SOUTH AMERICA

SIZE

- About 17.8 million km², roughly 12% of the world's land area.
- The 4th-largest continent, after Asia, Africa, and North America.
- About 430 million people in 12 sovereign countries, plus 2 territories (French Guiana and the Falkland Islands). Brazil is the largest country.

Global significance

- **Nature & Climate**
  The Amazon rainforest helps regulate global climate and stores carbon.
- **Natural Resources**
  A leading supplier of copper, lithium, iron ore, oil, and food.
- **Economy & Politics**
  Brazil and Argentina are members of the G20
  Brazil is part of BRICS, while Mercosur and the Pacific Alliance promote regional economic cooperation.
- **CUITURE**
  Football, Carnival, tango, samba, and the Inca heritage of Machu Picchu are notable cultural features**.**
- **HISTORY**
  South America was shaped by Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule and independence movements led by figures such as Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín.

DIVERSITY

PHYSICAL

- The Andes are the longest mountain range on land, about 8,900 km (5,500 mi) and Aconcagua is the highest peak outside Asia.
- The Amazon is the largest river by water flow, and its basin holds the largest tropical rainforest.
- The Atacama Desert in northern Chile is the driest non-polar desert on Earth, stretching over 1,600 km along the Pacific coast and renowned for its extreme aridity, unique landscapes, and astronomical observatories.
- Angel Falls is the world's tallest waterfall, located in Venezuela, with water dropping 979 meters (3,212 feet) from Auyán-tepui mountain.

BIOLOGICAL

Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador are megadiverse countries.

- The Amazon rainforest contains exceptionally high biodiversity.The Galápagos Islands are associated with Charles Darwin's observations that helped shape his theory of evolution.

Cultural & Ethnic

Quechua, Aymara, Guaraní, and Mapuche are legitimate Indigenous peoples of South America.

- The region includes people of Indigenous, European, African, and Asian ancestry.
- Many countries have substantial mestizo populations.

Linguistic

Spanish is the dominant language across much of South America; Portuguese is spoken in Brazil.

- English is the official language of Guyana, Dutch of Suriname, and French of French Guiana.

- Quechua, Aymara, and Guaraní are important Indigenous languages

Global significance

Nature & Climate

The Amazon rainforest helps regulate global climate and stores carbon.

Natural Resources

A leading supplier of copper, lithium, iron ore, oil, and food.

Economy & Politics

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CUTURE

Football, Carnival, tango, samba, and the Inca heritage of Machu Picchu are notable cultural features.

HISTORY

South America was shaped by Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule and independence movements led by figures such as **Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín.**

SIGNIFICANCE OF AMERICA TO THE PHILIPPINES

Historical Connections Between the Philippines and South America

The Philippines and South America developed historical connections during the Spanish colonial period through maritime trade networks.These connections facilitated the movement of goods, people, ideas, and cultural practices across the Pacific. Argentina, particularly Buenos Aires, was part of the broader network of Spanish colonial territories connected through trade routes.

Connections Between the Philippines and Argentina

Filipinos were recorded as living in Argentina as early as 1776, possibly sailors who left Spanish galleons. These connections facilitated the movement of goods, people, ideas, and cultural practices across the Pacific. Philippines and Argentina shared historical connections through Spanish colonial networks, migration, trade, and cultural exchange and these connections developed over more than two centuries.

Political Influence and the Philippine Independence Movement

- Filipino ilustrados studying in Europe learned about Latin American independence movements.
- José Rizal discussed Argentina's liberation with fellow reformists through correspondence and the Propaganda Movement.
- This provided examples for understanding decolonization and political reform.

South American history helped Filipino reformists understand independence movements and the struggle for national freedom.

Labor Market and Employment Opportunities

Historical examples show that Filipinos have established careers in South America, such as Felix Pardo de Tavera, a Filipino-born physician who lived in Argentina from 1895 to 1928 and became the head of pediatrics at a hospital in Buenos Aires. Stronger economic ties may also create opportunities for Filipinos in importing and exporting, logistics, agriculture, technology, and international business. Furthermore, cooperation in education, science, and energy can allow Filipino professionals and researchers to share knowledge, develop new skills, and build international networks. These connections can broaden career opportunities and support professional development.

A concrete example is the Philippines' agricultural trade with Argentina. In 2021, bilateral agricultural and fisheries trade reached US$333.15 million. Philippine exports included carrageenan, seaweed, desiccated coconut, and copra oil, while imports included soybean and other agricultural products

Cultural Exchange: Music and Dance

Argentina's tango became popular in the Philippines during the 1920s and 1930s, partly influenced by President Manuel Quezon. From 1937 to 1939, an Argentine tango orchestra visited the Philippines, and its director, Bernardo Alemany, composed Manila Tango in 1939. Meanwhile, the Filipino jazz band Manila Serenaders toured Argentina in 1933, where some members settled and established a Filipino community. Cultural organizations, such as Argentine Friends of the Philippines, further strengthened ties between the two countries. Today, Filipino tango artists Jenn and Jang Lopez continue to promote the dance.

https://asiasociety.org/philippines/cultural-connections-through-history-philippines-and-argentina-across-two-and-half-centuries

PERU

- Peru was historically connected to the Philippines through the Manila–Acapulco Galleon Trade.
- Callao Port in Peru served as a supplementary port to Acapulco, Mexico.
- The trade network facilitated the movement of goods and encouraged interactions between Asia and South America.
- Peruvian currency was accepted as legal tender in the Philippines from 1855 to 1858.

