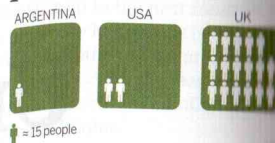


### population per sq km



## Argentina Today

### Cristina's Reign

Cristina Kirchner was re-elected Argentina's president by a landslide majority of 54%. She ran on a platform that appealed to the populist vote, promising to raise incomes, restore industry and maintain Argentina's economic boom. Her approach worked like a charm.

Kirchner has often been compared to Evita for her fight against poverty and her administration of generous social programs – but both have also shown authoritarian tendencies, such as trying to censor the media and rule by decree.

Kirchner dismissed the Central Bank president for not allowing her to use currency reserves to pay off future debts, and strong-armed business into price-control agreements. Her government has also been accused of manipulating economic numbers; in March 2011, the *Economist* magazine stated that it no longer trusted inflation figures coming out of Argentina and would cease to publish them in favor of figures from a US-based analyst. The Falkland Islands are another hot topic, with Kirchner once again seriously challenging the island's sovereignty – just in time for the 30th anniversary of the Falklands War.

Despite her many detractors, this *presidenta* has made admirable strides – she's addressed the abuses of the military dictatorship, championed same-sex marriage laws and, over all, supported the blue-collar classes. And her people love her for it, just like they did Evita.

### Economic Woes

Argentina's currency devaluation in 2002 caused a demand for its suddenly cheap agricultural products. Helped along by skyrocketing government spending and growth in Brazil and China, this economic boom lasted through 2007 and revved up again in 2010. But now high inflation, a

### ethnicity

(% of population)



### if Argentina were 100 people



92 would be Roman Catholics  
2 would be Jewish  
2 would be Protestant  
4 would be other

- » Area: 2.8 million sq km
- » Population: 40,120,000
- » Capital: Buenos Aires
- » Primary language: Spanish
- » Time: GMT minus three hours (depending on daylight savings time)
- » GDP per capita (PPP): US\$16,000
- » Unemployment rate: 7.3%

### Top Books

- » **Uttermost Part of the Earth** (E. Lucas Bridges, 1947) Classic book about Tierra del Fuego's now-extinct *indigenas*.
- » **In Patagonia** (Bruce Chatwin, 1977) Evocative writing on Patagonia's history and mystique.
- » **The Motorcycle Diaries** (1993, Ernesto Che Guevara et al) Based on the travel diary of the Argentine-born revolutionist.
- » **And the Money Kept Rolling In (and Out)** (Paul Blustein, 2005) How the IMF helped bankrupt Argentina.

### Top Films

- » **La historia oficial** (The Official Story, 1985) Oscar-winning film on the Dirty War.
- » **Historias mínimas** (Intimate Stories, 2002) Three separate people traveling in Patagonia.

stronger peso and lower commodity prices are stalling the economy. The government is cutting back on its utility and transportation subsidies, so the public will be paying a truer price for these services. And in October 2011, in an effort to curb capital from heading overseas, the government required Argentines to substantiate their purchases of US dollars.

Cristina Kirchner will need to control inflation, unofficially hovering at around 25% ('official' estimates are less than half, 11%). She'll have to control spending to maintain cash reserves and equalize the trade balance. Government policies need to become more transparent to encourage both domestic and foreign investment. It's a tall order and devaluation is an increasing risk, but who knows – maybe another crash is just what Argentina needs to get on top again.

### Sporting Success

One of the big shocks in the sporting world was in June 2011, when the famous *fútbol* club River Plate was demoted to second division. This was the first time it had happened in the club's 110-year existence, and it caused riots in Buenos Aires. The famous *Superclásico* matches against Boca have had to be put on hold until River Plate regains top-tier status.

Meanwhile, it was another great year for Rosario-born Lionel Messi, who won FIFA's Player of the Year award in 2009 and the equivalent Ballon d'Or award in 2010 and 2011. He currently plays in Spain for FC Barcelona, but captains the Argentine national team.

In other 2011 sporting news, the Dakar Rally was once again held in Argentina (and Chile). Argentina's tennis team made it to the Davis Cup final in Seville (but lost yet again to Spain). And the FIBA Championship basketball tournament (and Olympic qualifier) was held in Mar del Plata, in which Argentina won the final against Brazil.

### Greetings

- » **Un novio para mi mujer** (A Boyfriend for My Wife; 2008) Comedy about a husband plotting his divorce.
- » **El secreto de sus ojos** (The Secret in Their Eyes; 2009) Thriller that won the 2010 Oscar for best foreign-language film.
- » Say *buenos dias* or *buenas tardes* (good morning/good afternoon) when you walk into a room.
- » *Adios* or *hasta luego* means goodbye.
- » *Ciao* or *chau* is a casual goodbye to friends.
- » *Che* is a casual word that means 'Hey!' Use it with friends.
- » *Che boludo* is a phrase that should only be used with either a very good friend – or someone you want to tell off.
- » Accept and give *besos* (kisses) on the cheek.



## History

Like all Latin American countries, Argentina has a tumultuous history, one tainted by periods of despotic rule, corruption and hard times. The Dirty War was an especially brutal era that occurred not so long ago, and still lives in the memory of many Argentines. Wild rollercoaster economic woes are another hardship that Argentines have had to deal with over the decades. But Argentina's history is also illustrious, the story of a country that fought off colonial rule from Spain and was once one of the world's economic powerhouses. It's about a country that gave birth to the tango, and to international icons such as the gaucho, Evita Perón and Che Guevara. Understanding Argentina's past is paramount to understanding its present and, most importantly, to understanding Argentines themselves.

The following is just a brief introduction to the history of Argentina. If you'd like to read more, see p561 for some recommended titles.

### Native Peoples

Many different native peoples ranged throughout what became Argentina. On the pampas lived the hunter-gather Querandí, and in the north the Guaraní were semisedentary agriculturalists and fishermen. In the Lake District and Patagonia, the Pehuenches and Puelches gathered the pine nuts of the araucaria, while the Mapuche entered the region from the west as the Spanish pushed south. Today there are several Mapuche reservations, especially in the area around Junín de los Andes.

Until they were wiped out by Europeans, there were indigenous inhabitants as far south as Tierra del Fuego ('Land of Fire'), where the Selk'nam, Haush, Yaghan and Alacaluf peoples lived as mobile hunters and gatherers. Despite frequently inclement weather they wore little or no clothing, but constant fires kept them warm and gave the region its name.

Of all of Argentina, the northwest was the most developed. Several indigenous groups, notably the Diaguita, practiced irrigated agriculture in the valleys of the eastern Andean foothills. Inhabitants were influenced

by the Tiahanaco empire of Bolivia and by the great Inca empire, which expanded south from Peru from the early 1480s. In Salta province the ruined city of Quilmes is one of the best-preserved pre-Incan sites.

### Enter the Spanish

Just over a decade after Christopher Columbus accidentally encountered the Americas, other European explorers began probing the Río de la Plata estuary. Most early explorations of the area were motivated by rumors of vast quantities of silver. Spaniard Sebastian Cabot optimistically named the river the Río de la Plata (River of Silver), and to drive the rumors home, part of the new territory was even given the Latin name for silver (*argentum*). But the mineral riches that the Spanish found in the Inca empire of Peru never panned out in this misnamed land.

The first real attempt at establishing a permanent settlement on the estuary was made by Spanish aristocrat Pedro de Mendoza in 1536. He landed at present-day Buenos Aires, but after the colonists tried pilfering food from the indigenous Querandí, the natives turned on them violently. Within four years Mendoza fled back to Spain without a lick of silver, and the detachment of troops he left behind beat it upriver to the gentler environs of Asunción, present-day capital of Paraguay.

### Northwest Supremacy

Although Spanish forces reestablished Buenos Aires by 1580, it remained a backwater in comparison to Andean settlements founded by a separate and more successful Spanish contingency moving south from Alto Perú (now Bolivia). With ties to the colonial stronghold of Lima and financed by the bonanza silver mine at Potosí, the Spanish founded some two dozen cities as far south as Mendoza (1561) during the latter half of the 16th century.

The two most important centers were Tucumán (founded in 1565) and Córdoba (1573). Tucumán lay in the heart of a rich agricultural region and supplied Alto Perú with grains, cotton and livestock. Córdoba became an important educational center, and Jesuit missionaries established *estancias* (ranches) in the sierras to supply Alto Perú with mules, foodstuffs and wine. Córdoba's Manzana Jesuítica (Jesuit Block) is now the finest preserved group of colonial buildings in the country, and several Jesuit *estancias* in the Central Sierras are also preserved. These sites, along with the central plazas of Salta (founded in 1582) and Tucumán, boast the finest colonial architecture. For more on the Jesuits, see p184.

### Buenos Aires: Bootlegger To Boomtown

As the northwest prospered, Buenos Aires suffered the Crown's harsh restrictions on trade for nearly 200 years. But because the port was ideal for trade, frustrated merchants turned to smuggling, and contraband

#### TIMELINE

10,000  
BC

Humans, having crossed the Bering Strait approximately 20,000 years earlier, finally reach the area of modern-day Argentina. The close of one of the world's greatest human migrations nears.

7370  
BC

Toldense culture makes its first paintings of hands inside Patagonia's famous Cueva de las Manos. The paintings prove humans inhabited the region this far back.

4000  
BC

The indigenous Yaghan, later referred to as Fuegians by the English-speaking world, begin populating the southernmost islands of Tierra del Fuego. Humans could migrate no further south.

AD 1480s

The Inca empire expands into present-day Argentina's Andean northwest. At the time, the region was inhabited by Argentina's most advanced indigenous cultures, including the Diaguita and Tafi.

1536

Pedro de Mendoza establishes Puerto Nuestra Señora Santa María del Buen Aire on the Río de la Plata. But the Spaniards anger the indigenous Querandí, who soon drive the settlers out.

1553

Francisco de Aguirre establishes Santiago del Estero, furthering Spain's expansion into present-day Argentina from Alto Perú. Today the city is the country's oldest permanent settlement.

1561

The city of Mendoza is founded by Spaniards during their push to establish access to the Río de la Plata, where Spanish ships could deliver more troops and supplies.

THE  
MISSION

*The Mission* (1986), starring Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons, is an epic film about the Jesuit missions and missionaries in 18th-century South America. It's the perfect kickoff for a trip to northern Argentina's missions.

Argentina's national beer, Quilmes, is named after the now decimated indigenous group of northwest Argentina. It's also the name of a city in the province of Buenos Aires.

One of the best-known contemporary accounts of postindependence Argentina is Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Life in the Argentine Republic in the Days of the Tyrants* (1868). Also superb is his seminal classic, *Facundo, Or Civilization & Barbarism* (1845).

trade with Portuguese Brazil and nonpeninsular European powers flourished. The wealth passing through the city fueled its initial growth.

