



Digital Nomads Guides

Montevideo

• Uruguay •



Bonus Info
Online!

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Montevideo

Digital Nomads Guides

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Everything in this book has been researched thoughtfully and with great care. However, things can change at anytime. We can't rule out mistakes 100%. We are not liable for any damage created by the information in this book. This book is not a substitute for thinking for yourself ;)

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	3
Why Montevideo?	4
About this Guide	5
Part One: How to Get Set Up in Montevideo	6
Money, ATMs and Prices.....	6
WiFi Speed and Availability	9
WiFi Vocabulary	9
Places to Work	10
Accommodation.....	12
Mobile Internet.....	14
Plugs & Power.....	15
How to Meet Other Digital Nomads	15
Food & Drink	16
Transport.....	19
Free Time.....	21
Attitude	23
Visa	23
Safety.....	23
Part Two: Barrio Guides.....	24
Centro, Barrio Sur & Palermo	25
Pocitos & Punta Carretas	29
Ciudad Vieja	33
Carrasco.....	36
Buceo, Malvín & Punta Gorda	38
Part Three: Other Amazing Places in Uruguay.....	39
Colonia del Sacramento	39
Punta del Este	40
Punta del Diablo	41
Cabo Polonio.....	41
Final Words.....	42



Why Montevideo?

It's not exactly the center of the universe, but Montevideo is a charming and reasonably-sized city with excellent opportunities to both work and relax hard. It's modest, while it shouldn't be; Uruguay has the fastest internet on the South American continent. Uruguay's capital may be the southernmost on the continent, but it enjoys a liveable climate year round, amplified by the city's palm tree-lined coastal road.

Uruguay's tourism sector isn't as well developed as other countries, which is a definite win for those annoyed by big groups. Most visitors are from neighboring Argentina and Brazil and are largely focussed on visiting Uruguay's sea - and riverside destinations like Punta del Este, Punta del Diablo and - you guessed it! - Colonia del Sacramento. Brazilians will take over the country during summer months (December - February) to avoid the terrible heat up north. This leaves Montevideo at an affordable price. The country is the second tiniest one on this landmass and has relatively good infrastructure, so you can get to anywhere in the country on the same day.

The country has been on the forefront of political issues, being one of the few countries that has had a secular state since its foundation. In recent years, Uruguay has become a little more famous for legalizing marijuana, abortion and same-sex marriage, being the least corrupt country in Latin America and having had the coolest and humblest president. Nicknaming Uruguay the "Holland of South America" or the "Switzerland of Latin America" doesn't really cover it. In fact, the people here are really friendly to foreigners and even the government loves your presence; there's tax exemptions for all foreign cards!

Uruguay is a windy place with heaps of coastline. This results in awesome watersports like sailing and kitesurfing being practiced regularly on its shores. On good days, you can see kites flying right in front of Montevideo's skyline.

Lovers of fast internet, high living standards and good beaches, will adore this country nobody ever talks about. Let's hope this guide won't be the downfall of this place and leading it to succumb to mass tourism!



About this Guide

Part One of this guide has all the tools you need to get set up in Uruguay, in order of importance. We believe you should just book a flight to Montevideo and not worry about being underprepared. If you read this book at the airport or on your flight, you'll be as prepared as can be in **just 29 minutes**. Important Spanish words are introduced if they're necessary vocabulary. They follow directly after the English. All prices are in United States Dollar (US\$) as it is widely understood, and the Uruguayan Peso is not a major currency and is prone to volatility.

Part Two of this book has specific information about the neighborhoods (*barrios*) in Montevideo. The neighborhoods aren't ordered according to historical importance like in other guides, but rather to lifestyle compatibility in terms of laptop-friendly cafés and coworking spaces. All cafés have been tested by our writers and vouched for by locals and expats living in Montevideo at the time of writing. All cafés included mention the internet speed in Megabit (Mbit), a PowerScore and ZenScore. PowerScore is a rating of the number of charging points out of five, in which five is the best and one is the worst. People with great laptop batteries can go to a café with a low PowerScore, but people with quick-draining batteries should skip over these. ZenScore is about how workable a café is in terms of noise, again with a rating out of five - five being very quiet and one being very noisy. It's not just decibels, it's also how many people are walking by your table causing you to fear for liquid spills over your keyboard. This is of course a little more variable as it's dependent on the time of day and day of the week. Our writers visited all the cafés during a weekday before 17:00.

A newly added Part Three has some relevant information about places in Uruguay besides Montevideo that have different things to offer. There's a few businesses tried and recommended in the same way specific to our guides, but these destinations are mostly to get the holiday feel. We put them in the guide to inspire you to experience more of Uruguay and get some sand between your toes.



Part One: How to Get Set Up in Montevideo

Money, ATMs and Prices

The currency in Uruguay is the Uruguayan Peso, just called peso here. The currency code is UYU. People use the \$ symbol, which can be confusing, when you are associating that with the US Dollar. The price of a cup of coffee indicated as \$100 is quite normal. However, prices of houses, computers, phones and other expensive stuff can also be indicated in US\$ or U\$. This is partly to protect the price from the inflation and partly to make it look cheaper.

The peso is very volatile and has a high inflation rate. Don't trust any website or guidebook which states prices in pesos and is older than three months. As of February 2017:

100 UYU = 3.55 USD = 3.30 EUR

ATMs accepting VISA and MasterCard are widely available. That being said, there can be problems with ATMs only working with certain cards or limiting the amount you can withdraw per transaction. Usually you can't get out more than about US\$140 per transaction. Make sure to bring multiple credit cards, preferably at least one VISA and one MasterCard to cover all bases.

There are two main ATM networks and most banks are connected to one of them. They are called Banred and Red BROU. Usually, there is a sign outside the bank, indicating the network. Try both networks and different banks to find out what works best with your cards. Most ATMs of both networks charge about US\$3 per transaction, which is on top of any charges from your own bank. These fees can differ from bank to bank.



Make sure to check out the national Banco República. There is one in every neighborhood. Search them via Google Maps if you can't find one. Banco República owns the Red BROU and they might not charge an additional fee.

Nearly all ATMs in Uruguay dispense not only pesos, but also USD. Take advantage of that, especially if you are travelling on to countries where dollars are hard to come by. The USD is the most accepted currency in all of South America and the best choice for a little emergency fund.

If you go to any ATM, you will be offered many more options than the usual Savings, Checkings or Credit. At Red BROU, the ATM asks you in which currency your account is. Always choose the currency you want to withdraw, to get the best exchange rate. At Banred,



you have the choice between VISA/MasterCard International and VISA/MasterCard Uruguay. Always select International for the same reason.

Exchanging money is easy everywhere, especially in the center. As usual, don't exchange your money at the airport because the exchange rates are better in the city.

Most upper and middle class restaurants and cafés accept credit card payments, but might have a minimum amount around US\$12. As with ATMs, payment via credit card is not very reliable. Make sure to have multiple cards and some backup cash. After typing in your PIN, you might have to sign and sometimes write your passport number on the receipt.

If possible, in restaurants and cafés, always try to pay by credit card. Uruguay has an immediate tax refund for tourists. Every time you pay with a foreign credit card, the tax of 22% automatically gets deducted. You will see the reduction immediately on the receipt, called "Desc. Ley 18999". Depending on your bank, you might get charged the full amount first and get a refund at the end of the month, or only get charged the reduced amount. Keep this in mind as 22% is a lot!



If you are planning to rent a car, make sure you don't pay the full amount online, but in the local store with your credit card. The 22% discount also applies for rental cars, but only if you pay at a local store. If you book a room, it doesn't matter if you pay by card or cash. Accommodation is always tax free for everyone. In supermarkets, you only get a 1% reduction if you pay by card.

It is common to add a tip of 10% to your credit card payment in a café. Just tell the staff when paying that you want to pay for the service (*con servicio*) when handing over the card. They will add the 10% tip to the amount and it will show up separately on your receipt. If you



don't say anything, people might ask, and you could feel guilty saying no. Less polite staff might just add the tip without asking.