Significance to the Philippines: Peru's historical connections demonstrate how international trade linked the Philippines with South America and contributed to early economic and cultural exchanges.

Diplomatic Relations and Cultural Cooperation

Peru is an important diplomatic partner of the Philippines in South America. The two countries celebrated the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations in 2024. To commemorate this milestone, the Philippine Embassy in Chile organized cultural activities in Lima, including a University of the Philippines Rondalla concert, a Filipino film festival, a cooking demonstration featuring a Filipino chef, and lectures about the historical and cultural connections between the two countries. These activities promoted Filipino culture in Peru while encouraging greater awareness of Peruvian heritage in the Philippines. Such initiatives show that diplomacy involves more than formal agreements between governments; it also includes education,

arts, cuisine, and people-to-people connections. Stronger cultural relations can provide a foundation for deeper cooperation in other areas in the future.

Significance to the Philippines: Diplomatic and cultural initiatives strengthen international friendship and create opportunities for future cooperation.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Position Relative to the Equator and Prime Meridian

South America is a continent located mainly in the **Western Hemisphere** and **Southern Hemisphere**. However, its northern part extends into the **Northern Hemisphere** because the **Equator** passes through the continent.

Fourth-largest continent in the world, covering approximately 17.8 million square kilometers. It is known for its diverse physical features, including towering mountains, vast river systems, tropical rainforests, grasslands, deserts, and plateaus.

Surrounding Continents, Oceans, and Seas:

South America is surrounded by several major bodies of water:

- **Pacific Ocean** – located west of South America
- **Atlantic Ocean** – located east of South America
- **Caribbean Sea** – located north of the continent
- **Drake Passage** – located south of the continent, toward Antarctica

South America is connected to **North America** in the northwest through the **Isthmus of Panama**.

Extreme Points

The extreme points refer to the northernmost, southernmost, easternmost, and westernmost locations of the mainland.

Extreme Point	Location	Country
Northernmost	Punta Gallinas	Colombia
Southernmost	Cape Froward	Chile
Easternmost	Ponta do Seixas	Brazil
Westernmost	Punta Pariñas	Peru

These points show the large geographical extent of South America from north to south and east to west.

MAJOR LANDFORMS AND WATERFORMS

South America has a wide variety of physical features, including mountains, plateaus, plains, deserts, rivers, and river basins.

MAJOR LANDFORMS:

A. Andes Mountains

- The **Andes Mountains** are the most important mountain range in South America. They are located along the western side of the continent and extend from the northern part of South America toward the south.
- The Andes are approximately **8,850 kilometers long,** making them the **longest continental mountain range in the world.**
- The Andes pass through several countries, including Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina.

B. Amazon Basin

- The **Amazon Basin** is a **huge drainage basin** located mainly in the northern and central parts of South America.
- It is closely associated with the Amazon River and the Amazon Rainforest. The basin covers a large part of the continent and contains one of the world's richest ecosystems.
- It provides freshwater and serves as a habitat for thousands of species of plants and animals.

C. Pampas

- The **Pampas** are vast, fertile grasslands located mainly in **Argentina** and parts of **Uruguay**.
- Because of its fertile soil and relatively flat landscape, the Pampas is one of South America's most important agricultural regions. It is widely used for **crop production and livestock farming**.

D. Brazilian Highlands

- The **Brazilian Highlands** are a large area of elevated land covering much of eastern and central Brazil.
- They consist of plateaus, mountains, and valleys. Many important rivers originate in or pass through this region.
- The Brazilian Highlands are also important for agriculture, mining, and other economic activities.

E. Guiana Highlands

- Located in northern South America, covering parts of Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and Brazil.
- **Mount Roraima** is one of its most recognized formations.
- It contains waterfalls, forests, and unique plant species.
- One of their most distinctive features is the presence of **tepuis**, which are large, flat-topped mountains or plateaus.

F. Patagonia

- Located in the **southern parts of Argentina and Chile.**
- Characterized by plateaus, grasslands, mountains, glaciers, and lakes.
- Its climate is generally cold and dry in many areas.
- It is known for its dramatic mountain scenery and glacial landscapes.

G. Atacama Desert

- The Atacama Desert is primarily located in **northern Chile.**
- It is one of the **driest places on Earth**.
- Its extremely dry climate is caused by several geographical factors, including the Andes Mountains and oceanic conditions.

MAJOR WATERFORMS:

A. Amazon River

- The Amazon River is one of the most important rivers in the world. It carries the **largest volume of water of any river in the world.**
- The Amazon and its many tributaries form a huge river system that supports the Amazon Basin and its rainforest.
- It is important for transportation, freshwater, ecosystems, and the livelihoods of communities living along the river.

B. Orinoco River

- Located mainly in **Venezuela and Colombia.**
- One of the longest rivers in South America.
- Flows into the Atlantic Ocean through a large delta.
- Supports wetlands, forests, and diverse wildlife.

C. Paraná River System

- Flows through Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina.
- **One of the major rivers** of South America.
- Important for **transportation, fishing, agriculture, and hydroelectric power.**
- Forms part of the Río de la Plata drainage system.