With the decline of silver mining at Potosí in the late 18th century, the Spanish Crown was forced to recognize Buenos Aires' importance for direct transatlantic trade. Relaxing its restrictions, Spain made Buenos Aires the capital of the new viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata – which included Paraguay, Uruguay and the mines at Potosí – in 1776.

The new viceroyalty had internal squabbles over trade and control issues, but when the British raided the city in 1806 and again in 1807 (in an attempt to seize control of Spanish colonies during the Napoleonic Wars), the response was unified. Locals rallied against the invaders without Spanish help and chased them out of town.

The late 18th century also saw the emergence of the gauchos of the pampas (see p114). The South American counterpart to North America's cowboys, they hunted wild cattle and broke in wild horses that had multiplied after being left behind by expeditions on the Río de la Plata.

## Independence & Infighting

Toward the end of the 18th century, criollos (Argentine-born colonists) became increasingly dissatisfied and impatient with Spanish authority. The expulsion of British troops from Buenos Aires gave the people of the Río de la Plata new confidence in their ability to stand alone. After Napoleon invaded Spain in 1808, Buenos Aires finally declared its independence on May 25, 1810.

Independence movements throughout South America soon united to expel Spain from the continent by the 1820s. Under the leadership of General José de San Martín and others, the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata (the direct forerunner of the Argentine Republic) declared formal independence at Tucumán on July 9, 1816.

Despite achieving independence, the provinces were united in name only. With a lack of any effective central authority, regional disparities within Argentina – formerly obscured by Spanish rule – became more obvious. This resulted in the rise of the caudillos (local strongmen), who resisted Buenos Aires as strongly as Buenos Aires had resisted Spain.

Argentine politics was divided between the Federalists of the interior, who advocated provincial autonomy, and the Unitarists of Buenos Aires, who upheld the city's central authority. For nearly 20 years bloody conflicts between the two factions left the country nearly exhausted.

## The Reign of Rosas

In the first half of the 19th century Juan Manuel de Rosas came to prominence as a caudillo in Buenos Aires province, representing the interests of rural elites and landowners. He became governor of the province in

1829 and, while he championed the Federalist cause, he also helped centralize political power in Buenos Aires and proclaimed that all international trade be funneled through the capital. His reign lasted more than 20 years (to 1852), and he set ominous precedents in Argentine political life, creating the infamous *mazorca* (his ruthless political police force) and institutionalizing torture.

Under Rosas, Buenos Aires continued to dominate the new country, but his extremism turned many against him, including some of his strongest allies. Finally, in 1852, a rival caudillo named Justo José de Urquiza (once a staunch supporter of Rosas) organized a powerful army and forced Rosas from power. Urquiza's first task was to draw up a constitution, which was formalized by a convention in Santa Fe on May 1, 1853.

## The Fleeting Golden Age

Elected the Republic of Argentina's first official president in 1862, Bartolomé Mitre was concerned with building the nation and establishing infrastructure. His goals, however, were subsumed by the War of the Triple Alliance (or Paraguayan War), which lasted from 1864 to 1870. Not

### MORE HISTORICAL READS

The most comprehensive, though not necessarily most readable, book on Argentine history is David Rock's *Argentina 1516-1987: From Spanish Colonization to Alfonsín* (1987). It's worth the grunt.

Gargantuan in size and vast in scope, *The Argentina Reader* (2002), edited by Gabriella Nouzeilles and Graciela Montaldo, is a thorough compilation of some of the most important essays, excerpts and stories from Argentine history and culture.

For an interpretation of the gaucho's role in Argentine history, check out Richard W Slatta's book *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier* (1983).

Take a more personalized look into Argentina's past with Monica Szurmuk's *Women in Argentina* (2001), a collection of travel narratives by women – both Argentine and foreign – who traveled here between 1850 and 1930.

Journalist Horacio Verbitsky's book *The Flight: Confessions of an Argentine Dirty Warrior* (1996) was based on interviews with former Navy Captain Adolfo Scilingo, who acknowledged throwing political prisoners into the Atlantic. In 2005 Scilingo was found guilty of numerous counts of human-rights abuses.

Argentine writer Uki Gofí's *The Real Odessa* (2002) is the best and probably most meticulously researched book about Argentina's harboring of Nazi war criminals during the Perón administration.

Jacobo Timerman, an Argentine publisher and journalist who was outwardly critical of the 1976–83 military regime, was arrested and tortured by the military. He details the experience in his esteemed memoir *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number* (1981).

1565

Diego de Villarroel founds the city of San Miguel de Tucumán (referred to today simply as Tucumán), Argentina's third-oldest. The city was relocated further east 120 years later.

1573

The city of Córdoba is founded by Tucumán Governor Jerónimo Luis de Cabrera, establishing an important link on the trade routes between Chile and Alto Perú.

1580

Buenos Aires is re-established by Spanish forces, but the city remains a backwater for years, in comparison with the growing strongholds of Mendoza, Tucumán and Santiago del Estero.

1609

Jesuits begin building missions in northeast Argentina, including San Ignacio Mini (1610), Loreto (1632) and Santa Ana (1633), concentrating the indigenous Guaraní into settlements known as *reducciones*.

1767

The Spanish Crown expels the Jesuits from all of New Spain, and the mission communities decline rapidly.

1776

Spain names Buenos Aires the capital of the new viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata. The territory includes the areas of present-day Paraguay, Uruguay and the mines at Potosí (Bolivia).

1806–07

Attempting to seize control of Spanish colonies, British forces raid Buenos Aires in 1806 and in 1807. Buenos Aires militias defeat British troops without Spain's help, which kindles ideas of independence.

May 25 1810

Buenos Aires declares its independence from Spain on May 25, although actual independence is still several years off. The city names the Plaza de Mayo in honor of the event.

## PERÓN

A fascinating, fictionalized version of the life of ex-president Juan Perón, culminating in his return to Buenos Aires in 1973, is Tomás Eloy Martínez' *The Perón Novel* (1998).

until Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, an educator and journalist from San Juan, became president did progress in Argentina really kick in.

Buenos Aires' economy boomed and immigrants poured in from Spain, Italy, Germany and Eastern Europe. The new residents worked in the port area, lived tightly in the tenement buildings and developed Buenos Aires' famous dance – the tango – in the brothels and smoky nightclubs of the port (see p576). Elsewhere in the country, Basque and Irish refugees became the first shepherds, as both sheep numbers and wool exports increased nearly tenfold between 1850 and 1880.

Still, much of the southern pampas and Patagonia were inaccessible for settlers because of resistance from indigenous Mapuche and Tehuelche. In 1878, General Julio Argentino Roca carried out an extermination campaign on the indigenous people in what is known as the *Conquista del Desierto* (Conquest of the Desert). The campaign doubled the area under state control and opened Patagonia to settlement and sheep.

By the turn of the 20th century Argentina had a highly developed rail network (financed largely by British capital), fanning out from Buenos Aires in all directions. Still, the dark cloud of a vulnerable economy loomed. Industry could not absorb all the immigration, labor unrest grew and imports surpassed exports. Finally, with the onset of the world-wide Great Depression, the military took power under conditions of considerable social unrest. An obscure but oddly visionary colonel, Juan Domingo Perón, was the first leader to try to come to grips with the country's economic crisis.

## Juan Perón

Juan Perón emerged in the 1940s to become Argentina's most revered, as well as most despised, political figure. He first came to national prominence as head of the National Department of Labor, after a 1943 military coup toppled civilian rule. With the help of Eva Duarte ('Evita'), his second wife (see p563), he ran for and won the presidency in 1946.

During previous sojourns in fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, Perón had grasped the importance of spectacle in public life and also developed his own brand of watered-down Mussolini-style fascism. He held massive rallies from the balcony of the Casa Rosada, with the equally charismatic Evita at his side. Although they ruled by decree rather than consent, the Peróns legitimized the trade-union movement, extended political rights to working-class people, secured voting rights for women and made university education available to any capable individual. Of course, many of these social policies made him disliked by conservatives and the rich classes.

Economic hardship and inflation undermined Juan Perón's second presidency in 1952, and Evita's death the same year dealt the country a blow and the president's popularity. In 1955 a military coup sent him into exile in Spain and begun nearly 30 years of catastrophic military rule.

### July 9 1816

After successful independence movements throughout South America, the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata (Argentina's forerunner) declares formal independence from Spain at Tucumán.



» Congress of Tucumán

### 1829

Federalist caudillo Juan Manuel de Rosas becomes governor of Buenos Aires province and de facto ruler of the Argentine Confederation. He rules with an iron fist for more than 20 years.

### 1852

Federalist and former Rosas ally Justo José de Urquiza defeats Rosas at the Battle of Caseros and, in 1853, draws up Argentina's first constitution.

### 1862

Bartolomé Mitre is elected president of the newly titled Republic of Argentina and strives to modernize the country by expanding the railway network, creating a national army and postal system, and more.

### 1865

More than 150 Welsh immigrants, traveling aboard the clipper *Mimosa*, land in Patagonia and establish Argentina's first Welsh colony in the province of Chubut.

### 1865–70

The War of the Triple Alliance is fought between Paraguay and the allied countries of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. Paraguay is defeated and loses territory.

### 1868

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, an educator and journalist from San Juan, is elected president. He encourages immigration to Argentina, ramps up public education and pushes to Europeanize the country.

## EVITA, LADY OF HOPE

'I will come again, and I will be millions.'

*Eva Perón, 1952*

From her humble origins in the pampas, to her rise to power beside President Juan Perón, María Eva Duarte de Perón is one of the most revered political figures on the planet. Known affectionately to all as Evita, she is Argentina's beloved First Lady, in some ways even eclipsing the legacy of her husband, who governed Argentina from 1946 to 1955.

At the age of 15 Eva Duarte left her hometown of Junín for Buenos Aires, looking for work as an actor, but eventually landing a job in radio. Her big chance came in 1944, when she attended a benefit at Buenos Aires' Luna Park. Here Duarte met Colonel Juan Perón, who fell in love with her; they were married in 1945.

Shortly after Perón won the presidency in 1946, Evita went to work in the office of the Department of Labor and Welfare. During Perón's two terms, Evita empowered her husband both through her charisma and by reaching out to the nation's poor, who came to love her dearly. She built housing for the poor, created programs for children and distributed clothing and food items to needy families. She campaigned for the aged, offered health services to the poor and advocated for a law extending suffrage to women.

Perón won his second term in 1952, but that same year Evita – at age 33 and the height of her popularity – died of cancer. It was a blow to Argentina and her husband's presidency.

