

URUGUAY

The **Supreme Court of Justice** heads the judiciary and lower courts include **6 appellate courts** (for civil matters, criminal matters and labor matters), courts of first instance (sometimes referred to as lawyer courts – “juzgados lerados”) and the **justice of peace** courts.

The Supreme Court of Justice has the power to modify any decision made by the Appellate courts and is the only court allowed to declare the unconstitutionality of laws passed by the General Assembly.

In addition, it decides on conflict affecting diplomats and international treaties, the execution of rulings of foreign courts and relations among the agency of government.

The Supreme Court also manages the entire judicial system. It prepared budgets for the judiciary and submits them to the general assembly for approval, proposes all legislation regarding the functioning of courts, appoints judges to the appellate courts and nominates all judges and judicial officials.

The appellate courts hear appeals from the courts of first instance which, in turn, hear appeals from the lower courts. The courts of first instance also hear the most serious criminal felony cases.

The criminal courts have a midyear recess from 1 July to 20 July and an end of the year recess from 25 December to 31 January; only urgent matters are heard during the recesses.

The judicial system is based on the Napoleonic Code of 1804 and the Constitution makes provision for a **jury** system.