

PUNTA DEL ESTE: THE JEWEL OF URUGUAY



Punta del Este is a well established Uruguayan tourism destination. Only some 9,334 people live here, nevertheless it is sometimes referred to as the "jewel of Uruguay". The town is located in southern

Uruguay and it is only some 87 miles (140km) from Montevideo.

This resort town has plenty to offer to its visitors. There are numerous luxury hotels, condominiums, restaurants, hot nightspots and well supplied shops. With all its attractions the town is very popular with almost every kind of tourist. There are wonderful shopping opportunities. Customers can spend their money in a string of boutiques lining the Calle Gorlero (the main street) or for example on an evening craft market at Plaza Artigas that is organized at weekends. Most popular buys are leather items. The prices are however high, at least higher than elsewhere in the country.

There are also plenty opportunities for dining out in the town. Many of local restaurants as well as shops are opened only during the season when they offer services to tourists. A tourist can buy a chivito (steak sandwiches) in a kiosk or they can visit a salon serving haute cuisine. The offer is very wide. It ranges from Spanish food to pizza and sushi. The most usual meal is seafood. Most of local restaurants open around noon, but keep on serving until the wee hours. A real gourmet may wish to eat in La Bourgogne, the town's top restaurant. This restaurant employs Jean-Paul Bondoux, rated the top French chef in South America and the cost of the meals is really high.

Apart from eating, some tourists enjoy local nightlife. Punta del Este is a vibrant town with many bars, clubs, discos and there is of course the casino. Those who enjoy more active holiday can go snorkeling or play golf. There is also the possibility of various boating and fishing expeditions.

Local authorities plan to make the town even more attractive for tourists. They want to bring in investors who would finance construction of a private port for boats and cruise ships, which would include a five-star hotel and a casino.

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