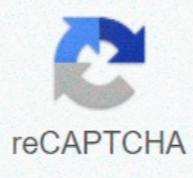


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## Middle and south america map

For More information fill out the form below or call us at 1(800)-976-9260 from 7:00AM - 5:00PM (PST) America is a mighty big country. It contains multitudes, and it can be hard to get a sense, sitting in, say, Montana, of what's happening thousands of miles away in Maine. The Real State of America Atlas by Cynthia Enloe and Joni Seager, released last week, is full of maps and graphics that can help quantify some of how we're doing as a country. For instance, how is our driving? Driving is, as you can see, down from last year, as the recession and high gas prices pinch transportation plans. (Maybe everyone's taking their bikes and public transportation?) As you can see, states with major metropolitan areas tend to have less driving. In Oklahoma, the non-car options are presumably quite worse. It's an interesting contrast between states that drive less and states that are fatter. The authors have also included a map of fruit consumption to contrast with this map of obesity. It seems that both driving less and eating more fruit could be related to weighing less. What's potentially most surprising is how many people in Washington, D.C. are eating fruit, beating even California, where much of the fruit in Washington, D.C. is likely from. This also surely plays into some stereotypes about New England and the Northeast, given how concentrated fruit consumption is. Make your own judgments. It's easy to read stories in the newspaper about trends and statistics (or simply extrapolate from your own anecdotal experience), but maps like those in the book are the best way to see how that information actually plays out. In a country this big, there isn't any way of truly knowing what's happening without looking at the data. Reproduced by arrangement with Penguin, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc., from THE REAL STATE OF AMERICA ATLAS: Mapping the Myths and Truths of the United States by Cynthia Enloe and Joni Seager. Copyright © 2011 by Cynthia Enloe and Joni Seager. Morgan Clarendon can be reached by email or on Twitter. The middle class, long a bedrock of the American economy, is contracting. In most metropolitan areas, there are now fewer people living in middle-income households compared with the year 2000, and more people living in both poorer and richer ones. The fabled American middle now barely represents a majority of the overall population (51%). A new analysis from Pew Research looks at households in 229 metropolitan areas, representing about three-quarters of the population. The middle class share fell in 203 places. The share of people in the upper-income bracket rose in 172 places, while the share classified as low income rose in 160 metros. Pew defines middle income as between \$42,000 to \$125,000 a year for a household of three, low income as below \$42,000, and upper income as above \$125,000. It notes that the declining middle is not all bad news. In places like Midland, Texas, the middle-income share has fallen 53% to 43%, but the share of households with lower incomes has expanded from 18% to 37%. But Pew's analysis is mostly a less-than-happy one. Nationwide, median incomes for U.S. households were down 8% in 2014 compared to 1999, showing how many people are doing worse than at the turn of the century. Across all areas, including the metros in the latest analysis, the share of people in the low-income brackets rose from 28% to 29%. "The decline of the middle class is a reflection of rising income inequality in the U.S.," says Pew. "Generally speaking, middle-class households are more prevalent in urban areas where there is less of a gap between the extremes at the top and the extremes at the bottom." The majority of South America falls below the equator, which means the seasons are inverted relative to those in the U.S. and Europe. Some countries start December through February and winter occurs from June to August. The formation of the continent is different to classify tectonic patterns, but like elsewhere, visitors tend to come during times of pleasant weather, good skinning, and holidays. The high and low season chart below is general, and seasonality for specific destination may vary. High season: December to February/late season: June to August/shoulder season: March to May/September to November/shoulder holidays are also peak times. Weather Information South America stretches from above the equator to just north of the Antarctic Circle, encompassing a wide cross-section of climates. In the hottest regions, visitors may find that winter offers the most pleasant temperatures. Crowd Information Crowds are most common during high seasons, holidays, school vacation periods, and events such as festivals. In Brazil, Carnival is a major draw. Peru celebrates over 1,000 festivals each year. Closure Information Hotels, shops, and other venues tend to remain open throughout the year, but if in doubt, check with tourist information providers for each area. When to Save Though prices will vary according to popularity and season, there are sometimes more discounts and sales during spring and fall. When to Book For maximum availability, book four to six months in advance. Simon Bolivar leading rebel troops against the Spanish forces of Agustín Agualongo. De Agostini Picture Library/Getty Images In 1810, Spain controlled much of the known world, its mighty New World Empire the envy of all the nations of Europe. By 1825 it was all gone, lost in bloody wars and upheavals. The Independence of Latin America was wrought by men and women determined to achieve liberty or to die trying. Who were the greatest of this generation of patriots? Simón Bolívar. Hulton Archive/Getty Images There can be no doubt about #1 on the list: only one man