D. Lake Titicaca

- **Located between Peru and Bolivia** in the Andes Mountains.
- It is **one of the highest navigable lakes** in the world.
- It is approximately 3,812 meters above sea level.
- It is an important freshwater resource for surrounding communities.

E. Angel Falls

- Located in **Canaima National Park, Venezuela.**
- It is the **world's highest uninterrupted waterfall.**
- Its total height is approximately 979 meters, including its longest uninterrupted drop of 807 meters.
- It flows from Auyán-tepui, a flat-topped mountain in the Guiana Highlands.

H. Iguazu Falls

- **Located on the border of Argentina and Brazil.**

- Consists of a system of hundreds of waterfalls.
- It is surrounded by tropical and subtropical forests.
- It is recognized as one of the largest and most spectacular waterfall systems in the world.

EXTREME LANDFORMS

Highest Point: Aconcagua

- **Aconcagua**, located in Argentina, is the **highest mountain in South America**.
- It reaches approximately **6,962 meters above sea level** and is part of the Andes Mountains. It is also the **highest mountain outside Asia**.

Lowest Point: Laguna del Carbón

- **Laguna del Carbón**, located in Santa Cruz Province, Argentina, is the **lowest point in South America**.
- It is approximately **105 meters below sea level**.

Longest Mountain Range: Andes Mountains

- The **Andes Mountains** are approximately **8,850 kilometers long**, making them the **longest continental mountain range in the world**.
- They form a major geographical feature along the western side of South America.

Highest Waterfall: Angel Falls

- **Angel Falls**, located in Venezuela, is the **world's highest uninterrupted waterfall**. It has a total height of approximately **979 meters**. It is located in the **Guiana Highlands** and is one of South America's most famous natural landmarks.

CLIMATE OF SOUTH AMERICA

- **Tropical Climate –** Found mainly in the Amazon region. It is generally hot and humid with abundant rainfall.
- **Desert Climate –** Found in the Atacama Desert, where rainfall is extremely limited.
- **Temperate Climate –** Found in parts of southern Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, with more moderate temperatures.
- **Mountain Climate –** Found in the Andes, where temperatures decrease as elevation increases.
- **Cold Climate –** Experienced in parts of Patagonia and the southern Andes, where temperatures can be very low.

FLORA

- **Rubber Trees –** Native to the Amazon region and known for producing natural rubber.
- **Orchids –** Flowering plants found in tropical forests and mountainous regions.
- **Bromeliads –** Plants commonly found in tropical forests, including pineapples.
- **Kapok Trees –** Large tropical trees found in the Amazon rainforest.
- **Grasses –** Commonly found in the Pampas and other grassland regions.
- **Cacti –** Plants adapted to dry environments, particularly desert regions.

FAUNA

- **Jaguar –** A large wild cat found in tropical forests and wetlands.
- **Llama –** A domesticated animal commonly found in the Andes.
- **Capybara –** The world's largest rodent, usually found near rivers and wetlands.
- **Anaconda –** A large snake that lives in tropical South American wetlands and rivers.
- **Toucan –** A tropical bird recognized by its large, colorful beak.
- **Andean Condor –** A large bird that lives in the Andes Mountains.
- **Sloth –** A slow-moving mammal commonly found in tropical forests.
- **Giant Anteater –** An animal that feeds mainly on ants and termites.

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

Number of Countries

South America is a continent located mainly in the Southern Hemisphere and the Western Hemisphere. It consists of 12 independent countries and several dependent territories.

Country	Capital / Seat of Government
Argentina	Buenos Aires
Bolivia	Sucre (Capital), La Paz (Seat of Government)
Brazil	Brasília
Chile	Santiago
Colombia	Bogotá
Ecuador	Quito
Guyana	Georgetown
Paraguay	Asunción
Peru	Lima
Suriname	Paramaribo
Uruguay	Montevideo
Venezuela	Caracas

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Regional organizations are groups of countries that work together to address common concerns, improve trade, promote peace, and strengthen political and economic relationships.
South American countries participate in several regional organizations and cooperation mechanisms.

MERCOSUR — *Southern Common Market (Mercado Común del Sur)*
Main focus: Trade and economic integration

- MERCOSUR promotes trade, investment, and economic cooperation among its member countries.
- Founding members: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.
- Bolivia has become a State Party, with a transition process for adopting the bloc's rules.
- Venezuela remains suspended from its membership rights and obligations.
- Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname are among its associated states.

Andean Community (*COMMUNIDAD ANDINA/CAN)*
Main focus: Andean regional integration

- The Andean Community promotes cooperation and integration among countries in the Andes region.
- Members: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.
- Works to facilitate trade and the movement of people among member countries.
- Encourages cooperation in transportation, customs, and other shared regional concerns.

UNASUR — Union of South American Nations *(Unión de Naciones Suramericanas*)
Main focus: Democracy, human rights, and security

- UNASUR was established to strengthen cooperation among South American nations.
- Its founding membership included all 12 independent South American countries.
- Its goals include political dialogue and cooperation in infrastructure, energy, education, health, and environmental matters.
- Its activities and membership participation have faced interruptions and changes because of political disagreements.
-

OAS — Organization of American States *(Organización de los Estados Americanos, OEA)*
Main focus: Democracy, human rights, and security

- The OAS is a broader organization covering countries across North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.
- Promotes democracy and the protection of human rights.
- Supports peaceful resolution of disputes.
- Encourages cooperation on security and development.
- South American countries participate alongside other countries in the Americas.

