In general, information available as of 1 January 2003 was used in the preparation of The World Factbook 2003.

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Introduction

Background:
Following independence from Spain in 1816, Argentina experienced periods of internal political conflict between conservatives and liberals and between civilian and military factions. After World War II, a long period of Peronist authoritarian rule and interference in subsequent governments was followed by a military junta that took power in 1976. Democracy returned in 1983, and numerous elections since then have underscored Argentina's progress in democratic consolidation.

Geography

Location:
Southern South America, bordering the South Atlantic Ocean, between Chile and Uruguay

Geographic coordinates: 34 00 S, 64 00 W

Map references: South America

Area: total: 2,766,890 sq km
land: 2,736,690 sq km
water: 30,200 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly less than three-tenths the size of the US

Land boundaries: total: 9,665 km
border countries: Bolivia 832 km, Brazil 1,224 km, Chile 5,150 km, Paraguay 1,880 km, Uruguay 579 km
Coastline: 4,989 km

Maritime claims: contiguos zone: 24 NM territorial sea: 12 NM exclusive economic zone: 200 NM continental shelf: 200 NM or to the edge of the continental margin

Climate: mostly temperate; arid in southeast; subantarctic in southwest

Terrain: rich plains of the Pampas in northern half, flat to rolling plateau of Patagonia in south, rugged Andes along western border

Elevation extremes: lowest point: Salinas Chicas -40 m (located on Peninsula Valdes) highest point: Cerro Aconcagua 6,960 m

Natural resources: fertile plains of the Pampas, lead, zinc, tin, copper, iron ore, manganese, petroleum, uranium

Land use: arable land: 9.14% permanent crops: 0.8% other: 90.06% (1998 est.)

Irrigated land: 15,610 sq km (1998 est.)

Natural hazards: San Miguel de Tucuman and Mendoza areas in the Andes subject to earthquakes; pamperos are violent windstorms that can strike the Pampas and northeast; heavy flooding

Environment - current issues: environmental problems (urban and rural) typical of an industrializing economy such as deforestation, soil degradation, desertification, air pollution, and water pollution note: Argentina is a world leader in setting voluntary greenhouse gas targets


Geography - note: second-largest country in South America (after Brazil); strategic location relative to sea lanes between the South Atlantic and the South Pacific Oceans (Strait of Magellan, Beagle Channel, Drake Passage); Cerro Aconcagua is South America's tallest mountain, while the Valdes Peninsula is the lowest point on the continent

People Argentina
Population: 38,740,807 (July 2003 est.)

Age structure:
- 0-14 years: 26.2% (male 5,185,548; female 4,955,551)
- 15-64 years: 63.4% (male 12,274,625; female 12,282,772)
- 65 years and over: 10.4% (male 1,659,641; female 2,382,670) (2003 est.)

Median age:
- total: 29 years
- male: 28 years
- female: 29.9 years (2002)

Population growth rate: 1.05% (2003 est.)

Birth rate: 17.47 births/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Death rate: 7.58 deaths/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Net migration rate: 0.62 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Sex ratio:
- at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female
- under 15 years: 1.05 male(s)/female
- 15-64 years: 1 male(s)/female
- 65 years and over: 0.7 male(s)/female
- total population: 0.97 male(s)/female (2003 est.)

Infant mortality rate:
- total: 16.16 deaths/1,000 live births
- female: 14.08 deaths/1,000 live births (2003 est.)
- male: 18.14 deaths/1,000 live births

Life expectancy at birth:
- total population: 75.48 years
- male: 71.72 years
- female: 79.44 years (2003 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.28 children born/woman (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 0.7% (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 130,000 (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths: 1,800 (2001 est.)

Nationality: noun: Argentine(s) adjective: Argentine

Ethnic groups:
white (mostly Spanish and Italian) 97%, mestizo, Amerindian, or other nonwhite groups 3%

Religions: nominally Roman Catholic 92% (less than 20% practicing), Protestant 2%, Jewish 2%, other 4%

Languages: Spanish (official), English, Italian, German, French

Literacy: definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 97.1%
male: 97.1%
female: 97.1% (2003 est.)