Uruguay is one of the more developed and therefore one of the more expensive countries in South America. Some pricing examples:

Half liter bottle of Coke - US\$1.50
Cappuccino - US\$3
200 g of cheese - US\$1.40
1 liter of milk - US\$1.40
Supermarket sandwich - US\$3
Pizza for two people - US\$9
Restaurant meal - from US\$7
Beer in a bar - US\$4
Liter of wine in a shop - from US\$2
Hostel bed - US\$13
Airbnb room - from US\$20
Airbnb apartment - from US\$30
City bus fare - US\$1
5 km by taxi - US\$5

So, how expensive is it to live in Montevideo for a week? Let's say you are on a budget. You stay in a hostel dorm and cook for yourself or eat (delicious) supermarket sandwiches. You have two beers per week and explore the city by bus once per week. That sums up to a weekly budget of US\$140 or US\$600 per month.

If money is not that tight, you might opt for your own apartment, go to a restaurant every day and have a proper night out twice per week. You explore the city by taxi, since you can't be bothered to figure out the buses. That comes to US\$400 per week or US\$1700 per month. This is about the range you can expect. The biggest factor is obviously your choice of accommodation. Interesting side note: Opting for restaurants every day only makes a difference of US\$40 per week. More about that in the Food section below.

Here is some helpful finance vocabulary:

Is it possible to pay by credit card? - *¿Es posible de pagar con tarjeta de crédito?*

Is there an ATM? - *¿Hay un cajero automático?*

How much? - *¿Cuanto cuesta?*

The bill - *La cuenta*

Tip - *Propina*

Signature - *Firma*



WiFi Speed and Availability

It's safe to say that Montevideo has the fastest WiFi in South America. You will find it at almost all cafés and restaurants. Just ask employees directly or check your network list if you don't see a WiFi sticker. Many cafés don't bother putting up a sticker. Uruguayans understand the word WiFi. You can expect between 15 and 25 Mbit.

Home connections at Airbnbs are about the same speed. For South American standards the connections are very reliable, but having mobile internet as a backup can't hurt. Make sure to get a discount from your host if the internet is down the whole day, and get help from Airbnb if they decline.

While the speed is great, some café WiFi networks are poorly configured and you might experience problems connecting to them. Most of the time, the problem is that the router is not giving you an IP-address. If you have the technical knowledge, set your fixed IP to something like 192.168.1.90, Subnet to 255.255.255.0 and Gateway to 192.168.1.1. If you have no clue what the last sentence was about, don't worry, just kindly ask the staff to restart the router. The vast majority of WiFi networks are working totally fine.

Free WiFi is also available in the city buses, the plazas and even at a few food trucks! Not exactly the place to have a Skype call or write your next blogpost, but definitely cool.

WiFi Vocabulary

The following words won't help you make friends, but will get you connected to the internet. After getting connected, we recommend you download the Google Translate app and download the Spanish language package to learn more and have it handy.

The network - *La red*

The password - *La contraseña / La clave*

The internet - *El internet*

Is there WiFi? - *¿Hay (conexión) WiFi?*

Uppercase or lowercase? - *¿Mayúscula o minúscula?*

Can you restart the router? - *¿Se puede reiniciar el router?*

Power point/plug - *Enchufe*

If you have problems understanding the password, have the note app on your phone or pen and paper handy (save it for multiple devices). Alternatively, check out the great free app *WiFi Map* for [iOS](#) and [Android](#). It pretty much has all the passwords of the cafés in Montevideo (and the rest of the world, by the way). Caveat: In order to get the passwords, you have to be online via 3G or update to the paid pro version of the app.



Places to Work

Coworking Spaces

There are not too many coworking spaces in Montevideo, but the existing ones have a friendly community and are always welcoming to new members. You'll find the specific places in the Part Two section, here we'll just quickly introduce the general chain coworking spaces.

Sinergia

The only Montevideo coworking chain. There are two locations: one in fancy Carrasco and one in Palermo. The Carrasco branch is relatively new and therefore quiet, while Palermo is a little bit busier. They generally have a friendly and familiar atmosphere. This is supported by the playing rooms they have in both branches. Blow some steam off after an intense working day by playing ping pong or table football. A great way to make new friends. You also get free coffee, *mate* and water with your desk and have a kitchen at your disposal. The prices are different for the two branches in Palermo and Carrasco. Check out Part Two of this guide for details. They are generous with offering a free trial day. Give it a try if you want to get some work done and meet other digital nomads.

Co-Work Latam

It has only one location in Montevideo, but many more in the other Latin American countries of Chile and Colombia, from the tropics to Patagonia. It all started in Chile. They're known for having a super professional work setting and a focus on business growth. Co-Work Latam also provides some community building activities. Their business is mainly aimed at Spanish speakers, but if that's exactly what you're looking for or doesn't intimidate you, it's the right crowd to mingle with.

Café Chains

Montevideo has a good assortment of cafés at your disposal. Some of them are unique to Uruguay, but have multiple locations inside the city. Think of them as the Uruguayan version of McCafé or Starbucks - of which the latter hasn't conquered the country yet - or any other type of successful food and coffee business model. These cafés might look unique to you, but in fact have multiple franchises in different neighborhoods. Trying to survive in the 21st century, all of them offer free WiFi besides coffee, and could be used as a working space. The authors visited at least one of each franchise. If one café in a specific neighborhood was exceptional, you'll find the address later in this guide alongside a detailed description.

Camelia

Bright interiors and wooden everything, this old lady's name can be your sociable living room away from home - whatever the hell that means. If you're coming from Buenos Aires, it will definitely remind you of Green Eat - which is something the employees know - but no matter how similar the concept, they're owned by different people. Salads in plastic cups and coffee in toss-away cups - even if you tell them it's not "to go" - can be an eyesore for trash-conscious individuals. They are excellent working spaces though and the food is tasty. Charging points are all over the place and you will meet many fellow laptop users.



Oro del Rhin

Founded by a German immigrant, they're quite proud of their history which is presented on every menu. Oro del Rhin is both one of Montevideo's historic cafés and an upcoming brand that seems to be slowly taking over the city. They tend to partner up with other shops and if you look closely, you will find them in many book and furniture shops. Apart from good coffee, they have some great cakes and most venues have a classy and historic atmosphere. The workability highly depends on the specific franchise.

La Pasiva

A chain of a more traditional Uruguayan diner. Waiters are wearing suits, but the Pasiva branches are still mainly known for their mean hotdogs (*panchos*). You won't find the most amazing coffee here, but prices are low and their venues are large enough that you'll never feel guilty for taking up a table for hours. A solid choice, but nothing fancy.



Accommodation

If you are looking for an Airbnb, you will have enough options in the major neighborhoods. Airbnb is relatively popular with foreigners and also with some Uruguayans from other cities who visit the capital. Most apartments are rented out privately by individuals, which usually means you'll receive friendly and personal contact.

The Airbnb market mainly caters to tourists, which means that it thins out quickly towards the outer neighborhoods. You might not have much choice, if you want to live in a specific *barrio*, which is far away from the center.

If you just get a room on Airbnb, you will live with a local. Many hosts will offer to show you the city. It's cheaper than other options, but you obviously have the risk of not finding a quiet working environment. Up to your priorities, but you might as well go Couchsurfing for free.

Going the traditional way and renting through a local agency is usually not worth it. You often have to pay a high deposit and furnished short-term contracts are not very common.

Hostels are widely available in the center. Rooms are usually for 4-8 people and you will meet many people from all over the world. A great place to get to know people, not so great for work and privacy.

If you are visiting Montevideo in winter, make sure that the apartment has heating. Many apartments in the old town and the center have scary old gas heaters. You can move them from one room to another and they will make the whole apartment smell like gas. Be aware, that the area right in front of them gets incredibly hot. Make sure to let your host show you how to turn them on and off. You shouldn't keep them on overnight or when you go out. If you have the choice, opt for an apartment with an airconditioner, since you can always put it on reverse to heat the apartment. That rule obviously applies even more to visits in summertime.