CELAC — Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
Main focus: Political dialogue and cooperation

- CELAC brings together Latin American and Caribbean countries for regional dialogue and cooperation.
- Includes South American countries as well as countries from other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Provides a forum for discussing regional development, economic cooperation, and international relations.
- Helps countries coordinate positions on issues of shared interest.

<u>INFLUENTIAL COUNTRIES</u>

1. Brazil

- The largest country in South America in both land area and population.
- One of the continent's largest economies and a major producer of agricultural products, iron ore, and other commodities.
- Plays an important role in international organizations, climate discussions, and regional cooperation.
- The Amazon Rainforest gives Brazil a major role in global environmental issues.

2. Argentina

- One of the largest economies and countries in South America.
- Important in agriculture, livestock production, energy, and mineral resources.
- A founding member of MERCOSUR, which promotes regional economic integration.

- Has considerable influence in regional diplomacy and international trade.

3. Colombia
- One of the continent's major countries in population and economic activity.
- An important producer of coffee, petroleum, coal, and other goods.
- Plays a significant role in regional diplomacy, trade, and security cooperation.
- Participates in regional organizations, including the Andean Community.

4. Chile
- A major producer and exporter of copper and lithium, which are important for electronics and renewable-energy technologies.
- Maintains extensive international trade relationships.
- Participates in regional economic cooperation and international diplomacy.
- Its mineral resources contribute to the global supply of materials used in electric vehicles and batteries.

CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

Population & Demographics

A **population** is the total number of inhabitants, organisms, or items living or existing in a specific region, area, or context. While **Demography** is the statistical study of human populations. It looks at the size, structure, and movement of groups of people over time and space.

The total population of South America is approximately 441.3 million people in 2026.

- The current population of South America is **441,341,574** as of Tuesday, **October 20, 2026** based on Worldometer's elaboration of the latest United Nations data.
- South America's population is equivalent to **5.31% of the total world population.**
- South America ranks number 1 in Latin America and the Caribbean among subregions ranked by Population.
- The **population density** in South America is **25 per Km² (65 people per mi²).**
- The total land area is 17,461,112 Km² (6,741,770 sq. miles). **88.7% of the population is urban (390,840,159 people in 2026)**
- The **median age** in South America is **33.5 years.**

Indigenous groups, mestizo populations
- **Indigenous groups are a distinct** community of people who trace their original ancestry to a specific region before it was colonized or dominated by other groups.

Major Indigenous Groups and Populations
a. **Quechua:** Spanning Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Chile, numbering over 8 to 10 million people as the largest Indigenous language family in the Americas.
b. **Aymara:** Primarily in Bolivia, Peru, and northern Chile, with a population of roughly 2 to 3 million.
c. Mapuche: Native to south-central Chile and Argentina, with a population around 1.5 to 2 million.
d. **Guaraní:** Living across Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia, numbering around several hundred thousand to over a million combined.
e. **Yanomami:** An Amazonian group residing along the Brazil-Venezuela border, numbering roughly 35.000 to 38.000.

f. **Asháninka:** One of the largest Amazonian Indigenous groups in Peru and Brazil, with over 100,000 members.
g. **Wayuu:** Located in the Guajira Peninsula of Colombia and Venezuela, with a population over 400,000.

Indigenous Population by Country (Self-Identification/Estimates)
Country
Approximate Indigenous Population / Share

1. **Bolivia**
   -4.4 million (38%-62% depending on census criteria)
2. **Peru**
   -6 to 7 million (~20%-26% of population)
3. **Brazil**
   ~1.6 million (0.5% of population)
4. **Colombia**
   -1.9 million (~3.4% of population)
5. **Chile**
   ~2.2 million (~11.4% of population)

1. **Brazil:** Home to over 14 million Indigenous individuals and hundreds of distinct ethnic groups (such as the Ticúna and Yanomami) mostly located in the Amazon basin.
   Ticúna- The most populous Indigenous group in Brazil (over 74,000 in Brazil alone, totaling ~90,000 across borders).
   Yanomami- One of the largest relatively isolated groups in the Amazon, totaling around 35,000–38,000 people.

2. **Peru**: Has roughly 6 to 8 million Indigenous citizens, with major Quechua and Aymara populations in the Andes alongside numerous Amazonian groups.
   Quechua- people are the largest Indigenous ethnic group in South America, with a total population numbering around 10 to 11 million people. direct descendants of the ancient Inca Empire and other pre-Columbian Andean civilizations.

3. **Bolivia** has the highest proportion of indigenous peoples in South America, with roughly 41% to over 48% of its population self-identifying as indigenous. The country officially recognizes 36 distinct indigenous ethnic groups, embedded within its identity as a plurinational state.
   Major Indigenous Groups
   • Quechua: about 49.5% of the indigenous population
   • Aymara: about 40.6% of the indigenous population, centered in the high Altiplano region and urban hubs
   • Chiquitano (3.6%), Guaraní (2.5%), Moxeño (1.4%)
   eastern lowlands and Amazonian basins.

4. **Colombia**: indigenous population is estimated at roughly **2.5 million people**, making up about **4.7% of the total national population**. The country recognizes **115 distinct indigenous peoples** who live across the Amazon, Andean, Caribbean, and Pacific regions, holding legal title to nearly one-third of the nation's land through collective reserves known as resguardos. (resguardos are legally recognized, **collective indigenous lands that cover about 31.5% of the national territory (roughly 36 million hectares).** Governed autonomously by traditional authorities, they

protect ancestral cultures, grant resource autonomy, and play a vital role in conserving the Amazon and Andean ecosystems.)