Although remembered for extending social justice to those she called the country's *descamisados* (shirtless ones), the Evita and her husband ruled with an iron fist. They jailed opposition leaders and newspapers, and banned *Time* magazine when it referred to her as an 'illegitimate child'. However, there is no denying the extent to which she empowered women at all levels of Argentine society and helped the country's poor.

Today Evita enjoys near-saint status. Get to know her at Museo Evita (p62), or visit her tomb in the Recoleta cemetery (p59). You can also read her ghostwritten autobiography *La razón de mi vida* (My Mission in Life; 1951).

During his exile, Perón plotted his return to Argentina. In the late 1960s increasing economic problems, strikes, political kidnappings and guerrilla warfare marked Argentine political life. In the midst of these events, Perón returned to Argentina and was voted president again in 1973; however, after an 18-year exile, there was no substance to his rule. Chronically ill, Perón died in mid-1974, leaving a fragmented country to his ill-qualified third wife, Isabel.

## The Dirty War & the Disappeared

In the late 1960s and early '70s, antigovernment feeling was rife, and street protests often exploded into all-out riots. Armed guerrilla organizations emerged as radical opponents of the military, the oligarchies and

Héctor Olivera's 1983 film *Funny Dirty Little War* is an unsettling but excellent black comedy set in a fictitious town just before the 1976 military coup.

US influence in Latin America. With increasing official corruption exacerbating Isabel's incompetence, Argentina found itself plunged into chaos.

On March 24, 1976, a military coup led by army general Jorge Rafael Videla took control of the Argentine state apparatus and ushered in a period of terror and brutality. Videla's sworn aim was to crush the guerrilla movements and restore social order. During what the regime euphemistically labeled the Process of National Reorganization (known as El Proceso), security forces went about the country arresting, torturing and killing anyone on their hit list of suspected leftists.

During the period between 1976 and 1983, often referred to as the Guerra Sucia or Dirty War, human-rights groups estimate that anywhere from 10,000 to 30,000 people 'disappeared.' Ironically, the Dirty War ended only when the Argentine military attempted a real military operation; liberating the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) from British rule.

### LAS MADRES DE LA PLAZA DE MAYO

In 1977, after a year of brutal human-rights violations under the leadership of General Jorge Rafael Videla, 14 mothers marched into the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires. They did this despite the military government's ban on public gatherings and despite its reputation for torturing and killing anyone it considered dissident. The mothers, wearing their now-iconic white head scarves, demanded information about their missing children, who had 'disappeared' as part of the government's efforts to quash political opposition.

The group, which took on the name Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo (The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo), developed into a powerful social movement and was the only political organization that overtly challenged the military government. Las Madres were particularly effective as they carried out their struggle under the banner of motherhood, which made them relatively unassailable in Argentine culture. Their movement showed the power of women – at least in a traditional role – in Argentine culture, and they are generally credited with helping to kick start the reestablishment of the country's civil society.

After Argentina's return to civilian rule in 1983, thousands of Argentines were still unaccounted for, and Las Madres continued their marches and their demands for information and retribution. In 1986 Las Madres split into two factions. One group, known as the Línea Fundadora (Founding Line), dedicated itself to recovering the remains of the disappeared and to bringing military perpetrators to justice. The other, known as the Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo held its last yearly protest in January 2006, saying it no longer had an enemy in the presidential seat. Both groups, however, still hold silent vigils every Thursday afternoon in remembrance of the disappeared – and to protest other social causes.

For more information see [www.madres.org.ar](http://www.madres.org.ar) and [www.abuelas.org.ar](http://www.abuelas.org.ar).

## The Falklands/Malvinas War

In late 1981 General Leopoldo Galtieri assumed the role of president. To stay in power amid a faltering economy and mass social unrest, Galtieri played the nationalist card and launched an invasion in April 1982 to dislodge the British from the Falkland Islands, which had been claimed by Argentina as its own Islas Malvinas for nearly a century and a half.

However, Galtieri underestimated the determined response of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. After only 74 days Argentina's ill-trained, poorly motivated and mostly teenaged forces surrendered ignominiously. The military regime collapsed, and in 1983 Argentines elected civilian Raúl Alfonsín to the presidency.

### Aftermath of the Dirty War

In his successful 1983 presidential campaign, Alfonsín pledged to prosecute military officers responsible for human-rights violations during the Dirty War. He convicted high-ranking junta officials for kidnapping, torture and homicide, but when the government attempted to try junior officers, these officers responded with uprisings in several different parts of the country. The timid administration succumbed to military demands and produced the Ley de la Obediencia Debida (Law of Due Obedience), allowing lower-ranking officers to use the defense that they were following orders, as well as the Ley de Punto Final (Full Stop Law), declaring dates beyond which no criminal or civil prosecutions could take place. At the time, these measures eliminated prosecutions of notorious individuals; in 2003, however, they were repealed. Dirty War crime cases have since been reopened, and in recent years several officers have been convicted for Dirty War crimes. Despite these arrests, however, many of the leaders of El Proceso remain free, both in Argentina and abroad.

### The Menem Years

Carlos Saúl Menem was elected president in 1989, and quickly embarked on a period of radical free-market reform. In pegging the peso to the US dollar, he effectively created a period of false economic stability, one that would create a great deal of upward mobility among Argentina's middle class. However, his policies are widely blamed for Argentina's economic collapse in 2002, when the overvalued peso was considerably devalued.

Menem's presidency was characterized by the privatization of state-owned companies – and a few scandals. In 2001 he was charged with illegally dealing arms to Croatia and Ecuador and placed under house arrest. After five months of judicial investigation, the charges were

The Falklands War is still a somewhat touchy subject in Argentina. If the subject comes up, try to call them 'Malvinas' instead of 'Falklands,' as many Argentines have been taught from a young age that these islands have always belonged to Argentina.

*Nunca Más* (Never Again; 1984), the official report of the National Commission on the Disappeared, systematically details military abuses from 1976 to 1983 – during Argentina's Dirty War.

#### 1869–95

The Argentine economy booms, immigration skyrockets as Italian and Spanish immigrants flood in, and Buenos Aires' population grows from 90,000 to 670,000. The tango emerges in Buenos Aires.

#### 1872–79

José Hernández publishes his epic poem, 'El Gaucho Martín Fierro,' in two parts: 'El Gaucho Martín Fierro' (1872) and 'La Vuelta de Martín Fierro' (1879).

#### 1926

Novelist and poet Ricardo Güiraldes publishes *Don Segundo Sombra*, a classic work of gaucho literature evoking the spirit of the gaucho and its impact on Argentine society.

#### 1946

Juan Perón is elected president and makes changes to the Argentine political structure. Evita embarks on her social-assistance programs to help lower-class women and children.

#### 1952

Eva Perón dies of cancer on July 26 at age 33, one year into her husband's second term as president. Her death would severely weaken the political might of her husband.

#### 1955

After the economy slides into recession President Perón loses further political clout and is finally thrown from the presidency and exiled to Spain after another military coup.

#### 1976–83

Under the leadership of General Jorge Videla, a military junta takes control of Argentina, launching the country into the Dirty War. In eight years an estimated 30,000 people 'disappear.'

#### 1982

With the economy on the brink of collapse once again, General Leopoldo Galtieri invades the Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas, unleashing a wave of nationalism and distracting the country from its problems.

A bit of trivia: Carlos Menem's Syrian ancestry earned him the nickname 'El Turco' (The Turk). And in 2001 he married Cecilia Bolocco, a former Miss Universe who was 35 years his junior; they're now separated.

At least two terms came about due to Argentina's economic crisis: *el corralito* (a small enclosure) refers to the cap placed on cash withdrawals from bank accounts during 'La Crisis'; while *cacerolazo* (from the word *cacerola*, meaning pan) is the street protest where angry people bang pots and pans.

dropped; the following day he announced he would run again for president. In 2003 he did, only to withdraw after the first round. A failed 2007 bid for governor of his home province of La Rioja has pretty much written him off politics.

## 'La Crisis'

Fernando de la Rúa succeeded Menem in the 1999 elections, inheriting an unstable economy and US\$114 billion in foreign debt. With the Argentine peso pegged to the US dollar, Argentina was unable to compete on the international market and exports slumped. A further decline in international prices of agricultural products pummeled the Argentine economy, which depended heavily on farm-product exports.

By 2001 the Argentine economy teetered on the brink of collapse, and the administration, with Minister of Economy Domingo Cavallo at the wheel, took measures to end deficit spending and slash state spending. After attempted debt swaps and talk of devaluing the peso, middle-class Argentines began emptying their bank accounts. Cavallo responded by placing a cap of US\$250 per week on withdrawals, but it was the beginning of the end.

By mid-December unemployment hit 18.3% and unions began a nationwide strike. Things came to a head on December 20 when middle-class Argentines took to the streets in protest of De la Rúa's handling of the economic situation. Rioting spread throughout the country and President de la Rúa resigned. Three interim presidents had resigned by the time Eduardo Duhalde took office in January 2002, becoming the fifth president in two weeks. Duhalde devalued the peso and announced that Argentina would default on US\$140 billion in foreign debt, the biggest default in world history.

## Néstor Kirchner

Duhalde's Minister of Economy, Roberto Lavagna, negotiated a deal with the IMF in which Argentina would pay only the interest on its debts. Simultaneously, devaluation of the peso meant that Argentina's products were suddenly affordable on the world market, and by 2003 exports were booming. The surge was great for the country's GNP, but prices at home skyrocketed, plunging more of Argentina's already shaken middle class into poverty.

A presidential election was finally held in April 2003, and Santa Cruz Governor Néstor Kirchner emerged victoriously after his opponent, former president Carlos Menem, bowed out of the election.

By the end of his term in 2007, Kirchner had become one of Argentina's most popular presidents. He reversed amnesty laws that protected members of the 1976–83 junta against being charged for

### 1983

After the failure of the Falklands War and with an economy on the skids, Raúl Alfonsín is elected the first civilian leader of the country since 1976.



» Raúl Alfonsín

### 1999–2000

Fernando de la Rúa succeeds Menem as president, inheriting a failing economy. Agricultural exports slump and strikes begin throughout the country. The IMF grants Argentina US\$40 million in aid.

### 2002

Interim president Eduardo Duhalde devalues the peso, and Argentina defaults on a US\$140 billion international debt (US\$800 million owed to the World Bank), the largest default in history.

### 2003

Néstor Kirchner is elected president of Argentina after Carlos Menem bows out of the presidential race, despite winning more votes in the first round of elections.

### 2007

Former First Lady Cristina Fernández de Kirchner is elected president.

### 2010

Néstor Kirchner dies suddenly, dealing a serious blow to the Kirchner dynasty. Many thought he would run for president in 2011, and very likely win.

