

Iguazu Falls

Iguazu Falls, **Iguazú Falls**, **Iguassu Falls** or **Iguaçu Falls** (Portuguese: *Cataratas do Iguaçu* [kataˈrateʒ du igwaˈsu]; are waterfalls of the Iguazu River on the border of the Argentina province of Misiones and the Brazilian state of Paraná. The falls divide the river into the upper and lower Iguazu. The Iguazu River rises near the city of Curitiba. The river flows through Brazil for most of its course, although most of the falls are on the Argentine side. Below its confluence with the San Antonio River, the Iguazu River forms the boundary between Argentina and Brazil.

The name "Iguazu" comes from the Guarani or Tupi words "y" [i], meaning "water", and "ûasú" [waˈsu], meaning "big". Legend has it that a god planned to marry a beautiful woman named *Naipí*, who fled with her mortal lover *Tarobá* in a canoe. In rage, the god sliced the river, creating the waterfalls and condemning the lovers to an eternal fall. The first European to discover the falls was the Spanish conquistador Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca in 1541.

Distribution of the Falls between Argentina and Brazil

The Iguazu Falls are arranged in a way that seems like a reverse letter "J". The border between Brazil and Argentina runs through the Devil's Throat. On the right bank is the Brazilian territory, which has just over 20% of the jumps of these falls, and the left side jumps are Argentine, which make up almost 80% of the falls.

Access



Walkways allow close views of the falls from both Argentina and Brazil.

The falls can be reached from the two main towns on either side of the falls: Puerto Iguazú in Argentina and Foz do Iguaçu in Brazil, as well as from Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, on the other side of the Paraná river from Foz do Iguaçu. The falls are shared by the Iguazú National Park (Argentina) and Iguaçu National Park (Brazil). The two parks were designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1984 and 1987, respectively.

The first proposal for a Brazilian national park aimed at providing a pristine environment to "future generations", just as "it had been created by God" and endowed with "all possible preservation, from the beautiful to the sublime, from the picturesque to the awesome" and "an unmatched flora" located in the "magnificent Iguaçu waterfalls". These were the words used by André Rebouças, an engineer, in his book "Provinces of Paraná, Railways to Mato

Grosso and Bolivia", which started up the campaign aimed at preserving the Iguazu Falls in 1876, when Yellowstone National Park, the first national park in the world, was four years old.

On the Brazilian side, there is a walkway along the canyon with an extension to the lower base of the Devil's Throat. Helicopter rides offering aerial views of the falls have been available. However, Argentina has prohibited such helicopter tours because of the environmental impact on the flora and fauna of the falls. From Foz do Iguazu airport, the park can be reached by taxi or bus to entrance of the park. There is an entrance fee to the park on both sides. Free frequent buses have been provided to various points within the park. The town of Foz do Iguazu is about 20 kilometres (12 mi) away, and the airport is in between the park and the town.

The Argentine access, across the forest, is by a Rainforest Ecological Train very similar to the one in Disney's Animal Kingdom. The train brings visitors to the entrance of Devil's Throat, as well as the upper and lower trails. The *Paseo Garganta del Diablo* is a 1-kilometre-long (0.6 mi) trail that brings the visitor directly over the falls of the Devil's Throat, the highest and deepest of the falls. Other walkways allow access to the elongated stretch of falls across the forest on the Argentine side and to the boats that connect to San Martin Island. Also on the Argentine side, there have been inflatable boat services that take visitors right under the falls.

The Brazilian transportation system aims at allowing the increase in the number of visitors, while reducing the environmental impact, through the increase in the average number of passengers per vehicle inside the park. The new transportation system has 72-passenger, panoramic-view, double-deck buses. The upper deck is open, which enables visitors a broad view of the flora and fauna during the trip to the Falls. The buses' combustion systems are in compliance with the CONAMA (phase IV) and EURO (phase II) emissions and noise requirements. The reduction in the number of vehicles, of noise levels and speed, is enabling tourists to observe increasing numbers of wild animals along the route. Each bus has had an exclusive paint scheme, representing some of the most common wild animals found in the Iguazu National Park, including the spotted jaguars, butterflies, raccoons, prego monkeys, coral snakes, toucans, parrots and yellow breasted caimans.

Climate

Iguazu Falls experiences a humid subtropical climate (*Cfa*, according to the Köppen climate classification) with abundant precipitation and high temperatures year-round.