Government Argentina

Country name: conventional long form: Argentine Republic
conventional short form: Argentina
local short form: Argentina
local long form: Republica Argentina

Government type: republic

Capital: Buenos Aires

Administrative divisions: 23 provinces (provincias, singular - provincia), and 1 autonomous city* (distrito federal); Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires Capital Federal*, Catamarca, Chaco, Chubut, Cordoba, Corrientes, Entre Rios, Formosa, Jujuy, La Pampa, La Rioja, Mendoza, Misiones, Neuquen, Rio Negro, Salta, San Juan, San Luis, Santa Cruz, Santa Fe, Santiago del Estero, Tierra del Fuego - Antartida e Islas del Atlantico Sur, Tucuman

note: the US does not recognize any claims to Antarctica

Independence: 9 July 1816 (from Spain)

National holiday: Revolution Day, 25 May (1810)

Constitution: 1 May 1853; revised August 1994

Legal system: mixture of US and West European legal systems; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and mandatory

Executive branch: chief of state: President Nestor KIRCHNER (since 25 May 2003); note - declared winner of a runoff election by default after Carlos Saul MENEM withdrew his candidacy on the eve of the election; Vice President Daniel SCIOLI (since 25 May 2003); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government
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cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president

election results: results of the presidential primary of 27 April 2003: Carlos Saul MENEM 24.3%, Nestor KIRCHNER 22%, Ricardo Lopez MURPHY 16.4%, Adolfo Rodriguez SAA 14.4%, Elisa CARRIO 14.2%, other 8.7%; the subsequent runoff election slated for 25 May 2003 was awarded to KIRCHNER by default after MENEM withdrew his candidacy on the eve of the election

elections: president and vice president elected on the same ticket by popular vote for four-year terms; the last election held was the presidential primary election of 27 April 2003 (next election to be held NA 2007); a runoff election slated for 25 May 2003 between the two candidates receiving the highest votes in the primary was awarded to KIRCHNER by default after MENEM withdrew his candidacy on the eve of the election

Legislative branch: bicameral National Congress or Congreso Nacional consists of the Senate (72 seats; members are elected by direct vote; presently one-third of the members being elected every two years to a six-year term) and the Chamber of Deputies (257 seats; members are elected by direct vote; one-half of the members elected every two years to a four-year term)

election results: Senate - percent of vote by bloc or party - NA%; seats by bloc or party - PJ 40, UCR 24, provincial parties 6, Frepaso 1, ARI 1; Chamber of Deputies - percent of vote by bloc or party - NA%; seats by bloc or party - PJ 113, UCR 74, provincial parties 27, Frepaso 17, ARI 17, AR 9

elections: Senate - last held 14 October 2001 (next to be held intermittently by province before December 2003); Chamber of Deputies - last held 14 October 2001 (next to be held intermittently by province before December 2003)

Judicial branch: Supreme Court or Corte Suprema (the nine Supreme Court judges are appointed by the president with approval by the Senate)

Political parties and leaders: Action for the Republic or AR [Domingo CAVALLO]; Alternative for a Republic of Equals or ARI [Elisa CARRIO]; Front for a Country in Solidarity or Frepaso (a four-party coalition) [Dario Pedro ALESSANDRO]; Justicialist Party or PJ [Carlos Saul MENEM] (Peronist umbrella political organization); Radical Civic Union or UCR [Angel ROZAS]; Federal Recreate Movement [Ricardo LOPEZ MURPHY]; several provincial parties

Political pressure groups and leaders: Argentine Association of Pharmaceutical Labs (CILFA); Argentine Industrial Union (manufacturers' association); Argentine Rural Society (large landowners' association); business organizations; General Confederation of Labor or CGT (Peronist-leaning umbrella labor organization); Peronist-dominated labor movement; Roman Catholic Church; students

RG, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNFICYP, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNIKOM, UNMEE, UNMIBH, UNMIK, UNMOP, UNMOVIC, UNTSO, UNU, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WToO, WTrO, ZC

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Jose Octavio BORDON
chancery: 1600 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009
consulate(s) general: Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York
FAX: [1] (202) 332-3171
telephone: [1] (202) 238-6400