### 2011

Cristina Kirchner wins the presidential re-election race; a few months later she undergoes successful surgery after a cancer scare.

atrocities committed during the Dirty War. He took a heavy stance against government corruption and steered the economy away from strict alignment with the US (realigning it with that of Argentina's South American neighbors). And in 2005 he paid off Argentina's entire debt to the IMF in a single payment. By the end of Kirchner's presidency in 2007, unemployment had fallen to just under 9% – from a high of nearly 25% in 2002.

When the presidential seat went up for grabs in 2007, Argentines expressed their satisfaction with Kirchner's policies by electing his wife, well-known Senator Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, as president. Cristina won the presidency with a whopping 22% margin over her nearest challenger and became Argentina's first elected female president.

## 'La Presidenta'

When Cristina became 'la Presidenta', she faced two major challenges: tackling poverty and curbing inflation. Unlike her husband Néstor's successful tenure, however, hers has been rocky one peppered with scandals, tax bungles and rollercoaster approval ratings.

During her first days as president, a Venezuelan-American entering Argentina from Venezuela was found with almost US\$800,000 cash in his suitcase. *Time* magazine wrote that US attorneys claimed this was Hugo Chavez' way of aiding Kirchner's election campaign, an allegation the Venezuelan president denied.

In March 2008 Kirchner significantly raised the export tax on soybeans, infuriating farmers who soon went on strike and blockaded highways; the tax was later rescinded. Then in June 2009, her power base was shattered when her ruling party lost its majority in both houses of Congress in the mid-term elections.

And in October 2010, Cristina was dealt a personal blow – her husband Néstor died suddenly of a heart attack. The country rallied around her, however, and sympathy towards her (along with a growing economy) helped her easily win the presidential re-election in October 2011.

For more recent news on Cristina and Argentina, see p556.

CRISTINA

Cristina Kirchner chooses Argentina's economy minister, Amado Boudou, as a running mate; the rugged Boudou drives a Harley-Davidson and jams with famous musicians on his Fender Telecaster guitar.



## Life in Argentina

Throughout Latin America, Argentines endure a reputation for being cocky. 'How does an Argentine commit suicide?' goes the old joke. 'By jumping off his ego.'

Traveling to Argentina, you'll find a nugget of truth in this stereotype. But you'll also realize that a warm and gregarious social nature more accurately defines the Argentine psyche. Argentines are some of the most welcoming and endearing folks on the planet.

Opinionated, brash and passionate, they're quick to engage in conversation and will talk after dinner or over coffee until the wee hours of the morning. Argentina's most visible customs are entirely social in nature. Look no further than the ritual of drinking *mate*, and their famous *asado* (barbecue).

While Argentines are friendly and passionate they also have a subtle broodiness to their nature, especially *porteños* (residents of Buenos Aires). This stems from a pessimism Argentines have acquired watching their country, one of the world's economic powerhouses during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, descend into a morass of international debt. They've endured military coups and severe government repression – while witnessing their beloved Argentina plundered by corrupt politicians.

But the broodiness is just a part of the picture. Add everything together and you get a people who are fun, fiery, opinionated and proud. And you'll come to love them for it.

### Lifestyle

Although Buenos Aires holds more than one-third of the country's population, it's surprisingly unlike the rest of Argentina or, for that matter, much of Latin America. As is the case throughout the country, one's lifestyle in the capital depends mostly on money. A modern flat rented by a young advertising creative in Buenos Aires' Las Cañitas neighborhood differs greatly from a family home in one of the city's impoverished *villas* (shantytowns), where electricity and clean water are luxuries.

Geography and ethnicity also play important roles. Both of these Buenos Aires homes have little in common with that of an indigenous family living in an adobe house in a desolate valley of the Andean Northwest, where life is eked out through subsistence agriculture and earth goddess Pachamama outshines Evita as a cultural icon. In regions such as the pampas, Mendoza province and Patagonia, a provincial friendliness surrounds a robust, outdoor lifestyle.

Argentina has a relatively large middle class, though it's been shrinking significantly in recent years, and poverty has grown. On the other side of the spectrum, wealthy city dwellers have moved into *countries*, (gated communities) in surprising numbers.

One thing that all Argentines have in common is their devotion to family. The Buenos Aires advertising exec joins family for weekend dinners,

Argentina's workforce is more than 40% female, and women currently occupy over a third of Argentina's congressional seats.

Argentines almost always exchange a kiss on the cheek in greeting – even among men. In formal and business situations, though, it is better to go with a handshake.

### SOCIAL DOS & DON'TS

When it comes to social etiquette in Argentina, knowing a few intricacies will keep you on the right track.

#### Dos

- » Greet people you encounter with *buenos días* (good morning), *buenas tardes* (good afternoon) or *buenas noches* (good evening).
- » In small villages, greet people on the street and when walking into a shop.
- » Accept and give *besos* (kisses) on the cheek.
- » Use *usted* (the formal term for 'you') when addressing elders and in formal situations.
- » Dress for the occasion; only tourists and athletes wear shorts in Buenos Aires.

#### Don'ts

- » Don't refer to the Islas Malvinas as the Falkland Islands, and don't talk to strangers about the Dirty War.
- » Don't suggest that Brazil is better than Argentina at *fútbol*, or that Pelé is better than Maradona. And don't refer to *fútbol* as soccer.
- » Don't show up at bars before midnight, or nightclubs before 3am, or dinner parties right on time (be fashionably late).
- » Don't refer to people from the United States as Americans or *americanos*; use the term *estadounidenses* instead. Some Latin Americans consider themselves 'American' (literally from America, whether it be North, Central or South).

and the cafe owner in San Juan meets friends out at the family *estancia* (ranch) for a Sunday *asado*. Children commonly live with their parents until they're married, especially within poorer households.

### The Sporting Life

*Fútbol* (soccer) is an integral part of Argentines' lives, and on game day you'll know it by the cheers and yells emanating out of shops and cafes. The national team has been to the World Cup final four times and has triumphed twice, in 1978 and 1986. The Argentine team also won Olympic gold twice, at the 2004 and 2008 games. The most popular teams are Boca Juniors and River Plate (there are around two-dozen professional teams in Buenos Aires alone) and the fanatical behavior of the country's *barra brava* (hooligans) rivals that of their European counterparts. Among the best-known *fútbol* players are Diego Maradona, Gabriel Batistuta and Lionel Messi.

Rugby's popularity has increased in Argentina ever since Los Pumas, their national team, beat France in the first game of the 2007 Rugby World Cup and *again* in the play-off for third place. As an indicator of just how popular the sport has become, the *Superclásico* (the famed soccer match between Boca and River Plate) was rescheduled so it wouldn't conflict with Los Pumas' quarter-final match.

Horse racing, tennis, basketball, golf and boxing are also popular. Argentina has the top polo horses and players in the world, and the Dakar Rally has been taking place partly or mostly in Argentina since 2009.

Pato is Argentina's traditional sport, played on horseback and mixing elements from both polo and basketball. It was originally played with a duck (a 'pato') but now, thankfully, uses a ball encased in leather handles. Despite its long history and tradition, however, relatively few people follow it.

Jimmy Burns' *The Hand of God* (1997) is the definitive book about football legend Diego Maradona and makes a great read – even if you're not a soccer fanatic.

MARADONA



## Argentine Cuisine

Argentines love eating. Most of their social and political life involves a table, be it for a leisurely coffee, an informal meal or an elegant banquet. While sophistication is not a national feature – beef and pasta are the two pillars upon which the national menu is based – it does exist. In Buenos Aires and other large cities, you'll find slick international restaurants including Japanese, Middle Eastern, Mexican, Southeast Asian, Brazilian and more, that serve intricately prepared dishes. But traditional Argentine food, which is rooted in Italian and Spanish cooking, is more modest.

Argentina has also established a reputation for fine wine. The number of wineries and vineyards is skyrocketing, not just in Mendoza province but in northwest Argentina and even northern Patagonia. And despite rising inflation, sampling fine wine remains an affordable luxury.

For cooking courses in Buenos Aires, see p68.

### Staples & Specialties

#### Beef

When the first Spaniards came to Argentina, they brought cattle. But efforts at establishing a colony proved unfruitful, and the herds were abandoned in the pampas. Here, the cows found the bovine equivalent of heaven: plenty of lush, fertile grasses on which to feed, with few natural predators (aside from some gauchos) to limit their numbers. Then the Europeans recolonized and captured the cattle for their own use, intermixing them with other bovine breeds.

Traditionally, free-range Argentine cows ate nutritious pampas grass and were raised without antibiotics and growth hormones. This made for a leaner and more natural-tasting meat. But, things are changing; see p123.

Average beef consumption in Argentina is around 60kg per person per year – though in the past, they ate even more.

#### Italian

Thanks to Argentina's Italian heritage, the national cuisine has been highly influenced by Italian immigrants who entered the country during the late 19th century. Along with an animated set of speaking gestures, they brought their love of pasta, pizza, gelato and more.

Many restaurants make their own pasta – look for *pasta casera* (handmade pasta). Some of the varieties of pasta you'll encounter are *ravioles*, *sorrentinos* (large, round pasta parcels similar to ravioli), *ñoquis* (gnocchi) and *tallerines* (fettuccine). Standard sauces include *tuco* (tomato sauce), *estofado* (beef stew, popular with ravioli) and *salsa blanca* (béchamel). Be aware that occasionally the sauce is *not* included in the price of the pasta – you choose and pay for it separately.

Pizza is sold at *pizzerías* throughout the country, though many regular restaurants offer it as well. It's generally excellent, so go ahead and order a slice or two.

### Spanish

Spanish cooking is less popular than Italian, but forms another bedrock of Argentine food. In the country's Spanish restaurants you'll find paella, as well as other typically Spanish seafood preparations. Most of the country's *guisos* and *pucheros* (types of stew) are descendants of Spain.

Empanadas – small, stuffed turnovers ubiquitous in Argentina – are prepared differently throughout the country (for example, you'll find spicy ground-beef empanadas in the Andean Northwest, and in Patagonia, lamb is a common filling). They make for a tasty, quick meal and are especially good for bus travel.

### Regional Flavors

Although *comida típica* can refer to any of Argentina's regional dishes, it often refers to food from the Andean Northwest. Food from this region, which has roots in pre-Columbian times, has more in common with the cuisines of Bolivia and Peru than with the Europeanized food of the rest of Argentina. It's frequently spicy and hard to find elsewhere (most Argentines can't tolerate anything spicier than a pinch of black pepper). Typical dishes can include everything from *locro* (a hearty corn or mixed-grain stew with meat), to tamales, *humitas* (sweet tamales) and fried empanadas.

In Patagonia, lamb almost wipes beef off the map. Along the coast, seafood is a popular choice and includes fish, oysters and king crab. In the Lake District, game meats such as venison, wild boar and trout are popular. In the west, the provinces of Mendoza, San Juan and La Rioja pride themselves on *chivito* (young goat). River fish, such as the dorado, pacú (a relative of the piranha) and surubí (a type of catfish), are staples in the northeast.