Airbnb Hopping in the Slow Season

One of the best ways to explore a big city like Montevideo in depth, is by going 'Airbnb Hopping'. That is, by changing Airbnbs every 7-10 days and trying out different *barrios*. It's ideal for those who don't commit to a coworking space for a month and prefer to work in cafés for half the day and then explore town. Visiting one neighborhood from another can be an exhausting undertaking when you have to wait for the buses all the time. If you plan to stay a month or longer in Montevideo, why not sample the neighborhoods? Our 7-10 days is a little arbitrary, but one week can be very short and two weeks quite long. Anything less and it probably feels like you've just unpacked. Start looking for a new Airbnb around five days before you leave your current one. In the high season (Uruguayan summer, December - February) this is probably not advisable as there's more people looking for accommodation and prices swell. The biggest advantage of Airbnb Hopping? You'll never have to clean!



Laundry

Some apartments have washing machines or a central laundry room in big apartment buildings. Otherwise, you're sent down the path of finding your friendly neighborhood laundry (*lavandería*). Foursquare and Google Maps only have limited information. The best option is to ask your host or neighbors directly upon arrival where you can get your clothes tortured and bathed in chemicals, or ask someone on the streets. On average you're never more than six blocks away from a laundry, it's just the struggle of finding them. Once you found one, hand over your bag of dirty clothes and expect to pay around US\$5 for one full machine load *after* they've been washed. Usually you can pick them up the next day, but on busy days (the weekend) it might take two or even three days. Evaluate how long you can go on your last outfit. The heap comes back in a giant taped plastic bag and the whole thing reeks of flowers.



Mobile Internet

Buying a SIM card in Uruguay is very easy. Just walk into any kiosk or phone shop, where you see a logo of one of the three companies Antel, Movistar and Claro. Ask for a prepaid SIM (*chip prepago*) of your chosen company. You don't need any identification whatsoever. Buying a SIM card doesn't take more time than buying a soda. However, before you can use the card, it has to be activated. The phone number is usually printed on the SIM package. Otherwise, ask the vendor.

If you google around, you might find information stating that you have to register your phone at immigration when entering the country, before you can use it in Uruguay. This is not the case anymore. Just bring any SIM-lock-free phone.

We recommend going with Antel. It's the government-owned telecommunications company and has the best coverage and also the best internet packages. In the city center of Montevideo you will have 4G/LTE. The only thing is the activation process is a little cumbersome. As a foreigner, you have to go to an Antel office with your passport. Wait patiently, while the Antel person takes forever to put your information in the computer. Once activated, you can get a 500 MB package for US\$3.40, valid for 30 days. For higher usage, there is also a 1 GB package only valid for five days for the same price. You can book them by sending a text with the content "100" (500 MB for 30 days) or "BAM 100" (1 GB for five days) to the number 226. To get the remaining balance, send "SALDO" to the 226.

The Antel SIM costs about US\$4.50 and comes with a balance of US\$3.30. Just not enough to get an internet package. While buying your SIM, ask for a recharge of the current pesos equivalent of US\$2. This is enough to have internet for a month and some more for calling Airbnb hosts, friends and the like.

If the internet is not working, try changing the APN in your phone settings to antel.lte.

To recharge, look out for the logos outside of kiosks, supermarkets and phone shops. If there is a logo of one of the companies, you can assume that they also recharge the others. You have to quote your phone number and how much you want to recharge. Pay the amount and wait for a confirmation text *before* you leave the shop.

To get your remaining balance call the number *77 (including the *) and press 3, when a computer voice starts talking to you. It's a good way to learn Spanish numbers.

You will get annoying texts from time to time, offering special promotions or just letting you know that it's a special day. Just ignore them; they are usually not worth your time and you risk ending up in some unwanted subscription.



Plugs & Power

Plugs in Uruguay are tricky. They mostly use the Italian system, with the thin 4 mm diameter. The sockets look like European ones but most of them are too small for the thick European plugs (5 mm diameter). The “European” plugs of universal adapters are usually fine. If you don’t have a universal adapter, get one. You might get lucky and find a thick socket sometimes, but don’t count on it. Voltage is set at 220V.

How to Meet Other Digital Nomads

Montevideo is not a digital nomad hub (yet), but it has quite a few expats and foreign students. The main communication tools are Facebook groups. They are easy to find by searching for Montevideo or Uruguay on the Facebook search. If you are a techie, there are also many Meetup groups for developers and the sort. There are also some groups for entrepreneurs and freelancers. However, for other topics Meetup is not that active, compared to big cities in other countries. Apart from that, check out the working friendly cafés and especially the coworking spaces in Part Two of this book to meet like-minded folks.



Food & Drink

Supermarkets

The major supermarket brands are Disco and Ta-Ta. Disco is often a little pricey, but they have a lot of variety in products and care a lot how everything looks. Ta-Ta stores tend to be everywhere though. Apart from that, there are many medium-sized and smaller places, often just called *almacén*.

Whether you have to weigh your veggies yourself, let an employee do it for you, or have them weighed at the checkout, depends on the supermarket, and can only be discovered by carefully looking out for a scale in the veggie department. The standards of appearance for fruits and veggies aren't as high as in Europe or North America, but this shouldn't discourage you from eating them. Learn how to differentiate between the weird-looking ones and the plain rotten.

Plastic bags are provided free of charge at all supermarkets. If you want to do something good, bring your own bag and politely decline the plastic bags. People will appreciate your effort to do something for the environment.

Beer bottles usually have a packaging deposit (*envase*). Coke bottles come in both deposit bottles (yellow cap) and in throw away bottles. Since the deposit bottles are usually cheaper even if you don't bring them back, go for those. To return bottles, big supermarkets have a machine, which gives you a receipt to hand in at checkout. In smaller places, the machine is replaced by a human. This system works way better than in most other countries in South America. Wait until you go to Argentina or Chile.

Cheese and ham (*fiambres*) are relatively cheap in Uruguay, but only the bigger supermarkets sell it pre-packaged. You usually get it at the counter. It's considered part of the service and 'fresher'. Uruguayans are quite proud of their well-organised, grab-a-number system, so even if no one else is anywhere near the counter, you might have to take one. Just point at the product you want and tell the person how much you want. About 200-300g (*dos/tres cientos*) is a good amount for a few days of sandwiches. If you have no clue which cheese to choose, just go for a cheap one. They are all pretty good.

Apart from the cold-cuts department, the ready-made food is something to point out. In big supermarkets, it's not limited to sandwiches but you will also find quiche, empanadas, pizzas, pasta meals, soups, roasted chicken and more. These are a great alternative if you are not in the mood for cooking but don't want to pay for a restaurant. Even in tiny kiosks you will still find a few sandwiches at your disposal. Sometimes they even have a microwave (for the quiche) to heat it up for you. Bakeries have this as well.

Specialty Shops

Greengrocers have a seasonal variety of fruits, veggies and spices, both imported and domestic. You often get better deals and more choice than in the supermarkets. You usually have to pay in cash.



Definitely visit some bakeries. The locals favorite sweet snack is the *alfajor*. Two cookies glued together with a huge amount of *dulce de leche* (caramel cream), often covered in chocolate, grated coconut and peanuts. It's called a snack but it might as well substitute a meal. If you are more into savory stuff, try the adorable mini croissants (*bizcochos*) with different toppings. They are cheap and make a great snack.

Street Food

Along the big Avenida 18 de Julio you'll walk into a guy preparing sugar-coated peanuts (*garrapiñada*) every other block. Small bags of this snack, hated by your dentist, cost US\$0.70 and all the guys sell it at the same price.

On the sideroads from the same avenue you'll find a small army of more permanent - rather than temporary - food trucks taking up a large parking spot. They have cameras inside and some of them even have WiFi. Slide open their windproof plastic doors and you enter fast-food safe haven: the grill is hot, the toppings look appetizing and someone is ready to take your order. They sell hamburgers (*hamburguesas*), hot dogs (*panchos*), the Uruguayan sandwich *chivito*, and the Brazilian sandwich *baurú*, among other things like sodas and the giant national cookies *alfajores*. There's no particular limit to the amount of toppings you can take; the only limit is the size of the bun. Ignore all of the above if you're trying to eat healthy. You can eat inside or take away.

Restaurants

Eating out starts with the legendary *chivito*, an epic sandwich with steak, egg, tomato and all kinds of veggies. You will find small restaurants advertising it on every corner. Get some fries on the side and your economic - but not super healthy - meal is ready.

Uruguayans love grilled meat and you will smell the grills (*parillas*) before you see them. The grills are often ridiculously huge and so are the animal parts on them. Just point out what you want.