5. **Chile**: Includes roughly 2 million Indigenous people, with the Mapuche forming the largest group.
   Mapuche: Based mainly in the Central Valley of Chile and southwestern Argentina, with a population near 2 million.

Mestizos — Mestizo is a term of Spanish origin (derived from the Latin word mixtus, meaning "mixed") used to describe a person of combined European and Indigenous American descent.

Ecuador (83.7%)
Peru (71.4%)
Paraguay (54.4%)
Bolivia (53.1%)
Colombia (52.4%)

• **High-Mestizo Nations**: Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Colombia have the highest self-identified or demographic majorities of Mestizos on the continent.
• **Moderate to Mixed Nations:** Venezuela, Chile, and Argentina also have significant admixed or Mestizo populations, though definitions vary between cultural self-identification and genetic ancestry. For instance, Argentina's Mestizo population is estimated around 16.3%, concentrated in the northwest and urban migration centers.
• **Lower Proportions**: Countries like Brazil and Uruguay report much lower percentages of people who specifically identify as Mestizo (around 12%–13%), though Brazil features a large multi-ethnic/Pardo population.

Culture & Traditions

- **Culture** is the shared set of beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and arts that characterize a group, society, or organization.
- **Tradition** describes customs, beliefs, art, or practices handed down through generations and kept alive over a long time.

1. The **Rio de Janeiro Carnival** is a world-famous pre-Lenten festival in Brazil featuring the official Grupo Especial samba school parades at the Sambadrome and massive open-air street parties called blocos. The Rio Carnival celebrates Brazilian culture, music, and dance—most notably samba—as a final major period of joy, freedom, and indulgence before the start of the Catholic season of Lent.

2. The **Inti Raymi** (Quechua for "Inti festival") is a traditional religious ceremony of the Inca Empire in honor of the god Inti (Quechua for "sun"), the most venerated deity in Inca religion. It was the celebration of the winter solstice – the shortest day of the year in terms of the time between sunrise and sunset – and the Inca New Year, when the hours of light would begin to lengthen again. Celebrated on June 25, the Inti Raymi was the most important festival of the Inca Empire, as described by Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and took place in the Haukaypata, the main square of Cusco. Today, the festival is recognized as the second-largest festival in South America and the most important and well-attended celebration of the year in Cusco, attracting thousands of visitors from across Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and around the world.

3. **Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) –** Mexico: A multi-day holiday where families honor deceased loved ones by building private altars (ofrendas) decorated with marigolds, photographs, and favorite foods.

• October 31 (Halloween): Families finish setting up altars; gates of heaven open at midnight for the spirits of children (Día de los Angelitos).
• November 1 (All Saints' Day): Day to remember and honor children who have passed away.
• November 2 (All Souls' Day): Spirits of adults return to visit (Día de los Difuntos), and public celebrations reach their height.

Football

Football first came to South America in the 19th century through the port of Buenos Aires, Argentina, where European sailors played the game. Members of the British community there formed the first club, the Buenos Aires Football Club (FC), in 1867; about the same time, British railway workers started another club, in the town of Rosario, Argentina. The first Argentinian league championship was played in 1893, but most of the players belonged to the British community, a pattern that continued until the early 20th century.

Tango

In the late-19th and early-20th centuries, a huge influx of European immigrants brought polkas, waltzes, and other dances into Argentina. The cities of Buenos Aires and Montevideo (in Uruguay) became a melting pot. The European dances mixed and merged with African candombe dances and the Habanera from Cuba and the early tango was born.

Initially, the tango was practiced in the working-class communities of the Río de la Plata region—the area around Buenos Aires and Montevideo. The dance soon spread amongst the upper classes of the cities, who brought the tango to Europe. It experienced an explosion of popularity there, especially in Paris. Rudolph Valentino's tango scene in 1921's The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse was the first to shine the Hollywood spotlight on tango.

Tango dance partners hold each other closely, with the male partner leading the movements. But the music is also a vital element—singers and lyricists like Carlos Gardel played an equally vital role in developing what we now know as tango. The dance form remains in the international limelight today, with tango and ballroom dance competitions, but its strongest presence is still felt in the clubs and theatres of Argentina.

Samba

The dance drew its roots from African immigrants living in the state of Bahia in northeastern Brazil. Congolese and Angolan religious ceremonies were accompanied by circle dances and a style of music called samba de roda—roda meaning wheel in Portuguese. The music had an upbeat, call-and-response rhythm that relied heavily on drums, and the dances featured rhythmic hip movements.

The popularity of this style soon spread down into Rio de Janeiro, and different neighborhoods called "blocos" would put their own spin on the dance. These variations of samba led to the formation of Brazil's samba schools. While the schools are a place for teaching and refining the craft, they're really more of a community that includes thousands of dancers, singers, and musicians.

These schools helped to develop samba as we know it today, and their biggest event of the year is Carnival—a week-long celebration in Rio leading up to Ash Wednesday. Twelve of the top samba schools

perform 80-minute choreographed routines featuring incredible floats and costumes. Carnival is also celebrated in the blocos, keeping the original spirit of samba alive.