### THE BEEF ON BEEF

You walk into a traditional *parrilla* (steak house), breeze past the sizzling grill at the entrance and sit down feeling hungry, knife and fork in hand. You don't know a word of Spanish and you've never had to choose between more than two or three cuts of steak in your life – but the menu has at least 10 choices. What to do?

At a steakhouse, the *parrillada* (mixed grill) is a little bit of everything, often including *chorizo* (beef or pork sausage), *pollo* (chicken), *costillas* (ribs) and *carne* (beef). It can also come with more exotic items like *chinchulines* (small intestines), *molleja* (sweet-breads) and *morcilla* (blood sausage). You can order a *parrillada* for as many people as you want; the steakhouse adjusts its servings according to the party's size.

Prime beef cuts include the following:

**Bife de chorizo** Sirloin; a thick and juicy cut.

**Bife de costilla** T-bone; a cut close to the bone.

**Bife de lomo** Tenderloin; a thinly cut, more tender piece.

**Cuadril** Rump steak; often a thin cut.

**Ojo de bife** Rib eye; a choice smaller morsel.

**Tira de asado** Short ribs; thin strips of ribs.

**Vacio** Flank steak; textured, chewy and tasty.

Very important: if you don't specify, your steak will be cooked *a punto* (medium to well done). Getting a steak medium rare or rare is more difficult than you'd imagine. If you want some pink in the center, order it *jugoso*; if you like it truly rare, try *vuelta y vuelta*. Don't miss *chimichurri*, a tasty sauce often made of olive oil, garlic and parsley.

And if you're lucky enough to be invited to an *asado* (family or friends' barbecue), do attend – here the art of grilling beef has been perfected, and the social bonding is priceless.

## BEEF

When it comes to national cuisine, Argentines produce what is arguably the world's best beef – and have mastered the art of grilling it. For the lowdown on beef, see boxed text.

Alfajores are round, cookie-type sandwiches layered with *dulce de leche* or fruit preserves. Get them at *kioskos* (kiosks, or small street shops) – they're delicious and Argentina's answer to the candy bar.

# A Taste of Argentina

Argentines take barbecuing to heights you cannot imagine. Their pizzas vie with those of New York and Naples. They make fabulous wines. *Mate*, that iconic tea, doubles as a social bond between family and friends. And your taste buds will sing as they sample Argentina's delectable ice cream.

## Mate

**1** Although most first-time *mate* drinkers can barely choke the stuff down, this strong green tea, sipped communally from a gourd with a filtering metal straw, is a cultural delight and social bonding experience.

## Beef

**2** Argentines have perfected the grilling of their flavorful beef. At its best you'll slice through the crispy, smoky and salted outer layers to uncover the tender and tasty meat within – and your mouth will love you.

## Ice Cream

**3** Step into one of Argentina's ice creameries and your hardest task will be choosing from dozens of flavors. The luscious treat will be swirled into a peaked mountain with a spoon stuck in the side – prepare for a sweet adventure!

## Wine

**4** Exploring Argentina by the glass will take you (and your palate) from the malbecs and cabernets of Mendoza to the crisp torrentés of Cafayate, and to the succulent syrahs of San Juan. A bottle a day – make that your motto.

## Italian Food

**5** You'll find pizza and pasta everywhere in Argentina and it'll make you wonder how the locals can consume so much of the stuff. When it's this consistently good, however, you'll understand.

### Clockwise from top left

**1.** *Mate* (p574) **2.** Beef (p571) **3.** Ice cream (p574)  
**4.** Wine bottles, Mendoza (p301)



## Drinks

Mendoza is Argentina's premier wine region, but other provinces also produce excellent wines. For more on a couple of off-the-beaten-path Argentine wine destinations, see p321 and p332.

If Argentina has a national beer, it's Quilmes. Order a *porrón* and you'll get a half-liter bottle, or a *chopp* and you'll get a frosty mug of draft.

Argentines love their *café con leche* (coffee with milk). An espresso with a drop of milk is a *café cortado*, while a *lágrima* is mostly milk with a drop or two of coffee. Black and herbal teas are also available, and there's always *mate*.

Even in big cities such as Buenos Aires, the *agua de canilla* (tap water) is drinkable. In restaurants, however, most people order bottled mineral water – ask for *agua con gas* (with bubbles) or *agua sin gas* (without). In older, more traditional restaurants, carbonated water in a spritzer bottle (*un sifón de soda*) is great for drinking, though Argentines often mix it with cheap wine.

## Where to Eat & Drink

Argentines love to dine out, and there is no lack of places to find a bite to eat.

For the best meats, head to a *parrilla* (steak restaurant). *Confiterías* and cafes are open all day and much of the night, and often have a long list of both food and drinks. Bars or pubs usually have a more limited range of snacks and meals available, though some can offer full meals. A *tenedor libre* (literally, 'free fork') is an all-you-can-eat restaurant; quality

## MATE & ITS RITUAL

The preparation and consumption of *mate* (pronounced *mah-tay*) is perhaps the only cultural practice that truly transcends the barriers of ethnicity, class and occupation in Argentina. More than a simple drink, *mate* is an elaborate ritual, shared among family, friends and co-workers.

*Yerba mate* is the dried, chopped leaf of *Ilex paraguayensis*, a relative of the common holly. Argentina is the world's largest producer and consumer of the stuff; Argentines consume an average of 5kg per person per year, more than four times their average intake of coffee.

Preparing and drinking *mate* is a ritual in itself. One person, the *cebador* (server), fills the *mate* gourd almost to the top with *yerba*, and then slowly pours hot water as he or she fills the gourd. The *cebador* then passes the *mate* to each drinker, who sips the liquid through the *bombilla*, a silver straw with a bulbous filter at its lower end. Each participant drinks the gourd dry each time. Remember it's bad form to touch the *bombilla*, and don't hold the *mate* too long before passing it on! A simple 'gracias' will tell the server to pass you by.

An invitation to partake in *mate* is a cultural treat and not to be missed, although the drink is an acquired taste and novices will find it very hot and bitter at first (adding sugar can be an option).

Because drinking *mate* is a fairly complex process, it is rarely served in restaurants or cafes. The simple solution is to do what traveling Argentines do: buy a thermos, a *mate* gourd, a *bombilla* and a bag of herb – stores often have a *mate* section. Cure your gourd by filling it with hot water and *yerba* and letting it soak for 24 hours. Nearly all restaurants, cafes and hotels are used to filling thermoses, sometimes charging a small amount. Simply whip out your thermos and ask: '¿Podía calentar agua para mate?' ('Would you mind heating water for *mate*?').

If you'd like to find out more about *mate*, visit a *mate* museum – there's one in Tigre (p104) and another in Posadas (p175).

Ice cream is one of Argentina's greatest treats, more akin to Italian gelato than its creamy counterparts in France and the US. For a list of ice-cream shops in Buenos Aires, see p82.

is usually decent, but a minimum-drink purchase is often mandatory and costs extra.

Typical restaurants tend to be open only at meal times (1pm to 3:30pm for lunch and 9pm to 1am for dinner).

Note that Argentines eat little for breakfast – usually just a coffee with *medialunas* (croissants – either *dulce*, sweet, or *salada*, plain). *Tostadas* (toast) with *manteca* (butter) or *mermelada* (jam) is an alternative, as are *facturas* (pastries). Some higher-end hotels offer breakfast buffets, however.

Restaurant reservations are taken but are really only necessary on weekends at better restaurants (or during high season at Mar del Plata or Bariloche, for example). Ask for your bill by saying, '*la cuenta, por favor*' ('the bill, please') or making the 'writing in air' gesture. Most restaurants accept credit cards, but some (usually smaller ones) only take cash.

To save a few bucks, especially for lunch, opt for the *menú del día* or *menú ejecutivo*. These 'set menus' usually include a main dish, dessert and drink, all for a reasonable price.

## Vegetarians & Vegans

Health foods, organic products and vegetarian restaurants are available in Argentina's biggest cities, but outside of them you'll have to search harder.

Most restaurant menus include a few vegetarian choices, and pastas are a nearly ubiquitous option. *Pizzerías* and *empanaderías* (empanada shops) are good bets – look for empanadas made with *acelga* (chard) and *choclo* (corn). If you're stuck at a *parrilla*, your choices will be salads, baked potatoes, *provoleta* (a thick slice of grilled provolone cheese) and roasted vegetables.

*Sin carne* means 'without meat,' and the words *soy vegetariano/a* ('I'm a vegetarian') will come in handy when explaining to an Argentine why you don't eat their nation's renowned steaks.

Vegans will have a much harder time in Argentina; there isn't a word for 'vegan'. Make sure homemade pasta doesn't include egg, and that fried vegetables aren't cooked in lard (*grasa*; *manteca* means butter in Argentina). You'll need to be creative to survive here. One tip: look for accommodations with a kitchen, so you can shop for and cook your own food. Good luck.

For tips on where to eat *sin carne* in Buenos Aires, see p83.

The *choripán* is a classic snack-sandwich available at cheap take-out eateries or street stalls. It's made with two ingredients: *chorizo* (spicy sausage) and *pan* (bread). Top it with *chimichurri* sauce, and you've got a tasty and very cheap meal.

At many finer Argentine restaurants, you'll be charged a per-person *cubierto*; this is a small 'fee' for bread and the use of utensils. It's not the tip, which is up to 10% and should be paid separately.



# The Sounds of Argentina

Music and dance are unavoidable in Argentina, and none is more famous than the tango. But the country also grooves to different sounds, be it *chamamé* in Corrientes, *cuarteto* in Córdoba or *cumbia villera* in the poor neighborhoods of Buenos Aires.

## Tango

There's no better place to dive into tango than through the music of the genre's most legendary performer, singer Carlos Gardel (1887–1935). Violinist Juan D'Arienzo's *orquesta* (orchestra) reigned over tango throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s. Osvaldo Pugliese and Héctor Varela are important bandleaders from the 1940s, but the real giant of the era was *bandoneón* (small type of accordion) player Aníbal Troilo.

Modern tango is largely dominated by the work of *bandoneón* maestro Astor Piazzolla who moved the genre from the dance halls into the concert halls – *tango nuevo*, as it was called, was now for the ear. Piazzolla paved the way for the tango fusion, which emerged in the 1970s and continues to this day with *tango electrónica* (or neo tango) groups such as Gotan Project, Bajofondo Tango Club and Tanghetto.

While in Buenos Aires, keep an eye out for Orquesta Típica Fernández Fierro, who put a new twist on traditional tango songs, but also perform their own new creations. Another young orchestra to watch out for is Orquesta Típica Imperial.