If you are looking for something a little healthier, you will find amazing salads and sandwiches at many cafés and diners, especially in the more upper class neighborhoods of Pocitos, Punta Carretas and Carrasco.

Vegan diets are not unheard of and some places cater specifically to those who don't consume animal products. It's not tough to find food in Pocitos, Punta Carretas and Carrasco neighbourhoods - in both restaurants and shops - that caters to food-conscious folks. However, the entire country of Uruguay loves their *parrillas*: outside of the capital, vegan food can be near unfindable.



Some useful restaurant vocabulary:

A table for one - *(Una mesa) para uno*

To eat - *Para comer*

To drink - *Para tomar*

The menu - *El menú*

Water with/without gas - *Un agua con/sin gas*

Beer - *Una cerveza*

Juice - *Un jugo*

Smoothie - *Un licuado*

Milkshake - *Un batido*

Burger - *Una hamburguesa*

Hot dog - *Un pancho*

Uruguayan sandwich - *Un chivito*

Salad - *Una ensalada*

Vegetarian - *vegetariano*

Chicken - *Pollo*

Beef - *Carne*

Pork - *Cerdo*

The bill please - *La cuenta por favor.*

Is it possible to pay by credit card? - *¿Es posible de pagar con tarjeta de crédito?*

Include tip - *con servicio/propina*

Mate

Uruguayans are constantly drinking *yerba mate*, a finely chopped tea with a lot of caffeine and a bitter taste. People drink it in a special cup, called the *mate* with a metal straw (*bombilla*). It's often passed from person to person and nobody is disgusted by this. You will see people with a *mate* and a thermos with hot water everywhere: in the streets, shops, and parks. If you go for a stroll on the rambla, it's pretty much compulsory to bring your *mate*. If somebody offers you one, accept it. People like watching foreigners drink it. Don't move the straw, it's considered offensive. Watch out not to burn your tongue!



Transport

Entering the City

The airport of Montevideo is east of the Carrasco neighbourhood . You can take a normal city bus, which leaves right outside the arrivals terminal. For about US\$2, this is a very cheap option. Most of the buses take one hour to go to the main bus terminal in Tres Cruces, from there you can walk, take another bus or take a taxi/Uber to your place.

If this is too much hassle for you, look for the airport shuttles. For about US\$13 they drop you off right at your place, but might drop off other people first. Uber also works well and will charge you something around US\$25. Taxis are about US\$50.

If you arrive by boat from Buenos Aires, you will end up right in the old town from where you can walk or take a bus.

Getting Around

Montevideo has a dense bus network, but Google Maps is clueless so you have to go for the local website [Cómo Ir](#) or their app. Both are only available in Spanish. The app is a little more intuitive and easier to use than the website and you can set the start point to your current location. If you go for the website, you first have to put in your starting address and click on the orange pin saying *marcar origen*. Then repeat this with your destination and click on the purple pin saying *marcar destino*. Instead of a house number, you can also put in a crossing street. Alternatively, you can just drag and drop the pins below on the clunky map. Next, click on *ir en ómnibus* on the right to get a list of possible buses. Click on them to see the route on the map.

Uber is also working well. There was some resistance when it got introduced, but by now it's relatively accepted. There is an alternative app called EasyTaxi, which also works in many other South American countries. It's very similar to Uber.

Taxis are generally metered and drivers are mostly honest. If there is a 'problem' with the meter, take another taxi. The meters don't show the price in pesos but a number of units (*fichas*). There is a laminated chart in the taxi to translate the units into pesos. This way, the taxi companies don't have to issue new meters every time inflation strikes.

Where to Next

An easy to reach destination from Montevideo is Buenos Aires in Argentina. You usually first take the bus to Colonia del Sacramento and then the ferry to Montevideo. If you have the time, just book the bus to Colonia first and stay a few days in this beautiful town. Relax from the busy city life, before heading to the metropole of Buenos Aires. The ferry costs about US\$30. There are three companies: Buquebus, Colonia Express and Seacat Colonia. Since Seacat Colonia is part of Buquebus and pretty much offers the same service at a cheaper price, it's usually the best option. Pro tip: If you book the ticket on their website, compare the prices in Argentinian and Uruguayan pesos (click the flags at the top). Depending on the exchange rates, one of them can be half the price of the other.



Brazil's southern cities of Porto Alegre and Florianopolis are proverbially around the corner. Most of the international buses will cross the border at the bi-national town of Chuy/Chuí at Uruguay's Atlantic coast. They leave from the bus terminal at Tres Cruces and taking the bus instead of flying might save you a lot of money. You can buy them on the spot with your credit card. There's multiple companies offering different options, but most will include reclining seats and snacks for the road.

Another great location for digital nomads is Santiago, the capital of Chile. High standards of living, great street food and super-friendly people. A bus ride will take 24 hours, but the buses are very luxurious and you can often recline your seat 180°. It's part of a proper South America experience. If you opt for a flight, you will have to pay a little more, but it's still among the cheaper flights on the continent.

There is also a Digital Nomads Guide about Buenos Aires and we are in the process of writing one about Santiago. Check out our website digitalnomadsguides.com to get them!

For more amazing places in Uruguay, check out Part Three of this book.



Free Time

You didn't come to Montevideo just to work your butt off. So here are some ideas what to do in your free time.

Rambla Costanera

If you want to be out and about and don't have the energy to come up with something creative, you're never too far away from the coastal road (*la rambla*). It's easy and free. With a total of 22 km of uninterrupted walking path next to the ocean it never gets boring. You will be joined by plenty of *mate* drinking locals, joggers and bicyclists. Unfortunately, the city also decided to make the rambla the main city highway to connect one *barrio* to another. This makes crossing the rambla a bit scary and time consuming if there is no traffic light around. The permanent sound of cars can get to you during a long walk, so head down to one of the amazing beaches you can find all along the coastal road.

Parque Rodo

An odd creation between Pocitos and Palermo, this huge park features an artificial lake with an out-of-place looking castle. Apart from that, there is a photo exhibition and an amusement park with rollercoasters and everything. Head here at the weekend, and you also have a good chance of bumping into a market to make the weirdness perfect. If you are in desperate need for some peace after visiting the park, head to the beautiful *Playa Ramírez* west of the park. It's the only west-facing beach in the city. If you hang in long enough, you have a good chance of catching an amazing sunset.

Cannabis Tour

Yes, cannabis is legal in Uruguay. That being said, it's not legal to sell it to foreigners. So if you want to get some, you either have to make some local friends or book one of the cannabis tasting tours. Like a wine tour, you will go to different plantations and try the products. Unfortunately, these tours don't come cheap. Expect to pay around US\$200 for a full day tour.



Cerro de Montevideo

There are different legends about where the city name Montevideo originates, but they all agree that Monte refers to the only visible mountain from the city, the *Cerro de Montevideo*. Although, the word mountain might be a little euphemistic for a 134 meter high hill. Nevertheless, it's the best place to see the whole bay of Montevideo and shoot some nice pictures. On top of the hill is a fort with a little military museum. Not too exciting, but from the fort walls you and your camera have an even better view over the city. The *cerro* is a little outside the center but still within the city limits and reachable with the normal city buses. Definitely worth a trip.

Working Out

Crossfit has taken over Montevideo as well and there's gyms everywhere, especially the upper class neighborhoods of Punta Carretas and Pocitos. Make sure to choose something that suits you. If you're on a really tight budget, there are free simple exercise machines at many places along the *rambla*. This is also the obvious choice when looking for places to go running. You will be joined by plenty of walking, jogging and cycling Uruguayans. You will never be alone. Watch out for crazy cyclists in pursuit of their personal record.



Attitude

Uruguayans are fairly relaxed, for being known to constantly sip on their *mate* - even more so than their Argentinian neighbors. Even though Montevideo sees many foreign visitors, expect to draw some attention and have people ask where you are from and how long you are staying. You will always find help, if you ask.

WhatsApp and Facebook are the methods to stay connected short and long term. Communication with your Airbnb host will usually be via WhatsApp, so make sure to have that set up.

Unlike other South American countries, religion is not very important in Uruguay. Church and state are officially separated and about 40% of all Uruguayans are not religious.