Major Religions:

1. Roman Catholicism

~50-70%

LARGEST in South America over 50% in ALL South American countries *except Uruguay and Suriname.*

Brazil has the MOST Catholics in the world- 63%.

1.1 Other Christian Denominations (Protestant / Evangelical)

~11-22%

- *Brazil* 22.2% (~44 million) *highest number in South America*. 89% are Pentecostals (Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists).
- Argentina Up to 15%
- Chile 13% Protestant + Mormons 540k (3.3% of Chile)
- Uruguay 11.1%

2. Islam

~0.1-0.7% — *2nd largest growing NON-Christian religion*

- *Argentina Largest Muslim population* group in South America. 3.5M Argentinians are Arab descent. Has largest mosque in Latin America. King Fahd Islamic Center in Buenos Aires (1996).

3. Judaism

~0.1-0.3%

- *Argentina has the largest Jewish population in South* America, over 300k.

Other Religious Groups + Unaffiliated ~5-15%

- *Includes*:
- Baha'i
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Kardecist Spiritism
- Umbanda
- Shinto

Non-religious

- Agnostic
- Atheist

South America (approx)

- Catholic ~ 60%
- Protestant/Evangelical ~ 20%
- Non-religious/Agnostic ~ 10-15%

- Other (Islam, Judaism, Buddhism etc) ~ 2-5%

LANGUAGE	NATIVE SPEAKERS IN SOUTH AMERICA	COUNTRY
Spanish	210-220M	Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela + Guyana/Suriname. Most widely spoken, 9 countries
Portuguese	~210-215M	Brazil (~203M in 2022). Most commercially decisive
Quechua	>13M	Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador + Argentina, Chile, Colombia. Largest Indigenous language family in Americas
Guarani	~6M	Paraguay (70% speak it daily), N. Argentina, S. Brazil, Bolivia. Only Indigenous language co-official and alive in a modern state
Aymara	~2-2.2M	Bolivia, Peru, N. Chile, N-W Argentina. Around Lake Titicaca
Other indigenous	Several 100k	Mapudungun (100-200k), Wayuunaiki (400-420k), Kuna (50-70k), Embera (~70k), Nasa Yuwe (60-75k), Ashaninka (63k) + Brazil has 295 Indigenous languages
English, French, Dutch	~5.4M	English: Guyana + business hubs French: French Guiana (~316k). Dutch: Suriname (60%+ speak Sranan Tongo + Dutch)
Arabic & Japanese	Heritage speakers	Brazil has largest Arab diaspora (7-12M ancestry) largest Japanese diaspora (2-2.7M ancestry) outside Japan

<u>Five Significant Cultural Landscapes:</u>

Machu Picchu- Machu Picchu is a 15th-century Inca citadel perched on a mountain ridge 2,430 meters (7,970 feet) above sea level in the Cusco Region of Peru.

Iguazu Falls- Iguazu Falls is the largest waterfall system in the world, located on the Iguazu River on the border between Argentina and Brazil. The system spans roughly 2.7 kilometers (1.7 miles) wide and

includes about 275 individual waterfalls and cascades. 60 to 82 meters (200 to 269 feet) high, with the centerpiece being the horseshoe-shaped Devil's Throat.
Rapa Nui- Rapa Nui also known as Easter Island is most famous for its nearly 1,000 gigantic stone statues called moai, which were carved by the early Rapa Nui people. These massive monolithic human figures mostly feature large heads and were carved from volcanic tuff in the Rano Raruku quarry between 1250 and 1500 CE. They represent deified ancestors and stand upon stone platforms called ahu.
Lake Guatavita- Lake Guatavita is a sacred circular crater lake located in the Cordillera Oriental of the Colombian Andes, about 57 km (35 miles) northeast of Bogotá near the towns of Sesquilé and Guatavita. Sits at an altitude of approximately 3,000 meters (9,843 feet) above sea level, with a surface area of about 19.8 hectares and a maximum depth of around 125 meters (410 feet).
Rio de Janeiro- Rio de Janeiro is a huge seaside city in Brazil, famed for its Copacabana and Ipanema beaches, 38m Christ the Redeemer statue atop Mount Corcovado and for Sugarloaf Mountain, a granite peak with cable cars to its summit. The city is also known for its sprawling favelas (shanty towns).

ECONOMIC

5.1. Natural Resources

Minerals and metals

- **Copper:** Chile is the world's largest producer (Escondida is the biggest mine). Peru is also a top producer.
- **Lithium:** The "Lithium Triangle" of Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia holds a large share of the world's known reserves. Lithium is key to EV batteries.
- **Iron ore:** Brazil (Carajás, Minas Gerais) is one of the top exporters worldwide.
- **Gold and silver:** Peru, Brazil, Colombia, and Suriname.
- **Others:** Tin and natural gas (Bolivia), bauxite (Brazil, Guyana, Suriname), and emeralds (Colombia).

Energy

- **Oil:** Venezuela has among the largest proven reserves in the world. Brazil (pre-salt offshore fields), Colombia, Ecuador, and Guyana (a new, fast-growing producer) are also important.
- **Hydropower:** Brazil and Paraguay (Itaipú Dam) produce a large share of their electricity this way.

Agricultural and biological resources

- **Land and climate:** The Amazon Basin, the Pampas, and the Cerrado are major farming zones.
- **Forests:** The Amazon rainforest is the largest tropical forest in the world, with timber and enormous biodiversity.
- **Fisheries:** The Humboldt Current off Peru and Chile supports one of the richest fishing grounds (anchovy, fishmeal).