Influential contemporary tango singers include Susana Rinaldi, Daniel Melingo and Adriana Varela. For more on the tango dance itself, see p88.

## Folk Music

Traditional music is known as *folklore* or *folklórico*. It's an umbrella genre that captures numerous styles and there are popular contemporary branches (such as *chamamé*, *chacarera* and *zamba*).

One of Argentina's greatest contemporary *folklórico* musicians is accordionist Chango Spasiuk, a virtuoso of Corrientes' *chamamé* music. Horacio Guarany is a contemporary *folklórico* singer whose 2004 album *Cantor de Cantores* was nominated for a Latin Grammy in the Best Folk Album category. Eduardo Falú, Víctor Heredia, León Gieco and Soledad Pastorutti are other big names in *folklórico*.

Atahualpa Yupanqui (1908–92) is Argentina's most important *folklórico* musician of the 20th century. Yupanqui's music emerged with the *nueva canción* ('new song') movement that swept Latin America in the 1960s. *Nueva canción* was rooted in folk music and its lyrics often dealt with social and political themes. The genre's grande dame was Argentina's Mercedes Sosa (1935–2009), one of the best-known Argentine folk singers outside South America and winner of several Latin Grammy awards.

Murga is a form of athletic musical theater composed of actors and percussionists. Primarily performed in Uruguay, *murga* in Argentina is more heavily focused on dancing than singing. You're most likely to see this exciting musical art form at Carnival celebrations.

*Cumbia villera* is a relatively recent musical phenomenon: a fusion of *cumbia* and gangsta posturing with a punk edge and reggae overtones. Born of Buenos Aires' shantytowns, its aggressive lyrics deal with marginalization, poverty, drugs, sex and the Argentine economic crisis.

## GARDEL & THE TANGO

In June 1935 a Cuban woman committed suicide in Havana; meanwhile, in New York and in Puerto Rico two other women tried to poison themselves. It was all over the same man: tango singer Carlos Gardel, who had just died in a plane crash in Colombia.

Gardel was born in France (a claim contested by both Argentina and Uruguay), and when he was three his destitute single mother brought him to Buenos Aires. In his youth he entertained neighbors with his rapturous singing, then went on to establish a successful performing career.

Gardel played an enormous role in creating the tango *canción* (song) and almost single-handedly took the style out of Buenos Aires' tenements and brought it to Paris and New York. His crooning voice, suaveness and overall charisma made him an immediate success in Latin American countries, a rising star during tango's golden years of the 1920s and 1930s. Unfortunately, Gardel's later film career was tragically cut short by that fatal plane crash.

His devoted followers cannot pass a day without listening to him; they say 'Gardel sings better every day.'

## Rock & Pop

Musicians such as Charly García, Fito Páez and Luis Alberto Spinetta are *rock nacional* (Argentine rock) icons. Soda Stereo, Sumo, Los Fabulosos Cadillacs and Los Pericos rocked Argentina throughout the 1980s and maintain wild popularity. Bersuit Vergarabat endures as one of Argentina's best rock bands, with a musical complexity that is arguably without peer. R&B-influenced Ratones Paranoicos opened for the Rolling Stones in 1995, while La Portuaria – who fuse Latin beats with jazz and R&B – collaborated with David Byrne in 2006.

Other popular national groups include the offbeat Babasónicos; punk rockers Ataque 77; rockers Los Piojos, Los Redonditos de Ricota, Los Divididos, Catupecu Machu and Gazpacho; and metal-meets-hip-hop Illya Kuryaki and the Valderramas. Catchy Miranda! has an electro-pop style, while eclectic Kevin Johansen sings in both English and Spanish.

Born in Córdoba in the early 1940s, *cuarteto* is Argentina's original pop music: despised by the middle and upper classes for its arresting rhythm and offbeat musical pattern (called the *tunga-tunga*), as well as its working-class lyrics, it is definitely music from the margins. Although definitively *cordobés* (from Córdoba), it's played in working-class bars, dance halls and stadiums throughout the country.

## Electrónica

*Electrónica*, or dance music, exploded in Argentina in the 1990s and has taken on various forms in popular music. Hybrid *bandas electrónicas* (electronic bands) are led by the likes of Intima, Mujik and Adicta, while Juana Molina's ambient-electronic music has been compared to Björk's.

DJ-based club and dance music is increasingly popular. Argentina's heavyweights include Aldo Haydar (a veteran of progressive house), Bad Boy Orange (the reigning king of Argentine drum 'n' bass), Diego Ro-K (also known as the Maradona of Argentine DJs) and Gustavo Lamas (who blends ambient pop and electro house). And award-winning Hernán Cattáneo, probably the best-known Argentine DJ, has played with Paul Oakenfold and at Burning Man.

One of Buenos Aires' most interesting music spectacles is La Bomba del Tiempo, a collective of percussionists whose explosive performances are improvisational, tribal and even simulate electronic dance music. Check them out at Ciudad Cultural Konex (see p96) on Monday evenings.

CHARLY GARCÍA

Charly García's version of the Argentine national anthem does what Jimi Hendrix did for 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' but it earned García a court appearance for 'lacking respect for national symbols.'



## Literature & Cinema

Artistically, Argentina is one of Latin America's most compelling countries, containing a rich literary heritage and a vibrant and evolving film industry.

### Literature

Journalist, poet and politician José Hernández (1831–86) gave rise to the *gauchesco* literary tradition with his epic poem *Martín Fierro* (1872), which acknowledged the role of the gauchos in Argentina's development. Argentine writing only reached an international audience during the 1960s and 1970s, when the stories of Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Ernesto Sábato, Adolfo Bioy Casares and Silvina Ocampo, among many others, were widely translated for the first time.

Despite being discovered and influenced by Borges in the 1940s, the writing of Julio Cortázar (1914–84) was considerably different. His short stories and novels are more anthropological and concern people living seemingly normal lives in a world where the surreal becomes commonplace. Cortázar's most famous book is *Hopscotch*.

Another great writer is Ernesto Sábato (1911–2011), whose complex and uncompromising novels have been extremely influential on later Argentine literature. *The Tunnel* (1948) is Sábato's engrossing existentialist novella about an obsessed painter and his distorted personal take on reality.

Adolfo Bioy Casares' (1914–99) sci-fi novella *The Invention of Morel* (1940) not only gave Alain Resnais the plot for his classic film *Last Year at Marienbad*, but also introduced the idea of the holodeck decades before *Star Trek* existed.

The contemporary, post-boom generation of Argentine writers is more reality-based, often reflecting the influence of popular culture and directly confronting the political angles of 1970s authoritarian Argentina. One of the most famous post-boom Argentine writers is Manuel Puig (1932–90, author of *Kiss of the Spider Woman*). In the Argentine tradition, Puig did much of his writing in exile, fleeing Argentina during the Perón years and ultimately settling in Mexico.

Osvaldo Soriano (1943–97), perhaps Argentina's most popular contemporary novelist, wrote *A Funny Dirty Little War* (1986) and *Winter Quarters* (1989). Juan José Saer (1937–2005) penned short stories and complex crime novels, while Rodrigo Fresán (1963–), the youngster of the post-boom generation, wrote the international bestseller *The History of Argentina*.

Other notable contemporary writers include Federico Andahazi, Ricardo Piglia and Tomás Eloy Martínez.

Victoria Ocampo (1890–1979) was a famous writer, publisher and intellectual who founded *Sur*, a renowned cultural magazine of the 1930s. For more on her, see the boxed text, p132. You can also visit her mansion near Buenos Aires (p103).

Argentines are pretty well-read – their literacy rate is over 97%. And in 2011, Buenos Aires was voted Unesco World Book Capital.

### JORGE LUIS BORGES

Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986), the brightest light of Argentine literature, is best known for the complex labyrinthine worlds and sophisticated mind teasers constructing his stories. As a half-Jewish, half-English Argentine who was educated in Europe, Borges was influenced by everything from Jewish cabalists to HG Wells, Cervantes and Kafka.

Borges' dry, ironic wit is paired with a succinct, precise style. His paradoxical *Ficciones* (1944) blurs the line between myth and truth, underscoring the concept that reality is only a matter of perception and that an infinite number of worlds can exist simultaneously. Another theme that Borges explored was the nature of memory and dreams.

His early stories such as *Death and the Compass* and *Streetcorner Man* offer a meta-physical twist on Argentine themes, and his later works, including *The Lottery in Babylon*, *The Circular Ruins* and *Garden of the Forking Paths* are works of fantasy. *Collected Fictions* (1999) is a complete set of his stories.

Borges went blind towards the end of his life, but kept publishing books. Though he received numerous honors in his lifetime – including the Cervantes Prize, the Legion of Honor and an OBE – Borges was never conferred the Nobel.

### Cinema

One of Argentina's major contributions to cinema is Luis Puenzo's *The Official Story* (1985), which deals with the Dirty War. Another well-known international movie is Héctor Babenco's *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1985), based on Argentine-born Manuel Puig's novel. Both movies won Oscars.

New Argentine Cinema developed in the 1990s, brought about by economic and political unrest. Films that spearheaded this movement include Martín Rejtman's *Rapado* (1992) and *Pizza, birra, faso* (Pizza, Beer, Cigarettes, 1998) by Adrián Caetano and Bruno Stagnaro.

Pablo Trapero is one of Argentina's foremost filmmakers. Among his works are award-winning *Mundo grúa* (Crane World, 1999), the ensemble road movie *Familia rodante* (Rolling Family, 2004) and *Nacido y criado* (Born and Bred, 2006), a stark story about a Patagonian man's fall from grace. His 2010 noir film *Carancho* played at Cannes Film Festival.

Daniel Burman's films include *Esperando al mesías* (Waiting for the Messiah, 2000), *El abrazo partido* (Lost Embrace, 2004) and *Derecho de familia* (Family Law, 2006). His most recent effort, *Dos hermanos* (Brother and Sister, 2010) is the story of aging siblings who've recently lost their mother. The late Fabián Bielinsky's works include award-winning *Nueve reinas* (Nine Queens, 2000) and the 2005 neo-noir flick *El Aura*.

Lucrecia Martel's 2001 debut *La ciénaga* (The Swamp) and *La niña santa* (The Holy Girl, 2004) deal with the themes of social decay, Argentine bourgeois and sexuality in the face of Catholic guilt. Her powerful *La mujer sin cabeza* (The Headless Woman, 2008) was showcased at Cannes. Another acclaimed director, Carlos Sorin, takes us to the deep south of Argentina in *Historias mínimas* (Minimal Stories, 2002) and *Bombón el perro* (Bombón the Dog, 2004).