People value their free time. Expect to have a hard time finding open cafés and restaurants during the weekend. Even knowing these would probably be their best business days, people often just prioritize their time with family and friends over their monetary gain.

Visa

Getting into Uruguay is quite relaxed. The entry is visa-free for citizens of the US, EU, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Russia, South America, pretty much all countries in Central America and some more. You can stay for 90 days, which can be extended once for another 90 days. The initial entry is free of charge, while the extension costs about US\$30. Alternatively, you can also go on a visa run to Buenos Aires to get a fresh 90 days.

As usual: Visa conditions can change anytime. While this information is accurate at the time of writing, check with your country's ministry of foreign affairs, or Wikipedia.

Safety

Uruguay is one of the safest countries and by far the most liberal one on the continent. There is not much to consider apart from common sense. The old town and especially the harbour area can feel a little sketchy, but are usually fine. You might want to opt for a taxi at night.

Tap water is perfectly drinkable in Montevideo. Be aware, as this is not the case in most other Latin American countries. Enjoy it while you can.

The traffic in Montevideo is relatively civilized. Zebra crossings are respected by most drivers (except for bus drivers) but you might have to confidently claim your right.

Last word of advice: The toilet paper usually doesn't get flushed into the toilet bowl in Uruguay (and pretty much all the rest of Latin America). If there is a bin available in public toilets, use it. In Airbnbs, put a plastic bag in the bathroom if there is no bin. Calling up your host because of a clogged toilet is the last thing you want to do. Get into this new habit, for everyone's sake.



Part Two: Barrio Guides

*Bonus material unlocked! Go to digitalnomadsguides.com > Montevideo > Bonus Material and enter the password **montevideomadness** to find an interactive map and more goodies to use in the city!*

The *barrios* are relatively small in Montevideo - and that's why we've grouped some of them together. The city can best be described as the corner of the country where import-export, international business, education and culture collide, at the location of the *Río de la Plata* that widens towards the Atlantic Ocean. From the namesake *Cerro de Montevideo* you can gaze at the cityscape across the Montevideo bay, a natural harbor. That bay is where the port (*puerto*) is located and thus the fairly stinky industrial area. The port is next to the Old Town (*Ciudad Vieja*) and a contributor to the sketchy feeling of the neighborhood. The economy that this port brings is the main reason Montevideo is Uruguay's capital city.

Montevideo stayed a small city until the beginning of the 20th century, when people left the countryside and came to the city. Roughly half of the country's population now inhabits the Montevideo department. Neighborhoods that used to be independent towns were swallowed up/agglomerated to the main city, most notably former beach resort Carrasco.

The city is fully encircled from the port in the old town to Carrasco and beyond by the famous seaside boulevard the *rambla*. There's many beaches along this road, with short interruptions by land tips (*puntas*) that demarcate where one beach ends and another begins.



Image credit: Wikipedia User Dr. Blofeld based on original work by Jordevi - [License](#)



Centro, Barrio Sur & Palermo

To kick off the specs for a successful trip to Montevideo as a remote worker, it's best to start in the three central *barrios* of the city. Fast-paced people still manage to sip away a *mate*, while a few lost tourists stand in their way. Bypass the crowds by taking a smaller street and notice the peace and quiet easily found when you play to your own rhythm. It pays to be countercyclical in Montevideo's core and Uruguay's backbone. You'll find yourself in good company with other cubicle escapees and pioneering souls. This is a magnificent introduction to a city that so often goes unnoticed.

Work

Sinergia

Avenida Gonzalo Ramírez 1676

Mon - Fri 09:00 - 21:00

84 Mbit (!)

From the outside, this dark building with a giant 'S' painted on the garage door looks permanently closed, but ring the bell and someone will buzz you in. Once inside and past the bicycles, you'll realize that you're in coworking heaven. A big spacious room with plenty of colorful chairs and busy people. The whole place has a great flair. Not too quiet, not too loud. And no, the WiFi speed of 84 Mbit is no typo. There are charging points inside every table. In the basement, you can find a kitchen, a big dining table and best of all: table tennis and table football. A great way to relax after work and to make new friends. Also, a great feature is the so called 'focus area' above the main room. People are asked to be more quiet there, so you can always switch based on your mood and workload. The whole place is very community focused and there are regular pitch events, barbeques on the terrace and more. You can get a 10-day pass for US\$98, but there are also some other options including an interesting 'night plan', which allows you to work at night. Check out their website for all the options. You can also try the free trial day, before committing to a plan. This place is how coworking was intended to be.

Café Central

Avenida 18 de Julio 1114

Mon - Fri 12:00 - 20:00

6 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★☆☆☆

Be careful not to walk by this place too fast as it only has a tiny storefront at a busy road. Once you're inside - outside of lunch hours - there's this moment that you feel you've entered an oasis of peace. It's generally quiet inside. Pick one of the small tables at the side, a high one or a low one and get settled in. There's some wicked photography on the wall if you need to phase out and think. In spite of the compactness of this place, they have a good kitchen that sells real meals like canelones and veggie schnitzel (*milanesa*). With your laptop



on the table there's not much space for other things, so order their adorably tiny *cortado* as a caffeine refill *slash* appropriately-sized drink.

Café Salvo

Plaza Independencia 11100

Mon - Fri 09:00 - 19:30

18 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★★★★

Tucked underneath Uruguay's most iconic building (Palacio Salvo) hides this small café with giant glass windows. It's an elite café with an excellent view of the palm tree-ringed Independence Square and a great place to hide when it rains. Around lunchtime there are many people in suits making deals or having meetings, but people aren't pushy regarding a dress code. Food and drinks are fairly cheap considering the clientele and interior. All things considered, it's surprisingly bright inside: emphasized by the white tables and floors.

Agosto

Maldonado 1945

Mon - Fri 12:00 - 20:00

24 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★★★★

A tiny and adorable place in the middle of Palermo. Everything is put together and decorated with a lot of love and attention to detail. You can feel that someone fulfilled their dream of having their own café. The fresh flowers on the table and French background music add some extra atmosphere. Apart from coffee, they have some delicious cupcakes and a huge wine menu. There is only one power point in the corner, so be there early if you are energetically challenged. Make sure to bring cash since you can't pay by card here.

Escaramuza Libros y Café

Dr Pablo de María 1185

Mon - Sat 09:00 - 21:00

28 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★☆☆☆☆

Having a café inside a bookshop is a great concept you'll find in many cities in South America. This combination usually guarantees some great working atmosphere. That being said, this café is one of the noisier candidates of its kind. Be there early and leave early before the masses arrive. There is a nice garden so if you don't need power, this can be a great alternative. The architecture of the building is absolutely gorgeous and worth the visit alone. The glass roof allows plenty of light to enter. Their menu is relatively simple, but try their great cakes. It's also a good place for a semi-formal meeting.



Santa Clara

Canelones 1648

Mon - Fri 11:00 - 21:00

3 Mbit

PowerScore ★☆☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★★★★

A few blocks away from the busy Avenida 18 de Julio is a quiet and often overlooked area of Montevideo, where a tower and a dome indicate the presence of a church. Closeby is a little corner café with the word “WiFi” not once, but twice, written in large font on its front doors. This is the well-kept secret of some business people who walk here on their break to have a decent plate of food before heading back to the office. They prepare the food with suavity and appreciation for the craft. Getting work done can be a challenge as there’s no easy-to-find charging points, but if you have a full battery you can have both a nice view and complete a good round of work with a cup of Joe at the single high table. Have a bottle of Uruguayan craft beer when you’re done.

Food & Drink

Bosque Bambú

San José 1060

Mon - Sat 11:30 - 15:00

A truly amazing Chinese vegetarian buffet in the back of a shop. Just grab a plate or a take-away container and fill it with everything you fancy. Apart from Chinese noodles, dumplings and the sort, you will also find many fresh salads. Don’t worry, you can’t really get it wrong. Everything is very tasty. If you like meat, don’t be put off by the word vegetarian. You might not even notice it. Your food gets weighed at the checkout. If you can resist the temptation to overload your plate, you will get full for about US\$6. Be aware that the buffet is only open at lunchtime. A great place to get a tasty and healthy lunch.