earned the simple title "The Liberator." Simón Bolívar, greatest of the liberators. When Venezuelans began clamoring for independence as early as 1806, young Simón Bolívar was at the head of the pack. He helped establish the First Venezuelan Republic and distinguished himself as a charismatic leader for the patriot side. It was when the Spanish Empire fought back that he learned where his true calling was. As a general, Bolívar fought the Spanish in countless battles from Venezuela to Peru, scoring some of the most important victories in the War of Independence. He was a first-rate military mastermind who is still studied by officers today all over the world. After Independence, he attempted to use his influence to unify South America but lived to see his dream of unity crushed by petty politicians and warlords. Witold Skrypczak/Getty Images Father Miguel Hidalgo was an unlikely revolutionary. A parish priest in his 50's and a skilled theologian, he ignited the powder keg that was Mexico in 1810. Miguel Hidalgo was the last man the Spanish would have suspected was a sympathizer with the growing independence movement in Mexico in 1810. He was a respected priest in a lucrative parish, well-respected by all that knew him and known more as an intellectual than as a man of action. Nevertheless, on September 16, 1810, Hidalgo took to the pulpit in the town of Dolores, announced his intention to take up arms against the Spanish and invited the congregation to join him. Within hours he had an unruly army of angry Mexican peasants. He marched on Mexico City, sacking the city of Guanajuato along the way. Along with co-conspirator Ignacio Allende, he led an army of some 80,000 to the very gates of the city, overwhelming Spanish resistance. Although his insurrection was put down and he was captured, tried and executed in 1811, others after him picked up the torch of liberty and today he is rightly considered the Father of Mexican Independence. DEA PICTURE LIBRARY/Getty Images A reluctant liberator and leader, the modest O'Higgins preferred the tranquil life of a gentleman farmer but events pulled him into the War of Independence. Bernardo O'Higgins' life story would be fascinating even if he weren't Chile's greatest hero. Illegitimate son of Ambrose O'Higgins, the Irish Viceroys of Spanish Peru, Bernardo lived his childhood in neglect and poverty before inheriting a large estate. He found himself caught up in the chaotic events of Chile's Independence movement and before long was named Commander of the patriot army. He proved to be a brave general and an honest politician, serving as the first President of Chile after liberation. Painting by Arturo Michelena (ca. 1896) Francisco de Miranda was the first major figure of Latin America's Independence movement, launching an ill-fated attack on Venezuela in 1806. Long before Simón Bolívar, there was Francisco de Miranda. Francisco de Miranda was a Venezuelan who rose to the rank of General in the French Revolution before deciding to try and liberate his homeland from Spain. He invaded Venezuela in 1806 with a small army and was driven off. He returned in 1810 to take part in the establishment of the First Venezuelan Republic and was captured by the Spanish when the Republic fell in 1812. After his arrest, he spent the years between 1812 and his death in 1816 in a Spanish jail. This painting, done decades after his death, shows him in his cell in his final days. DEA PICTURE LIBRARY/Getty Images Not long after Chile declared a provisional independence in 1810, brash young José Miguel Carrera took charge of the young nation. José Miguel Carrera was the son of one of Chile's most powerful families. As a young man, he went to Spain, where he fought bravely against Napoleon's invasion. When he heard that Chile had declared independence in 1810, he hastened home to help fight for liberty. He instigated a coup that removed his own father from power in Chile and took over as head of the army and dictator of the young nation. He was later replaced by the more even-keeled Bernardo O'Higgins. Their personal hatred of one another almost brought the young republic crashing down. Carrera fought hard for independence and is rightly remembered as a national hero of Chile. DEA / M. SEEMULLER/Getty Images José de San Martín was a promising officer in the Spanish army when he defected to join the patriot cause in his native Argentina. José de San Martín was born in Argentina but moved to Spain at an early age. He joined the Spanish army and by 1810 he had reached the rank of Adjutant-General. When Argentina rose in rebellion, he followed his heart, discarded a promising career, and made his way to Buenos Aires where he offered his services. He was soon put in charge of a patriot army, and in 1817 he crossed into Chile with the Army of the Andes. Once Chile was liberated, he set his sights on Peru, but he eventually deferred to the generalship of Simón Bolívar to complete the liberation of South America. For outdoorsy travelers, the continent offers plenty of adventure. Whether you prefer speed and danger or enjoy the slower and more patient forms of adventure like long-distance hiking, there's something for everyone to fire up your adventurous spirit. 01 of 25 Often compared to Machu Picchu, La Ciudad Perdida, as it is known is a three to four-day trek through the jungle to reach the site in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Dating from around six centuries earlier than Machu Picchu, there are several platforms that have been cleared around the hilltop, and the final 1,200 stone steps you have to climb to reach the site are a real challenge. 02 of 25 Olga Gavrilova / Getty Images The Miraflores Cliffs are a key part of the seafront in Lima, and they provide a launching spot for paragliders every day. 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