Jesuit missions followed in 1609.

The park was created in 1934 to protect one of the greatest natural beauties of Argentina, the Iguazu Falls, surrounded by the subtropical jungle.

The Iguazú National Reserve was defined by law 18.801 of 7 October 1970 as constituting the western part of the Iguazú National Park. **While** the national park preserves nature with the least possible alteration, the reserve admits human activities and infrastructure. Creation of the reserve allowed construction of an international airport and alienation of land for three tourist hotels. Across the Iguazu River lies its Brazilian counterpart (Iguacu National Park). Both sites were declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, in 1984.

The park would be part of the proposed Trinational Biodiversity Corridor, which aims to provide forest connections between conservation units in Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina in the Upper Paraná ecoregion.

## **Flora and fauna**

The park lies within the Alto Paraná Atlantic forests ecoregion.<sup>[7]</sup> The fauna of the park includes several rare and threatened species: jaguar, jaguarundi, South American tapir, ocelot, tirica, anteater, the black-fronted piping guan, the harpy eagle, and the yacare caiman. One can also find birds like the great dusky swift and large toucans, mammals like the coatí, and a diversity of butterflies. The vinaceous amazon, named for its wine-colored plumage, is occasionally found in this park.

The Iguazú River ends in the Paraná River 23 km beyond the falls, after a 1320 km course. Inside the park it becomes up to 1,500 m wide and turns first south, then north, forming a large U-shape. Its banks are densely populated by trees, including the *ceibo* (Cockspur coral tree), whose flower is Argentina's national flower. The flora of the park also features *lapacho negro* and *lapacho amarillo* (family Bignoniaceae), as well as *palmito* trees and the 40-metre-high *palo rosa* (family Apocynaceae).

## **Valdes Peninsula**

The **Valdes Peninsula** (Spanish: *Península Valdés*) is a peninsula on the Atlantic coast in the Biedma Department in the north east of Chubut Province, Argentina. Around 3,625 km<sup>2</sup> (896,000 acres; 1,400 sq mi) in size (not taking into account the isthmus of Carlos Ameghino which connects the peninsula to the mainland), it is an important nature reserve which was listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999.

## **Contents**

The nearest large town is Puerto Madryn. The only town on the peninsula is the small settlement of Puerto Pirámides. There are also a number of *estancias*, where sheep are raised.

Most of the peninsula is barren land with some salt lakes. The largest of these lakes is at an elevation of about 40 m below sea level (see extremes on Earth), until recently thought to be the lowest elevation in Argentina and South America (the lowest point actually being Laguna del Carbón, Argentina).

The coastline is inhabited by marine mammals, like sea lions, elephant seals and fur seals. Southern right whales can be found in Golfo Nuevo and Golfo San José, protected bodies of water located between the peninsula and the Patagonian mainland. These baleen whales come here between May and December, for mating and giving birth, because the water in the gulf is quieter and warmer than

in the open sea. Orcas can be found off the coast, in the open sea off the peninsula. In this area, they are known to beach themselves on shore to capture sea lions and elephant seals.

The inner part of the peninsula is inhabited by rheas, guanacos and maras. A high diversity and range of birds live in the peninsula as well; at least 181 bird species, 66 of which migratory, live in the area, including the Antarctic pigeon.

**ACTIVITIES.**

**1) COMPLETE THE SENTENCES WITH IDEAS FROM THE TEXT**

**WETLAND – HARD AND ROCKY – CUYO - SUBTROPICAL – HORNERO -**

**WESTERN- HUMUS – AGRICULTURE- PENINSULA DE VALDEZ- IGUAZÚ**

**WATERFALLS- THREE- CEIBO - JUNGLE- IGUAZU PARK**

- 1) Chaco has most of the .....plants, but most aquatic plants are found in the.....
- 2) The soil in La Pampa is called.....which makes it a perfect area for.....
- 3) The soil in Patagonia is.....
- 4) Grape wine regions are optimal in.....region
- 5) guanacos, vicuñas, fox and viscachas are found mainly in the.....region of the country.
- 6) The national bird of Argentina is.....
- 7) The Guarani's were the original settlers of.....which is connected with.....countries.
- 8) Coati, caiman and anteater are found in.....
- 9) The national flower in Argentina is.....
- 10) The Iguazu waterfalls are surrounded by subtropical.....
- 11) Most of the marine life is found in.....
- 12) .....was included as a World Heritage site by Unesco in 1999

2) DRAG THE NAMES TO THE CORRESPONDING PICTURE

**SEA LION - ANTEATER - HAWK - HERON -  
PARTRIDGE - BUSH DOG - HUMMING BIRD COUGAR  
WHALE - BUTTERFLY**

