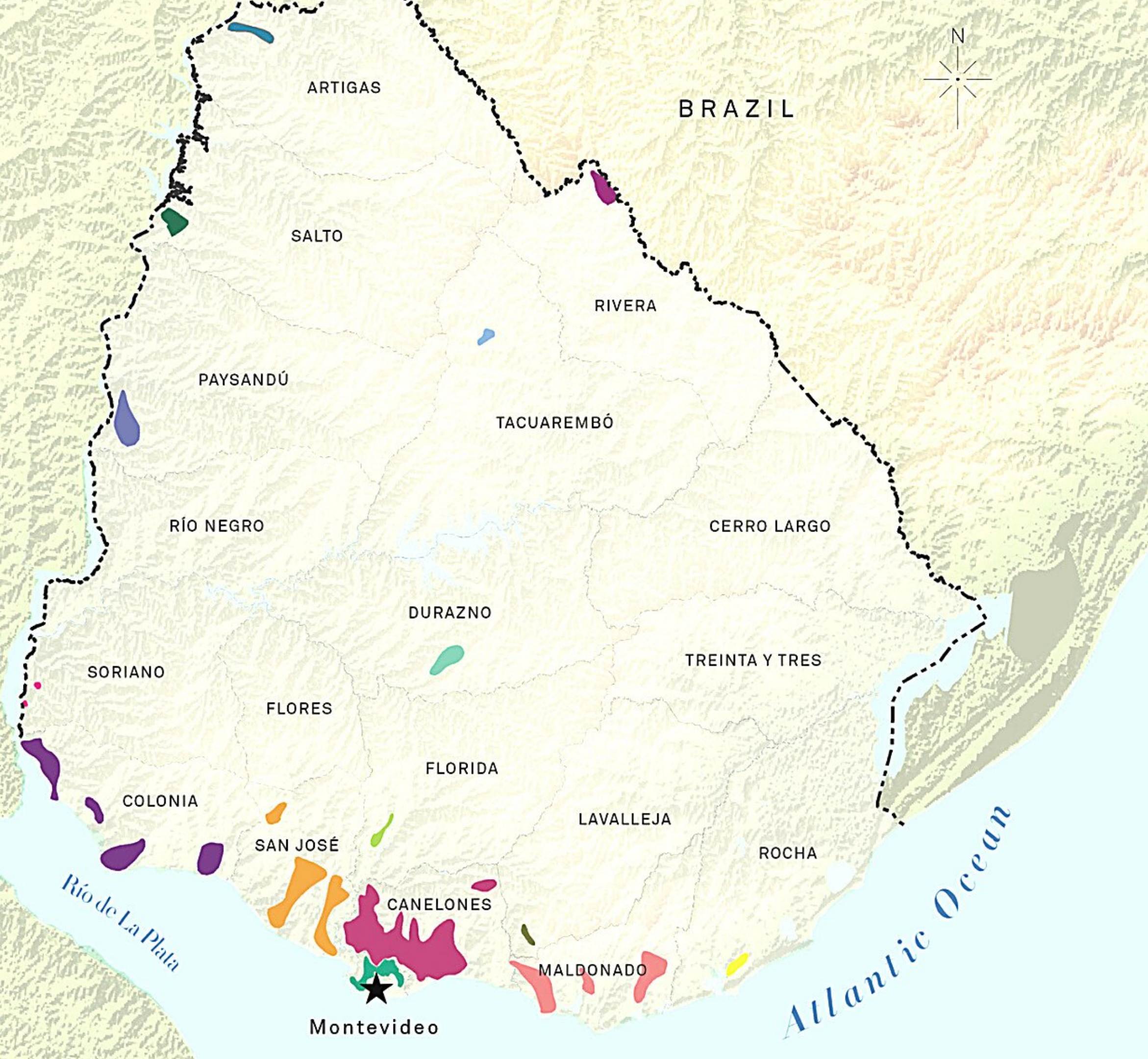




Uruguay Travel Guide

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Uruguay is one of the most charming and among the easiest countries in South America to visit. In our travel guide to Uruguay, you'll get a feel for how this South American country is safe to visit, well organised and moves at a peaceful pace. You can easily spend a couple of weeks easing into life in Uruguay and exploring its wine regions. As a bare minimum, plan to spend a couple of days in Montevideo and visiting the wine route of Canelones, and a couple more in the coastal regions of Maldonado or the riverside regions of Colonia.



URUGUAY

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- SAN JOSÉ
- CANELONES
- MONTEVIDEO
- LAVALLEJA
- MALDONADO
- ROCHA

How to get around

Montevideo's **Carrasco International Airport** has direct flights to most Latin American capitals and international connections, and is just 20 minutes from the capital (by taxi or bus). If you are arriving by boat (from Buenos Aires or Brazil), there are three busy ports with international arrivals in Uruguay:

Montevideo, Punta del Este and Colonia del Sacramento. Major cities are also served by international bus services, and local buses are comfortable and regular.

Hire cars are widely available and driving is a joy in Uruguay — especially with the country's fascination for interesting curved bridges and roundabouts.

The most organised **wine routes are in Montevideo and Canelones, Colonia and Maldonado.** If you are visiting Colonia, you can spend a day visiting the wineries, which are mainly in Carmelo. It's easy to drive to them or hire a driver for the day. There are also some organised wine tours from Colonia del Sacramento, and there are some wine tour day trips offered from Buenos Aires.

Wine routes

Maldonado also has a handful of tour operators (mainly based in Punta del Este) but it is quite a pleasant experience to drive yourself around the back lanes and countryside hills. The inland village of Garzón is a charming spot to spend a couple of nights, or you might opt to stay in the upmarket coastal resort of José Ignacio if you want to avoid the summer crowds in Punta del Este and La Barra.