5.2. Major Industries

1. **Agriculture**
    - Brazil leads in soybeans, coffee, sugar, beef, and orange juice.
    - Argentina: soybeans, corn, wheat, beef.
    - Colombia: coffee, cut flowers, bananas. Ecuador: bananas, shrimp, cacao.
    - Chile and Peru: fruits (grapes, blueberries, avocados), wine (Chile, Argentina).

2. **Mining:** Copper (Chile, Peru), iron ore (Brazil), lithium, gold.
3. **Energy:** Oil and gas, plus biofuels. Brazil is a major producer of ethanol from sugarcane.
4. **Manufacturing:** Manufacturing is mainly centered in Brazil (São Paulo area) and Argentina, including automobiles, aircraft (Embraer), steel, machinery, food processing, and textiles.
5. **Fishing and aquaculture:** Peru, Chile (salmon farming), Ecuador (shrimp).
6. **Services and tourism:** Machu Picchu (Peru), Galápagos (Ecuador), Patagonia, Iguazú Falls, Salar de Uyuni, and Rio's Carnival. Finance and services form the largest share of GDP in most countries.

5.3. Significance of South America in the Global Economy

A. Role in the World Economy

1. Supplier of raw materials and energy

- **Copper:** Chile is the world's largest producer (Escondida is the biggest mine), and Peru is also a top producer. Copper is vital for wiring, electronics, and EVs.
- **Lithium:** The **Lithium Triangle** (Chile, Argentina, Bolivia) holds a large share of the world's known reserves. Lithium is key to batteries and renewable energy.
- **Iron ore:** Brazil (Carajás, Minas Gerais) is among the top exporters, supplying the world's steel industry.
- **Oil and gas:** Venezuela has among the largest proven oil reserves in the world. Brazil (offshore pre-salt fields), Colombia, Ecuador, and **Guyana** (a fast-growing new producer) are also important. Bolivia exports natural gas.
- **Precious metals:** Gold and silver from Peru, Brazil, Colombia, and Suriname.

2. Major global food supplier

- **Brazil:** One of the largest exporters of soybeans, coffee, sugar, beef, chicken, and orange juice.
- **Argentina:** Soybean meal and oil, corn, wheat, and beef.
- **Ecuador:** The world's top banana exporter, also shrimp and cacao.
- **Peru and Chile:** Fruits (grapes, blueberries, avocados), fishmeal, salmon, and wine.
- Because of this, South America is considered an **agricultural powerhouse** and an important pillar of global food supply.

3. Large and growing economies

- **Brazil** is the region's biggest economy and one of the largest in the world. It is a member of **BRICS** and the **G20**.
- **Argentina** is also a G20 member. Colombia, Chile, and Peru are important middle-income economies.

4. Key trading partners

- **China** is now the top trading partner of many South American countries, followed by the **US** and the **EU**.

5. Limitation

- Many economies depend heavily on commodity exports, so they are vulnerable to price swings.

B. Regional Trade Blocs

Mercosur (Mercado Común del Sur / Southern Common Market)

Founded	1991, through the **Treaty of Asunción**. It became a customs union in 1994 (Ouro Preto Protocol).
Full members	Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and **Bolivia** (full member since 2024, still adopting the bloc's rules)
Venezuela	Joined in 2012, **suspended** since 2016
Associate states	Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and others (trade agreements, not full members)
Headquarters	Montevideo, Uruguay
Official languages	Spanish and Portuguese

Goals

- Free movement of goods, services, and factors of production among members.
- A **Common External Tariff (CET)** applied to non-members.
- Coordinated trade policy and deeper economic integration.

Key points

Largest trade bloc in South America by population and economic size, with **Brazil** and **Argentina** as its leading economies. Strong in **agriculture** (soybeans, beef, corn) and **manufacturing** (especially automobiles). Has pursued trade agreements and negotiations with partners such as the **European Union (EU)** and countries in Asia.

Pacific Alliance (Alianza del Pacífico)

Founded	2011 (Lima Declaration). The framework agreement was signed in 2012 and took effect in 2015.
Members	Chile, Colombia, Peru, and **Mexico** (a North American country, but Latin American in culture)
Observer states	Many countries across several continents
Headquarters	None. It rotates through a pro tempore presidency.

Goals

- Free movement of **goods, services, capital, and people** among members.
- Serve as a **gateway to the Asia-Pacific** market.

- A more open, market-oriented approach than Mercosur.

Key points

- It is considered one of the most integrated blocs in Latin America.
- Main exports: copper (Chile, Peru), oil and coal (Colombia), and manufactured goods (Mexico)

Quick Comparison

	Mercosur	**Pacific Alliance**
Location	Atlantic side and interior	Pacific coast
Approach	Customs union with common tariff	Free-trade, more open
Focus	Agriculture and industry	Asia-Pacific trade and investment
Largest member	Brazil	Mexico

Country	**Main Exports**
Brazil	Soybeans, iron ore, crude oil, sugar, coffee, beef
Argentina	Soybean meal and oil, corn, wheat, beef
Chile	Copper, lithium, fruits, salmon, wine
Peru	Copper, gold, zinc, fishmeal, fruits
Colombia	Crude oil, coal, coffee, cut flowers, bananas
Venezuela	Crude oil
Ecuador	Crude oil, bananas, shrimp, cacao
Bolivia	Natural gas, zinc, tin, soybeans
Paraguay	Soybeans, beef, hydroelectric power
Uruguay	Beef, soybeans, pulp, dairy
Guyana	Crude oil, gold, bauxite, rice
Suriname	Gold, oil, bauxite

D. Significance to the Philippines

1. Imports from South America

- **Animal feed:** Soybean meal (Argentina, Brazil) and fishmeal (Peru) support Philippine poultry, hog, and aquaculture industries.
- **Meat:** Frozen chicken and pork from Brazil help supply local demand.
- **Minerals and food:** Copper concentrate, coffee, fruits, and wine.