Ashot Shawarma

Zelmar Michelini 1295

Mon - Fri 11:00 - 17:00, Sat 12:00 - 16:00

The best kebab of Uruguay is found here. Inside there's loads of Armenian regalia, like flags, the Armenian alphabet, and beautiful photos of this Caucasus nation. The process is rather simple: you fill in a little form with your name, what you want and which toppings you want on it (limitless) and then you wait. You can choose between meat (*carne*), chicken (*pollo*), falafel or a Greek-style sandwich. That's it. Wait with a drink until your name is called and munch on your meal with *gusto*. Still have room for dessert? There's a few delightful options. It's not super cheap (US\$7 for the meat kebab) but you're not in Armenia. Your tastebuds will remember this place.

Candy Bar

Durazno 1402

Tue - Sat 12:00 - 15:00, reopens at 20:00 - 01:00, Sun 12:00 - 15:00

This innocent street corner transforms into a place of joy in the evening hours on warm nights. There's tattooed people shaking cocktails and spicing up your food in the open kitchen. The people of Candy Bar like to keep things simple for everyone. There's four dishes on the menu, one meat, one fish, two vegetarian, a bunch of tapas to choose from, and drinks for all. Everything has the same price inside each category. All meals are US\$10, tapas US\$5, and a big bottle of beer will set you back US\$6. Dimmed lights and a cozy interior will make a night out both comfortable and memorable.



Pocitos & Punta Carretas

These are Montevideo's hip neighborhoods and have some of the city's best beaches and sunset-watching spots. Punta Carretas is a fine peninsula with a lighthouse marking the southernmost point of the city, while Pocitos has the city's centerpiece beach (*playa Pocitos*). This is where Montevideo's most coveted residences are, since they're nicely situated between work and free-time places. Join the good vibes for a while and enjoy a daily dose of sunshine at the rambla.

Work

Co-Work Latam

Tiburcio Gómez 1330
24-hour access
10 Mbit

A big coworking space at the east end of Pocitos. As a member, you can access it 24/7 via their fancy fingerprint sensors. The atmosphere is relatively quiet and most people are deeply focused on their work. The interior is businesslike and professional (you could also call it cold). There is *mate*, coffee and water included in your plan. They only offer monthly plans, which might be a little inconvenient if you are only staying for a few weeks. The part-time plan allows you to work 100 hours per month and comes at US\$240, and the full-time plan with unlimited hours costs US\$350. There is also a cheaper option for US\$130, where you can only use the working places in the lounge and kitchen area as much as you want.

Medialunas Calentitas

26 de Marzo 1161
Tue - Sun 08:00 - 21:00
23 Mbit

PowerScore ★★★★★☆

ZenScore ★★★★★★

A great bakery and café. The specialty here is not hard to guess: go for some croissants (*medialunas*). It's a friendly place to work. Charging points are almost everywhere and it stays quiet throughout the day. The coffee is good and generously sized. Add some fast internet and the mix is perfect. Get some more take-away croissants to have a beach picnic afterwards. There is a second branch located at 21 de Setiembre 2982, which is a little smaller and a little less work friendly.



Hoy Te Quiero

Jaime Zudáñez 2601

Mon + Sun 12:00 - 21:00, Tue - Sat 09:00 - 21:00

20 Mbit

PowerScore ★★★★★☆

ZenScore ★★★★★☆

This harmonious and soothing café has a bustling terrace and ground floor. If you come looking for some peace and quiet, the friendly staff will help you find your way to the upstairs area. Here you'll find two big rooms, the bathroom, numerous charging points, and a second WiFi network - just for you! Great and fast service isn't limited to the downstairs area in the "I Love You Today" café. Come here with a group of up to eight people and order their spiced tea (tastes like Christmas!), juice in bucket-like glasses, or just coffee. Stuck in your work? Read one of the Deepak Chopra quotes, breathe in, breathe out and get back to it.

Café Martinez

Pedro F. Berro 640

Mon - Sun 11:00 - 00:00

15 Mbit

PowerScore ★★★☆☆

ZenScore ★★★☆☆

Café Martinez is a chain from Buenos Aires, crossing over to Uruguay. Everything is very professional and friendly. There's appetizing sandwiches, wraps, croissants and cakes for the sudden craving. If you only order coffee, you'll still get a few cookies and a glass of sparkling water on the side. Even during the busy lunch hours, the atmosphere stays relatively calm with jazz playing in the background. To score a charging point, head for the tables at the bench on the left after entering.

Coffee Shop

Bulevar España 2571

Mon - Fri 10:30 - 20:00

21 Mbit

PowerScore ★★★★★☆

ZenScore ★★★★★☆

A tiny storefront with the nondescript word "COFFEESHOP" leads you to a sweet little café with some remarkable features. All staff speak English. They have falafel and other amazing sandwiches. A coworking space without the badge. It's close to a university that floods the place at lunchtime: they might kindly kick you out if you don't order. Be willing to spend around US\$10 to get through the rush hours. The food is delicious though, so you won't regret eating lunch here. You can't pay by card.



Camelia

Av. 21 de Septiembre 2752

Mon - Sun 08:00 - 22:00

17 Mbit

PowerScore ★★★★★

ZenScore ★★★★★

This franchise of Camelia is on the corner of a busy street in the heart of Punta Carretas. On sunny days you can take a seat on the terrace - and sacrifice the amount of work you'll get done - or hide from the UV-rays inside, where a large team of employees helps you with your coffee order. There's a few things available for you to take home, with supermarket-style baskets and a fridge filled with food ranging from healthy to questionable. Their coffee bar and checkout has another little fridge with donuts and last minute mind-changers. At your disposal are single tables next to long benches, tall tables with matching chairs, and even a group-work corner pod, all with many charging points, and even USB charging points. Whoever came up with the concept had you in mind.

Yenny Bookshop & Oro del Rhin Café

Bvar. España 3000

Mon - Sun 10:00 - 22:00

16 Mbit

PowerScore ★☆☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★★★★

Located right at the rambla and designed with a giant glass front, you get some epic views of the beach from this café. It's the digital nomad cliché place where you will take those pictures to make people jealous. It's relatively expensive, but the juices and the coffees are pretty good. There are no charging points at all, so show up with a fully charged battery. The café is located inside a bookshop, which brings less zen than you would expect. The popular location leads to many people coming in and out. For more peace, there is a reading room with comfy leather chairs in the back. It comes with the trade-off of missing beach view and weak WiFi signal. But to be honest, the view is the real reason why you'd want to check this place out.

Food & Drink

Bulebar

Williman 647

Mon - Sat 12:00 - 00:00, Sun 12:00 - 18:00

American diner hysteria galore! Bulebar looks rather tame from the outside, but once inside you'll understand why folks are raving about this place. Their milkshake brings all the people to their excellent outdoor seating on sunny days, so maybe leave your vegan friends at home. Vegetarians can have a good time here though, with meatless versions of everything and salads and smoothies that will leave you satisfied. It's not the cheapest place, but all



portions are huge and come with a mix of potato and (gorgeous!) sweet potato fries. Hot sauce at one's pleasure. Go here when you have something to celebrate, or just because.

Montevideo Brew House (MBH)

Libertad 2592

Mon - Sat 19:00 - 00:00

Brewing culture is booming worldwide, but the crafty humans of MBH brought the trend right into the hip neighborhood of Pocitos. Hop by in the evening and get started with the sampler if you're curious about their local brew or not yet familiar with artisanal beers. Depending on your appetite, get a full dish of delish or a few *tapas* along with your ale, lager, IPA, stout, or pint of imperial something. Downstairs is the area with cozy corners and many tables good for groups of up to 12 people. Upstairs is a little more quiet and good for dates. Don't get too inebriated; it's relatively expensive.



Ciudad Vieja

While the Old City (*Ciudad Vieja*) emits a more sketchy vibe than the name implies, the municipality of Montevideo is doing its best to give this part of the city an update (read: gentrify). Once you manage to see through the off-putting things, you'll find that the Ciudad Vieja offers many cool places to hang out as a digital nomad and a visitor. If you're immune to pushy vendors, take a walk through the market (*Mercado del Puerto*) or watch the ships roll in at the dock of the bay. Roam the pedestrian zone of Sarandí street in the morning when the crowds are still small.