Tastings at wineries are best booked in advance.

All the wineries' booking details are available in our online winery guide.

Food in Uruguay

Before getting started on the cuisine of Uruguay, you have to get to grips with its biggest digested staple — **yerba mate**. Mate is a native plant from South America, and a potent tea is made from its leaves. It tastes similar to very strong green tea but has triple the caffeine kick!

Beyond mate and the inevitable sweet treats made from **dulce de leche** and tortas fritas (fried pastries), Uruguay is a meat-eating nation and consumes more beef per capita than any other country in the world. You'll find just as much **asado** (traditional BBQ) here as you will in Argentina and the steak is just as mouth-watering.

A favourite local incarnation for steak is the **chivito** — a steak sandwich served in every village in Uruguay. It's not glamorous by any means, but this steak sandwich is often topped with boiled egg, ham, tomato, cheese, mayo and salad, making it the ultimate guilty pleasure for gluttons.

Language

Spanish is the official language and spoken by everyone. You'll also find a large proportion of Uruguayans speak Portuguese well (most people born in the northeast are native speakers), and in the coastal cities, it's usually easy to find someone who speaks English.

Money talk & tipping

The Uruguayan peso is the official currency and there are exchange houses (casas de cambio) in Montevideo and in major cities. There are also plenty of ATMs.

Tipping is voluntary but appreciated — **10% is the norm**.

Wardrobe worries

Uruguay's weather can notoriously change within minutes so **always bring layers** and sun cream in the summer. Wineries are usually smart casual, and in the cities you'll want comfy shoes, as walking is often the best way to get around. The beach ranges from happy hippy comfort to downright designer clobber... dress according to your chosen beach or bar!

Toilet talk

Public toilets are usually easy to find and well kept in Uruguay but rarely provide toilet roll, so do bring your own. Toilet roll usually needs to go in the waste bin rather than being flushed.

Wifi

WiFi in Uruguay is the best in Latin America and it's **usually provided for free** in hotels, bars, restaurants and even on buses! Montevideo is mainly on fibre optic connections and WiFi is fast in the city — one of the many reasons Montevideo has attracted a big community of digital nomads. In wine country, the WiFi is a little patchier.

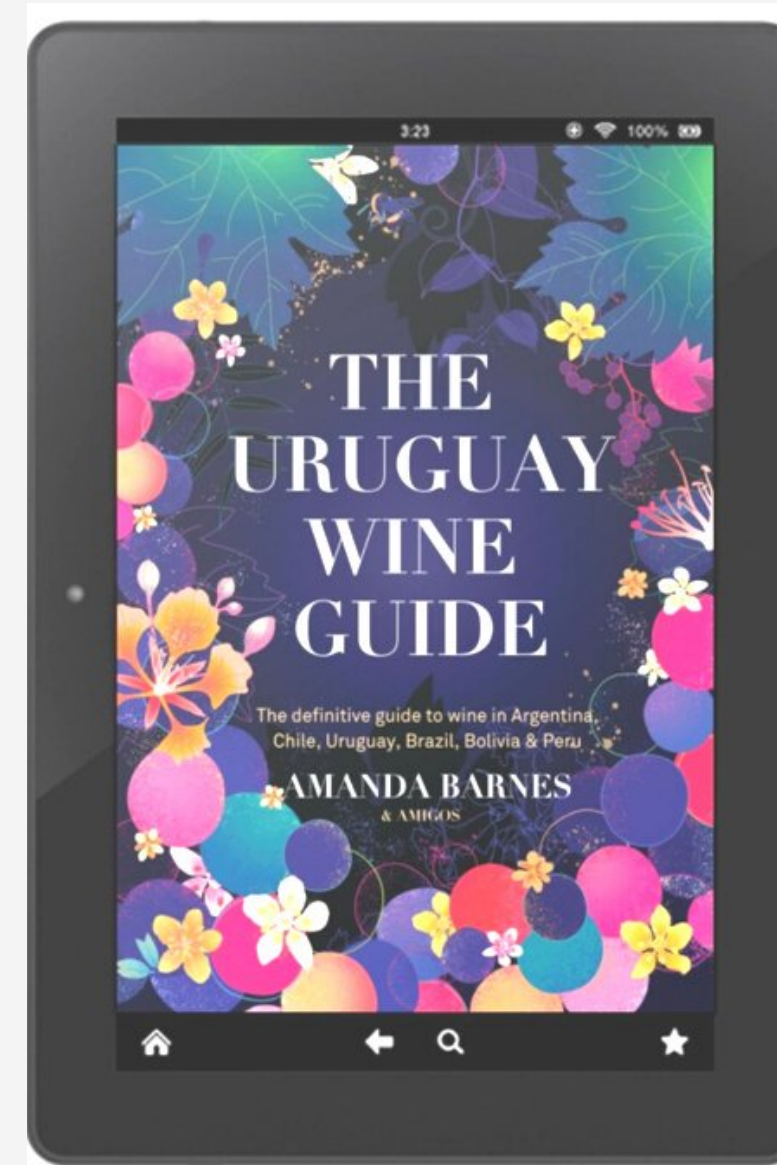
Safety & Travel

Uruguay is a relatively **safe country** in South America. Keep your eyes open for pickpockets, especially downtown and in busy markets, but overall the crime rate in Uruguay is wonderfully low. Driving in Uruguay is pretty relaxed (aside from rush hour in Montevideo). Keep cash on you for road tolls, and beware of one-way streets in the cities.

Health & Visas

Most visitors are granted a **90-day tourist visa** and no previous application is required. There's a good public healthcare system in Uruguay, although tourists need travel insurance to cover any charges. The tap water is good to drink.

*Read more about its
wineries and wines!*



THE URUGUAY
WINE GUIDE
E-BOOK