

Paraguay

Capital: Asuncion

Religion: Roman Catholicism is the main religion in Paraguay: 90 % of the population is Roman Catholic; 6.2% of the society are Evangelical Christians, 1.1% follows other Christian sects, while 0.6% practice indigenous religions. There is also a large Muslim community in Boqueron and in Alto Parana.

Government: Paraguay is a democratic country, with a multi-party system and separation of powers. The president is head of state and head of government and exercises the executive power. Legislative power is held by the two chambers of the National Congress. The judiciary power belongs to tribunals and Courts of Civil Law and a nine-member Supreme Court of Justice, all of them independent of the executive and the legislature.

Ethnic Groups: 95% of the population is mestizo (mixed European and Amerindian) and the remaining 5% are members of indigenous tribal groups.

Language: Spanish and Guarani are the official languages of the country. Guarani language comes from the indigenous Guarani culture and is spoken by 98% of the population, while Spanish is spoken by 92% of the society.

Currency: The unit of currency in Paraguay is the Guarani (PYG).

- Paraguay is a land-enclosed country. It borders with Argentina to the south and southwest, Brazil to the east and northeast and Bolivia to the northwest. The Paraguay River divides the country into the Eastern Paraguay and to the west El Chaco.
- Paraguay has a strong history of isolation from the outside world, due to the government attempts to make the country entirely self-sufficient and independent. Even today, receiving information from abroad is often difficult.
- The county suffers from high unemployment, inflation and foreign debt. There is a large gap between the rich and poor. Nearly all the resources in the country are controlled by a small number of elite families and economic opportunities are limited to urban dwellers.
- Despite significant social differences in the society, Paraguay citizens believe a person should be respected regardless of his social or economic position. This is an important element of the local culture.



- The industrial sector produces about 25% of Paraguay's gross domestic product (GDP) and employs about 31% of the labour force. Paraguay has a market economy characterized by a large informal sector. One of its main activities is the re-exportation of imported consumer goods to the neighboring countries.
- Between 1970 and 2009 the country had the highest economic growth in South America, with an average rate of 7.2% per year. The country GDP has grown 5 times in the last decade.
- Paraguay is proud to have the third most important free commercial zone in the world (after Miami and Hong Kong): Ciudad del Este.

Business and Social Etiquette

- Paraguayans are traditional conservative people who strive for tranquility.
- A handshake is the most common form of greeting, both for men and women. Family members and friends are greeted with a hug or a kiss on both cheeks.
- In business, people are addressed by using their professional titles only, such as: doctor, lawyer, etc. Those who do not have professional titles should be addressed as: Señor for Mr. Señora, for Mrs and Señorita for Miss, followed by the surname.
- If you meet a family member of your Paraguayan counterpart, formality and manners should be maintained. This is important because the opinion of the family is very important.
- When scheduling a meeting, it is advisable to reach the top executives, because they are usually the ones who make the final decision. There is no specific ritual for giving and receiving business cards, but be prepared to present your card to everyone present.
- Don't be surprised if your Paraguayan counterpart agrees on everything you say, but no contract is signed at the end.
- Paraguayan business people usually get very close to each other when they talk. It can be considered as rude if you back away when they are talking to you.
- Be prepared to start your meetings later than the agreed hour. Business appointments begin 10 to 20 minutes late, but visitors are expected to arrive on time.
- Paraguayans tend to make non-business related small talks before the meeting begins and strictly business matters are discussed. This is because they try to get to know their counterparts before making any deal.



- If you cannot attend all business meetings in Paraguay, hire a reliable local representative, who can act on your behalf. If you send a person other than the original representative, previous negotiations will be considered as non-binding and the entire negotiating process will have to start from the beginning.
- Paraguayans put a great emphasis on building personal associations rather than business relationships. Connections are more important than expertise.
- It is important to be patient because negotiations and decision making can take a long time.
- Never invite people for dinner before 7pm because the social events usually start at 9 or 9:30pm and dinner is served at 10pm.
- When you go out for drinks, Paraguayans buy rounds of drinks and offer food to everybody.
- If you are invited for a dinner, wait for your host to talk about business. Dinner is considered a social occasion. If you are invited to dine at their home, expect to be offered a second helping of food. Always remember to leave a little bit of food on your plate. This will show your host that you have had enough food.
- The appearance is an important part of the local culture. Paraguay business people dress conservatively. You will be judged on your appearance, so dress nicely in any social or business situation in Paraguay. Men should wear dark suits and ties and women should wear suits or dresses. After the initial meeting, follow your Paraguayan contacts style of attire.
- Show that you have an interest towards learning about their country, because they are proud of their heritage.
- As gifts are considered, a small item representing your country or region would be appreciated. On a home visit, you can impress the hostess by giving her flowers. Chocolates, clothes or toys for children are also considered as appropriate gifts. Scissors, knives or any other sharp objects should be avoided, because they mean severing of the friendship.

Language

- Business people are addressed by using their professional titles only, such as: Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer. Those who do not have professional titles should be addressed as: Señor (Mr.) Señora (Mrs.) and Señorita (Miss) plus the surname.

English

Spanish

Phonetics



Hello	Hola	O-la
Good morning	Buenos días	Boo-ai-nos-di-as
Good evening	Buenas tardes	Boo-ai-nas tar-dais
Good bye	Adios	A -dee-os
Yes	Sí	See
No	No	Nou
Please	Por favor	Por-fa-vour
Thank you	Gracias	Gra-see-as
You're welcome	De nada	Dai-na-da
I don't understand	No entiendo	No-en-tee-en- dou