2. Philippine exports to South America

- Electronics and semiconductors, coconut products, and processed foods.
- Volume is still small compared to Asia, the US, and the EU. Brazil is usually the largest partner in the region.

3. Competition

- Ecuador competes with the Philippines in banana exports, and Chile and Peru compete in fruit exports.

4. Labor market

- Few Filipinos work in South America, mostly professionals, seafarers, and BPO-related workers. It is a small but potentially growing destination.

5. Trade blocs and the Philippines

- As a Pacific country, the Philippines naturally connects with the **Pacific Alliance** through Asia-Pacific trade.
- **Mercosur** is more relevant to our imports of soybean meal and meat from Brazil and Argentina.

6. Historical and cultural ties

- The **Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade (1565-1815)** linked Asia and the Americas, with silver from Spanish America, including Potosí in present-day Bolivia, flowing to Manila.
- We share a Spanish colonial past, Catholicism, and many Spanish loanwords.
- Football (Brazil, Argentina), telenovelas, and music are everyday cultural links today.

7. Effect on Philippine prices

- Changes in South American soybean, copper, and oil output and prices affect the cost of feed, electronics, and fuel in the Philippines.

Challenges Faced by South America

Political

Rise of Far-Right Politics and Political Polarization

One of the main challenges is the growing conflict between right-wing or far-right political movements and left-wing or progressive groups. These opposing sides have different views on economic policies, social welfare, labor rights, and the role of government. This political division makes it difficult to establish stable leadership and reach agreements on national issues.

Foreign Intervention and Threats to National Sovereignty

United States intervention in South America creates challenges for countries seeking to make independent political and economic decisions. It discusses pressure on governments, military involvement, and competition for influence over strategic resources and international partnerships.

Impact: Foreign pressure can complicate diplomatic relations, create tension between governments, and raise concerns about a country's ability to control its own political decisions and natural resources. This is the article's interpretation of the situation, not a neutral consensus on every specific event.

Corruption and Political Instability

Corruption and declining public trust are other major political challenges. Political scandals, disputed elections, weak political parties, and repeated government crises can undermine confidence in democratic institutions.

- **Peru**: Repeated political crises, corruption allegations, and fragmentation among political parties.
- **Brazil**: Controversies involving political institutions, public spending, and government accountability.
- **Argentina**: Corruption scandals involving government figures and officials.

Economic

Slow Economic Growth: GDP growth has been structurally weak, averaging under 2% to 2.2% recently after a sluggish 0.9% average growth rate between 2014 and 2023. Economists often label this extended slowdown a "second lost decade".
High Informal Labor: The informal economy accounts for roughly 48% of total labor activity, which limits tax revenues, weakens social security systems, and depresses formal job creation
Institutional Weakness and Insecurity: Widespread crime, cartel violence, and corruption strain public budgets, deter long-term foreign investment, and inflate the cost of doing business.

Social

Extreme Income Inequality: South America remains one of the most unequal regions globally. The top 10% of earners make roughly 12 times more than the bottom 10%, and a large portion of inequality (44% to 63%) is inherited across generations according to the
Spatial and Urban Segregation: Cities are sharply divided by wealth. Affordable housing is often built far on the outskirts of metropolitan areas—such as in Brazil—lacking basic infrastructure and forcing low-income workers and caregivers into long, daily commutes that reduce quality of life and limit economic mobility.
Citizen Insecurity and Violence: High rates of crime, gang activity, and trafficking fuel widespread insecurity. Environmental and social land defenders also face severe danger, with the region recording a high concentration of related violent attacks.
Institutional Weakness and Unrest: Citizens frequently experience low trust in democratic governance, corruption scandals, and public budget cutbacks. This has triggered recurrent waves of mass protests, strikes, and social conflicts over living costs, inflation, and public service failures in countries like Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina

Environment

Glacial Melting: Tropical Andes glaciers are rapidly retreating (losing over 40% of glaciers in Peru), which reduces long-term water security and increases flash flood risks at glacial lakes like Lake Palcacocha
Water Pollution and Scarcity: Major urban and industrial corridors suffer from untreated wastewater and toxic runoff into vital systems such as the Medellin River, Guanabara Bay, and the Matanza Riachuelo River, alongside chronic mega-droughts in Chile.
Deforestation and Habitat Loss: Clearing of the Amazon Rainforest and the Gran Chaco for agricultural expansion (soy, sugarcane, and cattle ranching), illegal logging, and mining threatens indigenous livelihoods and biodiversity hotspots like El Chocó.
Threats to Environmental Defenders: High rates of violence and killings target local and indigenous leaders trying to protect land and forests from extractivist policies.