Juan José Campanella's *El hijo de la novia* (Son of the Bride) received an Oscar nomination for best foreign-language film in 2001, while *Luna de avellaneda* (Moon of Avellaneda, 2004) is a clever story about a social club and those who try to save it. In 2010 he won the Oscar for best foreign-language film with *El secreto de sus ojos* (The Secret in Their Eyes).

Other noteworthy films include Lucía Puenzo's *XXY* (2007), the tale of a 15-year-old hermaphrodite, and Juan Diego Solanas' *Nordeste* (Northeast, 2005), which tackles difficult social issues such as child trafficking; both were screened at Cannes. Finally, *El hombre de al lado* (The Man Next Door, 2009), by Mariano Cohn and Gastón Duprat, is a moral drama that won a prize at Sundance Film Festival.

## FESTIVAL

Argentina's biggest film event is the Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Film, held in April. Check out [www.bafici.gov.ar](http://www.bafici.gov.ar) for more information.



# Natural World

## The Land

Argentina. For anyone raised on *National Geographic* and adventure stories, the name is loaded with images: the Magellanic penguins of the Atlantic coast, the windswept mysteries of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, the vast grasslands of the pampas, the towering Andes and raging Iguazú Falls. Spanning from the subtropics to the edge of Antarctica, the country is simply unmatched in natural wonders.

So it makes sense that Argentina is big – *really* big. With a total land area of about 2.8 million sq km, Argentina is the world's eighth-largest country – only slightly smaller than India. It stretches from La Quiaca on the Bolivian border, where summers can be brutally hot, to Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego, where winters are experienced only by seasoned locals and the nuttiest of travelers. It's a distance of nearly 3500km, an expanse that encompasses a vast array of environments and terrain.

## The Central & Northern Andes

In the extreme north, the Andes are basically the southern extension of the Bolivian *altiplano*, a thinly populated high plain between 3000m and 4000m in altitude, punctuated by even higher volcanic peaks. Although days can be surprisingly hot (sunburn is a serious hazard at high altitude), frosts occur almost nightly. The Andean Northwest is also known as the *puna*.

Further south, in the arid provinces of San Juan and Mendoza, the Andes climb to their highest altitudes, with 6962m Cerro Aconcagua topping out as the highest point in the western hemisphere. Here, their highest peaks lie covered in snow through the winter. Although rainfall on the eastern slopes is inadequate for crops, perennial streams descend from the Andes and provide irrigation water, which has brought prosperity to the wine-producing Cuyo region (the provinces of Mendoza, San Juan and San Luis). Winter in San Juan province is the season of the *zonda*, a hot, dry wind descending from the Andes that causes dramatic temperature increases (see p328).

## The Chaco

East of the Andes and the Andean foothills, much of northern Argentina consists of subtropical lowlands. This arid area, known as the Argentine Chaco, is part of the much larger Gran Chaco, an extremely rugged, largely uninhabited region that extends into Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil. The Argentine Chaco encompasses the provinces of Chaco, Formosa and Santiago del Estero, the western reaches of Jujuy, Catamarca and Salta provinces, and the northernmost parts of Santa Fe and Córdoba.

The Chaco has a well-defined winter dry season, and summer everywhere in the Chaco is brutally hot. Rainfall decreases as you move east to west. The wet Chaco, which encompasses the eastern parts of Chaco

and Formosa provinces and northeast Santa Fe, receives more rain than the dry Chaco, which covers central and western Chaco and Formosa provinces, most of Santiago del Estero and parts of Salta.

## Mesopotamia

Also referred to as the Litoral (as in littoral), Mesopotamia is the name for the region of northeast Argentina between the Río Paraná and Río Uruguay. It's a region defined, as its names suggest, by its rivers, both a dominant part of the landscape. Here, the climate is mild, and rainfall is heavy in the provinces of Entre Ríos and Corrientes, which make up most of Mesopotamia. Hot and humid Misiones province, a politically important province surrounded on three sides by Brazil and Paraguay, contains part of Iguazú Falls, which descend from southern Brazil's Paraná Plateau. Shallow summer flooding is common throughout Mesopotamia and into the eastern Chaco, but only the immediate river floodplains become inundated in the west. Mesopotamia's rainfall is evenly distributed throughout the year.

## The Pampas & Atlantic Coast

Bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and Patagonia and stretching nearly to Córdoba and the Central Sierras, the pampas are Argentina's agricultural heartland. Geographically, this region covers the provinces of Buenos Aires and La Pampa, as well as southern chunks of Santa Fe and Córdoba.

This area can be subdivided into the humid pampas, along the Litoral, and the arid pampas of the western interior and the south. More than a third of the country's population lives in and around Buenos Aires, where the humid climate resembles Sydney's or New York City's in the spring, summer and autumn. Annual rainfall exceeds 900mm, but several hundred kilometers westward it's less than half that. Buenos Aires' winters are relatively mild.

The pampas are an almost completely level plain of wind-borne loess (a fine-grained silt or clay) and river-deposited sediments. The absence of nearly any rises in the land makes the area vulnerable to flooding from the relatively few, small rivers that cross it. Only the granitic Sierra de Tandil (484m) and the Sierra de la Ventana (1273m), in southwestern Buenos Aires province, and the Sierra de Lihué Calel disrupt the otherwise monotonous terrain.

Moving south along the Atlantic coast from the Argentine capital, the province of Buenos Aires features the sandy, often dune-backed beaches that attracted the development of seaside resorts such as Mar del Plata and Necochea. Inland it's mostly the grasslands of the pampas. South of Viedma, cliffs begin to appear but the landscape remains otherwise desolate for its entire stretch south through Patagonia.

## Patagonia & the Lake District

Ever-alluring Patagonia is the region of Argentina south of the Río Colorado, which flows southeast from the Andes and passes just north of the city of Neuquén. The Lake District is a subregion of Patagonia. Province-wise, Patagonia consists of Neuquén, Río Negro, Chubut and Santa Cruz. It's separated from Chilean Patagonia by the Andes.

The Andean cordillera is high enough that Pacific storms drop most of their rain and snow on the Chilean side. In the extreme southern reaches of Patagonia, however, enough snow and ice still accumulate to form the largest southern hemisphere glaciers outside of Antarctica.

East of the Andean foothills, the cool, arid Patagonian steppes support huge flocks of sheep, much of whose wool is exported to Europe. For such a southerly location, temperatures are relatively mild, even in winter, when more uniform atmospheric pressure moderates the strong gales that blow most of the year.

At its mouth, the Río de la Plata is an amazing 200km wide, making it the widest river in the world – though some consider it more like a river estuary.

The largest dinosaur ever discovered is *Argentinosaurus huinculensis*, uncovered in Neuquén province; the herbivore measured a massive 40m long and 18m high.

Iguazú Falls consists of more than 275 individual falls that tumble from heights as great as 80m. They stretch for nearly 3km and are arguably the most amazing waterfalls on earth.

Argentina is the world's third-highest producer of soybeans, after the USA and Brazil, but interestingly, Argentines don't really eat soy. Much of the country's soybeans are exported.

SOYBEANS



## Argentina's National Parks

Argentina's national and provincial parks offer a huge variety, from the sweltering tropics of Parque Nacional Iguazú to the crashing glaciers of Parque Nacional Los Glaciares to the animal-rich coastal waters of Reserva Faunística Península Valdés.

### Parque Nacional Los Glaciares

**1** The shining jewel of this park (p434) is Perito Moreno Glacier. Constantly calving, you're practically guaranteed to hear the crack of huge ice chunks sheering off and crashing into the water.

### Reserva Provincial Esteros del Iberá

**2** Animal lovers shouldn't miss this relatively unspoiled reserve (p163), which teems with exotic creatures like capybaras, black caimans, howler monkeys and countless species of birds.

### Parque Nacional Nahuel Huapi

**3** One of Argentina's largest and most popular parks (p368) with scenic views, gorgeous lakes, excellent hiking and world-class skiing.

### Parque Nacional Iguazú

**4** Hundreds of thundering waterfalls combine into an unbelievable sheet of water stretching nearly 3km long, and falling up to 80m in gorgeous terraces (p186).

### Reserva Faunística Península Valdés

**5** Right whales, Commerson's dolphins, elephant seals and Magellanic penguins all congregate in great numbers along the shores of this protected reserve (p389).



#### Clockwise from top left

1. Glacier Perito Moreno (p448)
2. Capybara (p585)
3. Parque Nacional Nahuel Huapi (p368)

Except for urban centers such as Comodoro Rivadavia (the center of coastal Patagonia's petroleum industry) and Río Gallegos (the hub for wool and meatpacking), Patagonia is thinly populated. Tidal ranges along the Atlantic coast are too great for major port facilities. In the valley of the Río Negro and at the outlet of the Río Chubut (near the town of Trelew), people farm and cultivate fruit orchards.

## Tierra del Fuego

The world's southernmost permanently inhabited territory, Tierra del Fuego ('Land of Fire') consists of one large island (Isla Grande), unequally divided between Chile and Argentina, and many smaller ones, some of which have been the source of longtime contention between the two countries. When Europeans first passed through the Strait of Magellan (which separates Isla Grande from the Patagonian mainland), the fires that gave this land its name stemmed from the activities of the now endangered Yaghan people.

The northern half of Isla Grande, resembling the Patagonian steppes, is devoted to sheep grazing, while its southern half is mountainous and partly covered by forests and glaciers. As in Patagonia, winter conditions are rarely extreme, although hiking and outdoor camping are not advisable except for experienced mountaineers. For most visitors, though, the brief daylight hours during this season may be a greater deterrent than the weather.

## Wildlife

With such variances in terrain and such great distances, it's no wonder Argentina boasts a wide range of flora and fauna. Subtropical rainforests, palm savannas, high-altitude deserts and steppes, humid-temperate grasslands, alpine and sub-Antarctic forests and rich coastal areas all support their own special life forms. The most exciting part is that visitors – especially those from the northern hemisphere – will find many of Argentina's plants and animals unfamiliar. Take the capybara, for instance, the world's largest rodent, or the araucaria (pehuén), a conifer appropriately deemed the 'monkey puzzle tree' in English. To protect these environments, Argentina has created an extensive system of national and provincial parks, which are often the best places to experience the country's unique wildlife.

## Animals

Northeast Argentina boasts the country's most diverse animal life. One of the best areas on the continent to enjoy wildlife is the swampy Esteros del Iberá, in Corrientes province, where animals such as swamp deer, capybara and caiman, along with many large migratory birds, are common. It's comparable – arguably even better – than Brazil's more famous Pantanal.

In the drier northwest the most conspicuous animal is the domestic llama, but its wild cousins, the guanaco and vicuña, can also be seen. Your odds of seeing them are excellent if you travel by road through Parque Nacional Los Cardones to Salta. Their yellow fur is often an extraordinary puff of color against the cactus-studded backdrop. Many migratory birds, including flamingos, inhabit the high saline lakes of the Andean Northwest.