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador James D. WALSH; note - Lino GUTIERREZ is designated to replace Ambassador WALSH
embassy: Avenida Colombia 4300, C1425GMN Buenos Aires
mailing address: international mail: use street address; APO address: Unit 4334, APO AA 34034
telephone: [54] (11) 5777-4533
FAX: [54] (11) 5777-4240

Flag description:
three equal horizontal bands of light blue (top), white, and light blue; centered in the white band is a radiant yellow sun with a human face known as the Sun of May

Economy - Argentina

Economy overview: Argentina benefits from rich natural resources, a highly literate population, an export-oriented agricultural sector, and a diversified industrial base. Over the past decade, however, the country has suffered recurring economic problems of inflation, external debt, capital flight, and budget deficits. Growth in 2000 was a negative 0.8%, as both domestic and foreign investors remained skeptical of the government's ability to pay debts and maintain the peso's fixed exchange rate with the US dollar. The economic situation worsened in 2001 with the widening of spreads on Argentine bonds, massive withdrawals from the banks, and a further decline in consumer and investor confidence. Government efforts to achieve a "zero deficit," to stabilize the banking system, and to restore economic growth proved inadequate in the face of the mounting economic problems. The peso's peg to the dollar was abandoned in January 2002, and the peso was floated in February; the exchange rate plunged and inflation picked up rapidly, but by mid-2002 the economy had stabilized, albeit at a lower level. Strong demand for the peso compelled the Central Bank to intervene in foreign exchange markets to curb its appreciation in early 2003. Led by record exports, the economy began to recover with output up 5.5% in 2003, unemployment falling, and inflation sliced to 4.2% at year-end.

GDP: purchasing power parity - $403.8 billion (2002 est.)
GDP - real growth rate: -10.9% (2002 est.)
GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - $10,500 (2002 est.)
GDP - composition by sector: agriculture: 5%
industry: 28%
services: 66% (2000 est.)
Population below poverty line: 37% (2001 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:
lowest 10%: NA%
highest 10%: NA%

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 41% (2002, yearend)

Labor force: 15 million (1999)

Labor force - by occupation: agriculture NA%, industry NA%, services NA%

Unemployment rate: 21.5% (37377)

Budget:
revenues: $44 billion
expenditures: $48 billion, including capital expenditures of $NA (2000 est.)

Industries: food processing, motor vehicles, consumer durables, textiles, chemicals and petrochemicals, printing, metallurgy, steel

Industrial production growth rate: 1% (2000 est.)

Electricity - production: 97.17 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - production by source: fossil fuel: 52.2%
hydro: 40.8%
other: 0.2% (2001)
nuclear: 6.7%

Electricity - consumption: 92.12 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - exports: 5.662 billion kWh (2001)

Electricity - imports: 7.417 billion kWh (2001)

Oil - production: 828,600 bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - consumption: 486,000 bbl/day (2001 est.)

Oil - exports: NA (2001)

Oil - imports:
Oil - proved reserves: 2.927 billion bbl (37257)

Natural gas - production: 37.15 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - consumption: 31.1 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - exports: 6.05 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - imports: 0 cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - proved reserves: 768 billion cu m (37257)

Agriculture - products: sunflower seeds, lemons, soybeans, grapes, corn, tobacco, peanuts, tea, wheat; livestock

Exports: $25.3 billion f.o.b. (2002)

Exports - commodities: edible oils, fuels and energy, cereals, feed, motor vehicles

Exports - partners: Brazil 23.6%, US 10.9%, Chile 9.7%, Spain 4.3% (2002)

Imports: $9 billion f.o.b. (2002)

Imports - commodities: machinery and equipment, motor vehicles, chemicals, metal manufactures, plastics

Imports - partners: Brazil 42%, US 12.8%, Germany 4.4% (2002)

Debt - external: $155 billion (2001 est.)

Economic aid - recipient: $10 billion (2001 est.)

