

News From Somewhere By Project Alphistia

**Volume 2, Issue 2
January 19, 2026**

Off to Uruguay



In just a few days I will go to Uruguay for a ten day vacation. Why? This is just one more of Tony's escapades, right? I'm probably the only person among my readers who's gone to Albania twice, Slovenia twice, and Iceland 8 times. So no surprise really to go to Uruguay once.

I tried to go three years ago. I bought a ticket from a pretty crooked travel vendor, then had the first of my terrible kidney stone attacks. Instead of enjoying a vacation to South America, in September of 2022 I endured several surgeries. And the ticket vendor ripped me off and I lost the value of my airfare. Live and learn.

Three years later I am ready to try again. My fifth kidney stone surgery was two months ago, and I'm cleared by my doctor to travel. I found a very good value airfare, and although the trip will be long, it won't involve much jet lag, because it's a north/south trip.

Uruguay is far from where I live. It's 5600 miles from Chicago's O'Hare Airport, and I will need to change planes in Panama. Although the forecast is cold for Chicago, there won't be snow. So I should be able to make my escape without winter worries.

It is summertime in Uruguay now. They have a fairly mild Mediterranean climate. It never snows there (in June, July, or August), but it's damp and cool. In summer it's mostly in the 80s and very sunny.

Uruguay is a fairly small country, about 60,000 square miles. Huge Brazil is to its north, Argentina to its north and west. It has a small population, about 3.5 million people, mostly along its coast.

Almost nothing happens in Uruguay. It is a calm and peaceful place, and has been for decades. From 1973 to 1985 it had its worst period in its history: a military junta took over the country, and it was a nasty dictatorship. It was a shameful time for Uruguayans. People were tortured and killed and quite a few people went into exile. Since then, Uruguay learned a very valuable lesson

and it has the most stable political system in all of Latin America.



That's one of the main reasons I want to visit. I'm thoroughly disgusted by the trump regime, part II. First that American voters were stupid enough to vote that asshole into office a second time, and the huge number of charlatans, crooks and creeps he's appointed in the last year. We're on the cusp of becoming a failed state politically, and the trump regime has ruined the "American brand" completely in the eyes of the world and more than half of its own citizens.

So it will be nice to relax in a functioning democracy for a short time. Uruguay is the most progressive country in Latin America. Even its conservatives are moderate. There is a tiny far right but they have little influence in the political system. Elections are free and fair, and boring...as they should be.

Uruguay pioneered progressive political polities decades ago. It had a bourgeois liberal president in the early 20th century who introduced many social

reforms that were in the vanguard for that time: women's suffrage, strict separation of church and state, the beginnings of a welfare state, and vastly improved public schools.

Through the years Uruguay had its ups and downs economically, often due to the generosity of its social programs. Since it returned to democracy in 1985, it has had the most stable economy in South America. Its neighbors Brazil and Argentina on the other hand have been a mess both economically and politically.

Is Uruguay a utopia then? Nobody would say that in Uruguay. The rest of the world barely even knows the country exists, and doesn't care about it one way or the other. This leaves the most important issue Uruguayans focus on: FUTBOL! (soccer).



I don't care about futbol at all, but I'm glad this provides so much happiness to Uruguayans.

My plan is to eat some very good food, dominated by beef, Beef, BEEF of high quality. The national cuisine also includes a lot of influence from Italy. A great many people in the country are descended from Italian immigrants. The national dish is the "chivito", a beef sandwich with much else on top and always served with fries. They also have their own hot dog (called a pancho), and they love pastries and cakes and drink lots and lots of their own tea-like drink yerba "mate".

A bit more than half the population lives in the capital Montevideo, and that's where I will spend most of my time.

My college days friend Vanya is in Uruguay for three months, so of course I will see him too! He is roaming the world for a few years and will likely settle down in one of the places he visits. Uruguay offers a lot for folks like him, including permanent residency to retirees and a cost of living that is lower than in the US, especially for rent and medical care. And the political climate is stable and the weather is mild.

I've considered Uruguay too as a bolthole. Not likely I'd do it though, but there is much about Uruguay that is to my liking...

For the time I am there, I will explore the art nouveau and art deco architecture, the pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods with lots of "mom and pop" shops, the ferias, which are local neighborhood street markets, and the big Sunday flea market that includes many, many secondhand bookstalls. There are a lot of museums, nearly all of them free. There are a couple of local artists I like a lot and each has their own museum.

I will report on what I have seen and done in my next newsletter, once I'm back home in Champaign. "Chao, chao" as Uruguayans say 😊

Pushkin is Very Happy



Pushkin is enjoying himself with the box that Aldi provided for him when I got a food delivery a few days ago. It wasn't a big box, and he absolutely could not get his entire self inside it, but he did the next best thing 😊 I have been lucky to have very good catsitters when I go away, and a Pushkin met his newest buddy Ben just a few days ago. He gives him a big thumbs up...paws up.

“INFO ALPHISTIA” booklet

(adapted, abridged text)

Alphistia will soon be a new country on the map of the world. We will find land where we will establish and develop a country of our own.

Alphistia would not be a universal homeland, but a place for those who want to live in a democratic, green, social welfare state, with its own way of life. We'd speak our own language to create a unique culture.

Someone who is a free-market zealot, a religious fanatic, or a follower of authoritarian political extremists, whose hobbies are guns and shopping, would not choose to live in Alphistia. There are already places for them...

Who is an Alphistian? The answer would be, if you feel that you are, then you are. Your background, ethnicity, religion, race, nationality, income etc...those are not what would be important. If you align yourself with the ideas presented here, then you can be an Alphistian.

Our homeland would be a very small part of the world. When away from Alphistia, we'd surely miss our country: the sound of our own language, the beautiful countryside, and our pleasant towns. We'd miss the love for learning of our fellow citizens, our rich culture, our clean air and the quiet that comes from electric cars, buses, and trains. We'd miss the measured pace of life that comes from the balance of work and leisure.

Many people around the world today live in places, not communities,

and while they are citizens of countries, they do not have the sense of belonging that Alphistia would give us.

We would live in peace and safety under the rule of law. We would have democratic elections, and our lives would not be subject to undemocratic political and economic forces outside our borders and beyond our control. We would live in a constitutional republic with political and social rights...all the norms of a civilized society that are currently under assault.



We would create a country we'd be happy to live in. WE would decide for ourselves how to live, and make tech, government, and social policy as instruments under our own control, not as tools of an oligarchy to oppress or destroy us.

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