Work

Espacio Serratosa

25 de Mayo 745

Mon - Fri 06:00 - 22:00

20 Mbit

Like many of Montevideo's coworking spaces, Serratosa is quite new and shiny. It's by far the smallest coworking space of all and offers a few things that make it stand out. Most notable is its excellent café and restaurant Margat (10:00 - 18:00) separated from, but next to, your shared desk. As a member of the Serratosa community, you get a 15% discount on everything they serve: salads, cake, coffee and more. Talking about coffee: there's no free simple filtered coffee or basic kitchen available as of writing, but there's a water dispenser at the offices on the first floor for those leading the simple life. Keep an eye out on their agenda; if there's events, they might transform the whole shared-desk area into a conference room. A full-time month package comes at US\$240 and a 10-day pass costs about US\$130. There is also a single-day pass for US\$28.

The Lab Coffee Roasters

Colón 1513

Mon - Thu 12:00 - 18:00, Fri - Sat 10:00 - 18:00

19 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★★★★

A very hip place right in the old town. It's like entering another world when stepping in from the old and a little shabby street. The pretentious drinking ware is part of the package. Order a juice and you will get it served in a bottle right out of a chemistry laboratory. If you go for coffee, you will be asked what type of milk you want: regular, skim, quinoa, soy, they have it all. Part of the café looks like a museum, featuring things from the different coffee origins, brewing and filtering techniques. Working is actively encouraged by sweetly providing plug dividers and extension cords to everyone in need. A person in front of a Macbook is considered part of the flair.



Alfajores del Uruguay

Perez Castellanos 1600

Mon - Sat 11:00 - 18:00, Sun 12:00 - 16:00

20 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★★★★

It's something between a souvenir shop and a café, but it has a few excellent working spots for those who like to combine work and sightseeing; it's across from the Mercado del Puerto. They specialize in spectacular sugary snacks and offer plenty of hot caffeinated drinks to help you digest those. The small tables are good for high-concentration work and staff leave you unbothered - either out of understanding or not really caring, we're not sure. In need of a present? Get some chocolate-covered stuff for someone you apparently don't really know that well.

Café Bacacay

Bacacay 1306

Mon - Sat 09:00 - 04:00

22 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★★★★

Your go-to all-day café: from breakfast and coffee to cocktails and monumental salads, they do everything here. It might be the first place where the coffee is not too great, but it might inspire you to order something different. Those with tiny-bladder syndrome might realize that there's too many damn chairs in Bacacay (a common problem in South American cafés), but everyone else can just fit themselves snugly in a corner and never leave. Claim a spot that has a view of the spectacular Teatro Solis when you can, it's not a bad sight.

Librería Más Puro Verso

Sarandí 675

Mon - Fri 10:00 - 20:00, Sat 10:00 - 18:00

3 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★★★★

This bookshop with fairytale stairs has a café on the first floor where many locals meet for a business lunch. It doesn't feel completely acceptable to go sit there with your laptop flipped open, but nobody will tell you otherwise, so it's a grey area. The internet is quite *shite*: instead of getting proper WiFi, they have an open network named UNO WiFi, which will imminently kick you out after some time. Why would you go here then? It's central. Besides, the couches at the window have a nice view of Montevideo's busiest pedestrian zone.



Café Brasileiro

Ituzaingó 1447

Mon - Fri 09:00 - 20:00, Sat 09:00 - 18:00

19 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★☆☆☆

One of Montevideo's historical cafés is in a nice classical building with a wooden interior. On the tables are cards with the WiFi password and a disclaimer that it might not work for you - people in Uruguay are generally lazy with setting up their fast WiFi. If you have fixing skills, you can make it work for yourself though, see WiFi Speed and Availability in Part One of this guide. Staff are OK but not too friendly if you want to work. There are only two tables next to a charging point, so don't arrive with a big group. Maximum four people.

Food & Drink

Sin Pretensiones

Sarandí 366

Mon - Fri 09:30 - 18:30

No pretensions: the name says it all. The good people of Sin Pretensiones make you happy with their local, seasonal and honest food. You feel like you've walked into an oversized version of your grandparents' living room - if only they made you gnocchi (*ñoquis*) with a mean sauce! Besides all the Uruguayan comfort food staples, there's an excellent selection of teas and cakes for the small appetite. There are all kinds of antique items to please the eyes. On the walls are old posters, an odd bicycle, dried peppers and all sorts of paraphernalia. You'll walk out feeling nostalgic about a time you don't remember.



Carrasco

This barrio is best described as ‘filthy rich’. Yes, this is where the expats get to live when taking up a job in Montevideo. It’s the suburban dream: tennis clubs, international schools and the buzzing sound of gardeners mowing giant lawns to perfection. The Airbnbs are on the side of pricey, but the standard here is villas, not apartments. It’s the last *barrio* in the Montevideo department; travel further east and you enter the tasty-sounding Canelones department. That’s the location of Carrasco International Airport (MVD), Montevideo’s main flight hub to Europe, North and Central America, and of course other South American countries.

Work

Sinergia

Divina Comedia 1651
Mon - Fri 09:00 - 21:00
20 Mbit

This branch of the Sinergia coworking spaces is very new and at the time of writing partially under construction. It’s sponsored by the Banco Itaú, so look out for their logo when you are searching the place. It’s a very familiar atmosphere and the hosts will love to show you around. Check out the basement with table tennis, table football and even a racing simulator. The kitchen offers free *mate*, filtered coffee, drinking water and some basic cooking facilities. All the tables have convenient charging points inside the table. The prices here in fancy Carrasco are a little higher than in their Palermo branch. A full month costs you US\$183 and a 10-day pass comes at US\$116. They also have a daily pass for US\$31. Before you commit, you can have a free trial day. It’s hard to leave this awesome place at the end of the day.

Camelia

Dr Gabriel Otero 6437
Mon - Sun 08:30 - 20:00
30 Mbit

PowerScore ★★★★★

ZenScore ★★★★★

A coworking space without the label, this branch of Camelia has a huge working space and is blessed with a giant terrace for the sunny days. There are charging points in all corners and about half the customers have a Macbook in front of them. You almost feel weird for not getting out your laptop. If you need to focus, you can always find a quiet corner. As expected, the WiFi is super fast. The food here comes always in plastic take-away containers and ranges from salads, over wraps and sandwiches to noodles and burgers. It’s basically Starbucks’ savoury, hipster cousin. Love it or hate it, it’s a great place to work.



La Madriguera

Cambara 1614

Mon - Fri 08:00 - 19:00, Sat 09:30 - 00:00

24 Mbit

PowerScore ★★★★★

ZenScore ★★★★★

Don't miss it when walking by. The storefront is small and there is just a generic sign saying "Café" on the outside. The second you walk in you will know that you came to the right place. Delicious cakes wait for you behind the counter. All the employees are bearded folks who will make you the most amazing coffee. The whole interior is showing a lot of love for detail. A wooden ceiling, artsy lamps, bicycles and paintings on the walls, even a freaking piano. It's like you just walked into a hipster's living room. It's not huge though: there are six small tables, one big group table and a comfy couch. It's very likely that someone else is already busy on their laptop when you come to this place. And it's also very likely that this person is speaking English. Almost all tables have a charging point under the table. Pay them a visit.



Buceo, Malvín & Punta Gorda

These friendly *barríos* are situated in between the hip areas of Pocitos and Carrasco. It's not exactly where life is happening though. You will find some solid supermarkets and a few restaurants but it's not the best place to find work-friendly cafés. That being said, the beach here is almost completely uninterrupted and Airbnb prices can be lower than in the hip places, especially in winter. You might be able to score an affordable apartment with an awesome ocean view and a strong internet connection. If you are fine with working from home and enjoying the beach for a while, give these *barríos* a chance.



Part Three: Other Amazing Places in Uruguay

It would be a pity to come all the way to Uruguay and only enjoy the capital city. Uruguay is a country of amazing natural beauty and peaceful places - with great WiFi. Being a relatively small country, you can reach all of these towns from Montevideo in only a few hours time. Just type a name in Google images and you'll be booking your accommodation in no time! You can also find all cafés mentioned in this section in our online map. See the introduction of Part Two for more information.