Currency: Argentine peso (ARS)

Currency code: ARS


Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications    Argentina
Telephones - main lines in use: 7.5 million (1998)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 3 million (December 1999)

Telephone system: by opening the telecommunications market to competition and foreign investment with the "Telecommunications Liberalization Plan of 1998," Argentina encouraged the growth of modern telecommunication technology; fiber-optic cable trunk lines are being installed between all major cities; the major networks are entirely digital and the availability of telephone service is being improved; however, telephone density is presently minimal, and making telephone service universally available will take time

domestic: microwave radio relay, fiber-optic cable, and a domestic satellite system with 40 earth stations serve the trunk network; more than 110,000 pay telephones are installed and mobile telephone use is rapidly expanding

international: satellite earth stations - 8 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean); Atlantis II and Unisur submarine cables; two international gateways near Buenos Aires (1999)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 260 (including 10 inactive stations), FM NA (probably more than 1,000, mostly unlicensed), shortwave 6 (1998)

Television broadcast stations: 42 (plus 444 repeaters) (1997)

Internet country code: .ar

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 33 (2000)

Internet users: 3.88 million (2001)

Transportation Argentina

Railways: total: 34,463 km (168 km electrified)
broad gauge: 20,736 km 1.676-m gauge (142 km electrified)
standard gauge: 3,115 km 1.435-m gauge (26 km electrified)
narrow gauge: 10,375 km 1.000-m gauge; 237 km 0.750-m gauge (2002)

Highways: total: 215,471 km
paved: 63,348 km (including 734 km of expressways)
unpaved: 152,123 km (1999)

Waterways: 10,950 km

Pipelines: gas 26,797 km; liquid petroleum gas 41 km; oil 3,668 km; refined products 2,945 km; unknown (oil/water) 13 km (2003)

Ports and harbors: Bahia Blanca, Buenos Aires, Comodoro Rivadavia, Concepcion del Uruguay, La

Plata, Mar del Plata, Necochea, Rio Gallegos, Rosario, Santa Fe, Ushuaia

Merchant marine:

- Total: 23 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 141,851 GRT/208,821 DWT
- Ships by type: Cargo 9, petroleum tanker 8, railcar carrier 1, refrigerated cargo 2, roll on/roll off 1, short-sea passenger 1, specialized tanker 1, includes some foreign-owned ships registered here as a flag of convenience: United Arab Emirates 1, Uruguay 1 (2002 est.)

Airports:

- 1,342 (2002)

Airports - with paved runways:

- Total: 145
  - Over 3,047 m: 4
  - 2,438 to 3,047 m: 26
  - 1,524 to 2,437 m: 62
  - 914 to 1,523 m: 44
  - Under 914 m: 9 (2002)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

- Total: 1,197
  - Over 3,047 m: 2
  - 2,438 to 3,047 m: 2
  - 1,524 to 2,437 m: 50
  - 914 to 1,523 m: 572
  - Under 914 m: 571 (2002)

Military

Argentina

Military branches:

- Argentine Army, Navy of the Argentine Republic (includes naval aviation and Marines), Coast Guard, Argentine Air Force, National Gendarmerie, National Aeronautical Police Force

Military manpower - military age:

- 20 years of age (2003 est.)

Military manpower - availability:

- Males age 15-49: 9,780,063 (2003 est.)

Military manpower - fit for military service:


Military manpower - reaching military age annually:

- Males: 331,011 (2003 est.)

Military expenditures - dollar figure:

- $4.3 billion (FY99)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP:

- 1.3% (FY00)
Transnational Issues

Disputes - international:
claims UK-administered Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands in its constitution, but in 1995 ceded the right to settle the dispute by force; Beagle Channel islands dispute resolved through Papal mediation in 1984, but armed incidents persist since 1992 oil discovery; territorial claim in Antarctica partially overlaps UK and Chilean claims (see Antarctic disputes); unruly region at convergence of Argentina-Brazil-Paraguay borders is locus of money laundering, smuggling, arms and drug trafficking, and harbors Islamist militants; uncontested dispute between Brazil and Uruguay over Braziliera Island in the Quarai/Cuareim leaves the tripoint with Argentina in question.

Illicit drugs:
used as a transshipment country for cocaine headed for Europe and the US; some money-laundering activity, especially in the Tri-Border Area; domestic consumption of drugs in urban centers is increasing.

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