Colonia del Sacramento

If you are looking for some time by the coast, visit the friendly town of Colonia del Sacramento. It's touristy, but in a relaxed and stylish way. Take a walk along the promenade, before enjoying a pizza or the Uruguayan - sandwich of the century - *chivito* in one of the ocean view restaurants. A fun and popular way to explore more of the town is by renting and driving around in a golf cart. It's a little silly, but loads of fun! Watch the sunset before heading back to Montevideo. Since a ferry trip from here to Buenos Aires is a lot cheaper and runs more frequently than from Montevideo, the trip to Colonia can also double as a visa run or a nice way to get to Argentina. Check out the Where to Next section in Part One for some info about the ferries.

Work

Ganache

Real 178

Fri - Wed 10:00 - 20:00, Thursday closed

10 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★☆☆☆

On sunny days, the outside terrace in this cobblestoned street in Colonia's old town is lovely, but to get proper work done you might want to sit inside. The staff will guide you to the corner with the strongest signal and the comfiest couches - it's not the first time they have heard this request. This place has a really sweet and colorful interior design. It feels like a living room from a few decades ago. Try some of the delicious pastries with a juice or a coffee, and sink into your chair until it's time to go.



Punta del Este

Uruguay's most famous statue of a hand emerging from the sand (*los dedos*) is actually not in Montevideo; it's in Uruguay's favorite seaside city Punta del Este. This land's end forms the official end of the river Plate (*Río de la Plata*) and where the Atlantic Ocean commences. Punta del Este is sometimes called the "Monaco of South America". Plenty of white luxury skyscraper hotels are lined up along the coast: it's terrible and impressive at the same time. However, hiding behind the pompous towers there are also hostels and Airbnbs available. Visiting Punta del Este is a very different experience, depending on the time of the year you show up. In summer, it's a packed beach town and you have to book in advance to get a bed for the night. In winter, the city is nearly dead and only a few cafés and restaurants stay open and put "open all year" signs proudly in their windows. The official kitesurfing area also begins between Montevideo and Punta del Este. Individual lessons cost about US\$60 per hour.

Work

Panificadora La 2

Avenida Francisco Salazar on the crossing with *Ma. E. Vaz Ferreira*

Thu - Tue 08:00 - 19:00, Wednesday closed

10 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★★★★

A beautiful bakery and café, open all year round. Select some goodies from the counter and enjoy them with a coffee. Our tip is the mini cheese croissants (*bizcochos*). Cheap and delicious. They also offer a selection of tasty sandwiches and a daily meal in case some croissants don't cut it for you. The WiFi is decent and you will be left unbothered if you need to get some work done.

Les Delices

29-Las Gaviotas on the corner with *Calle 20*

21 Mbit

PowerScore ★★☆☆☆

ZenScore ★★★★★

The cakes, pastries and pies on display will draw you inside, but the prices on the menu will keep your order to just a coffee, *por favor*. Les Delices is in a part of the *punta* in Punta del Este you'll definitely walk by and it's one of those few places open all year round. If you ask the waiter where the electricity is, they'll bring you to the one and only corner and leave you in peace with your *cortado*. Winter or summer doesn't matter: the prices won't drop. Make sure you only go here when you're not hungry; paying US\$12 for a slice of cake is pure extortion, and no, that won't buy you the whole cake.



Punta del Diablo

This place used to be a hippie village, which was discovered by Lonely Planet at some point and successively became an eco-tourism town. It's still a lot more relaxed than Punta del Este and you might actually be able to find a cabin with a proper ocean view on Airbnb. Only the main road is paved, while a permanently expanding network of dirt roads spans the rest of the town. The same seasonal rules apply like in Punta del Este: busy summers and ghost-town like winters. If you're slowly travelling to Brazil, Punta del Diablo is definitely worth a visit.

Cabo Polonio

If you want to disconnect from it all, head to Cabo Polonio. Cabo - as it's locally known - is located on the coast on the way to Punta del Diablo from Montevideo. There are a small selection of hostels, a single lighthouse and one very small 'shop' selling basic supplies. It's a town with no paved roads and less than 100 inhabitants. From the main highway, it is only accessible by walking the 7 kilometers across the sand dunes or by paying to take a 4x4 sand buggy.

There's no running water, electricity or WiFi, so this place is the perfect tranquil escape if you want to disconnect. The town is wind powered and has some generators. One of our authors stayed at a hostel that offered WiFi for a generous one hour a day.



Final Words

About Digital Nomads Guides

We are a starting travel guide for digital nomads, officeless expats and long-term travelers who need a break. Figuring out how to get comfy in a strange city as quickly as possible can be a hassle, that's why we did it for you! Parts of the businesses listed in our guides are crowdsourced by active Facebook groups, which we then check ourselves in terms of compatibility for work. As our guides are in ebook format, we can continuously update them as places run out of fashion or new environments appear.

Found a city on this planet that is great for digital nomads? Let us know about it via our contact form. If you wish to write a Digital Nomads Guides ebook yourself, get in touch with us!

The Authors of the Montevideo Edition

Jonas Breuer

Jonas is working as a [web developer and entrepreneur](#). He is focused on WordPress and affiliate websites and has published several WordPress plugins. After growing up in Germany, he discovered on a trip to China that working from far away is not really an issue. He lived in Sydney for a year until he decided to go digital nomad full time. Since then, he has visited plenty of places in Asia, Europe and South America - and published three books on the go!

Iris Veldwijk

She hitchhikes the world and writes about adventures on her blog [Mind of a Hitchhiker](#). Not so much a digital nomad as a long-term traveler, her expertise lies in existing on the bare minimum of cash and making friends without borders. Iris speaks five languages and learns a few more by just traveling to a place where it's spoken. In total, she has spent two years in Spanish-speaking countries - mainly with her thumb out. She really likes writing and finding out all the free stuff a place has on offer. And oh, she's Dutch.



Local Contributors

A big thanks to the amazing people from the Uruguay Expat Community and other Facebook groups. In no particular order: Alvaro Acosta Robledo, Angelica Courtin, Nicole Hoffman, Liana Georgescu, Christina Alexander, Sahand Minaei, La Cate, Mariane Clement, Ignacio Ocampo, Arvand Rood, Carolina Cabrera, Kleivi Blanco, Pablo Tronchon, Rafael Nobre, Kelvis Sosa, Prisca Torres, Flor Pizzani, Lala Antúnez and Camila Mata Lara.

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An extra special thanks to typo warrior Jess Whiteman, for proofreading the raw version of this guide several times.

Become a Contributor

You had a mediocre experience at one of our recommended cafés? Or you found a better way to find accommodation? We want to know! Send us an email to contact@digitalnomadsguides.com. We would love to hear your thoughts.

Have you spent some time in a great city and want to write your own Digital Nomads Guide? You're not alone, so let's talk! There might be a great opportunity here to work together.

Keep in Touch

Where are you heading next? Check our website if there is a guide for your next location. [Sign up for our newsletter](#) and like our [Facebook page](#).

Links

Since links are rather annoying in an ebook, we decided to put the not extraordinarily important ones here at the end. You can also find them in the online area. See the introduction of Part Two for more info.

iOS Apps

[WiFi Map to find passwords of café WiFis](#)
[Como Ir, bus connections](#)
[EasyTaxi, Latin American Uber](#)

Android Apps

[WiFi Map to find passwords of café WiFis](#)
[Como Ir, bus connections](#)
[EasyTaxi, Latin American Uber](#)

Coworking and Café Chains

[Sinergia Coworking](#)
[Camelia](#)
[Oro del Rhin](#)



[La Pasiva](#)

Mobile Internet

As usual, the mobile internet provider websites are super complicated: We recommend you just walk into a shop. If you are eager to figure stuff out yourself on their websites, here you go:

[Antel, biggest company and our recommendation](#)

[Movistar, biggest competitor](#)

[Claro, third relevant player](#)

[Prepaid data SIM wiki Uruguay, awesome website with all the relevant information](#)

Other

[Facebook Group Montevideo International Students](#)

[Facebook Group Uruguay Expat Community](#)

[Facebook Group Uruguay Expats](#)

[Great universal power adapter](#)

The End

Spectacular! You have reached the end of this guide. There is nothing more to see here. Go outside and enjoy Montevideo. See you in the next guide very, very soon! :)