In less densely settled areas, including the arid pampas of La Pampa province, guanacos and foxes are not unusual sights. Many bodies of water, both permanent and seasonal, provide migratory bird habitats.

Most notable in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego is the wealth of coastal wildlife, ranging from Magellanic penguins, cormorants and gulls to sea lions, fur seals, elephant seals, orcas and whales. Several coastal reserves, from Río Negro province south to Tierra del Fuego, are home to

Península Valdés is one of the few places on earth where killer whales (orcas) have been known to hunt sea lions by beaching themselves. You'd be very lucky to witness this phenomenon, however.

## ORCAS

## CAPYBARAS *Andy Symington*

Treading, with its webbed feet, a very fine line between cute and ugly, the capybara is a sizable semiaquatic beast that you're bound to encounter in the Iberá area. Weighing in at up to 75kg, the carpincho, as it's known in Spanish, is the world's largest rodent.

Very much at home both on land and in the water, the gentle and vaguely comical creature eats aquatic plants and grasses in great quantity. They form small herds, with a dominant male living it up with four to six females. The male can be recognized by a protrusion on its forehead that emits a territory-marking scent. The lovably roly-poly babies are born in spring.

Though protected in the Iberá area, the capybara is farmed and hunted elsewhere for its skin, which makes a soft, flexible leather. The meat is also considered a delicacy in traditional communities.

enormous concentrations of wildlife that are one of the region's greatest visitor attractions. Inland on the Patagonian steppe, as in the northwest, the guanaco is the most conspicuous mammal, but the flightless rhea, resembling the ostrich, runs in flocks across the plains.

For more on Patagonia's marine wildlife, see p392.

## Plants

When it comes to plant life, the country's most diverse regions are in northeast Argentina, the Lake District, the Patagonian Andes and the subtropical forests of northwest Argentina.

The high northern Andes are dry and often barren, and vegetation is limited to ichu (sparse bunch grasses) and low, widely spaced shrubs, known collectively as tola. In Jujuy and La Rioja provinces, however, huge, vertically branched cardón cacti add a rugged beauty to an otherwise empty landscape. In the Andean *precordillera*, between the Chaco and the Andes proper, lies a strip of dense, subtropical montane cloud forest known as the Yungas. Spanning parts of Salta, Jujuy and Tucumán provinces, the Yungas are kept lush by heavy summertime rains, and are one of the most biologically diverse regions in the country.

The wet Chaco is home to grasslands and gallery forests with numerous tree species, including the quebracho colorado and caranday palm. The dry Chaco, although extremely parched, is still thick with vegetation. Its taller trees include the quebracho colorado, quebracho blanco, algarrobo, palo santo, and a dense understory of low-growing spiny trees and shrubs. Both quebracho and algarrobo trees produce highly valued hard woods that have led to widespread deforestation throughout both regions of the Chaco.

In Mesopotamia rainfall is sufficient to support swampy lowland forests and upland savanna. Misiones' native vegetation is dense subtropical forest, though its upper elevations are studded with araucaria pines.

The once lush native grasses of the Argentine pampas have suffered under grazing pressure and the proliferation of grain farms that produce cash crops such as soy beans. Today very little native vegetation remains, except along watercourses like the Río Paraná.

Most of Patagonia lies in the rain shadow of the Chilean Andes, so the vast steppes of southeastern Argentina resemble the sparse grasslands of the arid Andean highlands. Closer to the border there are pockets of dense *Nothofagus* (southern beech) and coniferous woodlands that owe their existence to the winter storms that sneak over the cordillera. Northern Tierra del Fuego is a grassy extension of the Patagonian steppe, but the heavy rainfall of the mountainous southern half supports verdant southern beech forests.

The funny-looking *araucaria araucana* (monkey puzzle tree) grows in the Chilean and Argentine Lake Districts. It has long scaly branches and produces edible pine nuts.

## Environmental Issues

Although Argentina boasts one of South America's largest systems of parks and reserves, much of those areas – not to mention the extremely sensitive regions around and between them – face serious threat. Deforestation is a major issue in the Chaco, where cultivation of genetically modified soy, sunflower crops and lumber are impacting on the health of the forests. It's equally troubling in the Yungas and the subtropical rainforests of Misiones province, where tea plantations and timber companies continue to destroy some of Argentina's most biologically diverse areas. The result is that many of the country's protected areas, especially those in the Gran Chaco and Mesopotamia, are virtual islands in a sea of environmental degradation. To complicate matters, genetically modified, herbicide-resistant soy has become Argentina's single most important cash crop – leading to accelerated deforestation and high levels of pesticides and herbicide in agricultural soils.

The good news is that 2007 saw the passing of the Ley de Bosques (National Forest Law), which levied a one-year nationwide moratorium on the clearing of native forests until proper management regulations could be established. However, Cristina Kirchner delayed putting the law into effect for over a year but in February 2009 was finally spurred on to implement it by activists who demanded action.

For other environmental issues, see p556.

Most of Patagonia's glaciers are shrinking at an alarming rate, but the active Perito Moreno Glacier is considered 'stable' – it's advancing at roughly the same pace as it calves ice.

# Survival Guide

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# Directory A-Z

## Accommodations

Accommodations in Argentina range from campgrounds to five-star luxury hotels. At the tourist-oriented hotels staff members will speak some English, though at more provincial accommodations you'll be practicing your *Español*.

All but the cheapest hotels have private bathrooms, and most accommodations include breakfast – usually *medialunas* (croissants) and weak coffee or tea. Note that many hotels offer discounted rates for extended stays, usually a week or more; negotiate this *before* you begin your stay.

## PRICE RANGES

Inflation in Argentina is rampant, running (unofficially) at around 25%. To avoid getting price shock, check current prices.

Accommodation prices in this guidebook include tax and are general high-season rates (although not peak seasons like Christmas or Easter). Budget and midrange hotels almost always include taxes when quoting their prices, but top-end hotels usually do not – and it's 21%. Payment in cash (also at mid- to top-end hotels) sometimes incurs a 10% discount.

High season is generally January and February (when Argentines take their summer breaks), *Semana Santa* (Easter week) and July and August (except in Patagonia). Reserve ahead during these times. Outside these times, prices can drop anywhere from 20% to 50%.

The following are typical prices in high season:

**\$** less than AR\$250 for a double room; AR\$50 to AR\$70 for a dorm bed

**\$\$** from AR\$250 to AR\$500 per double room

**\$\$\$** more than AR\$500 per double room

## Cabañas

Some tourist destinations, especially at the beach or in the country, have *cabañas* for rent. These are usually stand-alone cabin-type accommodations, and nearly always have a stocked kitchen. They are a great deal for groups or families (as they often have several rooms), though sometimes their off-the-beaten-track location means you'll need a vehicle to reach them. The destination's tourist office is a good place to find a list of local *cabañas*.

## Camping & Refugios

Camping can be a splendid way to experience Argentina, particularly the Lake District and Patagonia, where there are many good campgrounds. Nearly every Argentine city or town has a fairly central municipal campground, but these are hit-and-miss – sometimes delightfully woody, sometimes crowded and ugly.

Private campgrounds usually have good facilities: hot showers, toilets, laundry, barbecue for grilling, restaurant or *confitería* (café) and small grocery store. Free campgrounds are often excellent, especially in the Lake District, although they lack facilities. Municipal campgrounds are cheap, but can become party central on weekends.

Argentine camping equipment is often more expensive and inferior than you may be used to. Camp stoves take locally available butane cartridges (which should *not* be taken on airplanes). There are definitely mosquitoes in Argentina, but mosquito repellent is widely available.

Backpacking and back-country camping opportunities abound in and around the national parks, especially those in the Lakes District and the south. Some parks have free or cheap *refugios* (basic shelters), which have cooking facilities and rustic bunks.

## Estancias

Few experiences feel more typically Argentine than staying at an *estancia* (a traditional ranch, often called *fincas* in the northwest). *Estancias* are a wonderful way to spend time in remote areas of the country – and wine, horses and *asados* (traditional barbecues) are almost always involved. *Estancias* are especially common in the area around Buenos Aires, near Esteros del Iberá and throughout the Lake District and Patagonia. In the latter, they're often geared toward anglers. They're not cheap, but the rates generally include room, board and some activities. To easily locate many of the *estancias* covered in this book, see the photo feature on p116; in Uruguay, see p529).

## Hospedajes, Pensiones & Residenciales

Aside from hostels, these are Argentina's cheapest accommodations, and the differences among them are sometimes ambiguous.

A *hospedaje* is usually a large family home with a few extra bedrooms (and, generally, a shared bathroom). Similarly, a *pensión* offers short-term accommodations in a family home, but may also have permanent lodgers. *Residenciales* generally occupy buildings designed for short-stay accommodations, although some (known euphemistically as *albergues transitorios*) cater to clientele who intend only very short stays – of two hours maximum. These are mostly used by young Argentine couples.

Rooms and furnishings at these accommodations are modest, often basic and usually clean, and rooms with shared bathrooms are the cheapest.

## Hostels

Hostels are common in Argentina, and range from basic no-frill deals to beauti-

## PRACTICALITIES

» **Addresses** In Argentine addresses, the word *local* refers to a suite or office. If an address has 's/n' – short for *sin numero* (without number) – the address has no street number.

» **Laundry** Affordable *lavanderías* are widely available in Argentina.

» **Newspapers** Argentina's biggest papers are centrist *Clarín* ([www.clarin.com](http://www.clarin.com)), conservative *La Nación* ([www.lanacion.com.ar](http://www.lanacion.com.ar)) and leftist *Página 12* ([www.pagina12.com.ar](http://www.pagina12.com.ar)). The English-language daily is *Buenos Aires Herald* ([www.buenosairesherald.com](http://www.buenosairesherald.com)). *The Argentina Independent* ([www.argentinaindependent.com](http://www.argentinaindependent.com)) is an excellent English-language online newspaper.

» **Photography** Many photo stores can affordably transfer images from your digital camera to CD; you can also get them printed out. Old-fashioned print and slide film are available, as is developing.

» **Radio** In Buenos Aires tune into FM 92.7 for 24-hour tango, FM 98.3 for Argentine rock, FM 88.7 ([www.fmlatibu.com](http://www.fmlatibu.com)) for alternative viewpoints. FM 100.1 ([www.lacolifata.org](http://www.lacolifata.org)) is presented by psychiatric asylum patients.

» **Smoking** Smoking bans differ by province. In Buenos Aires smoking is banned in most enclosed public spaces, including the majority of bars and restaurants.

» **Weights & Measures** Metric

ful, multi-perk offerings more luxurious than your basic hotel. Most fall in between, but all have common kitchens, living areas, shared bathrooms and dorm rooms. Most have a few private rooms with or without bathroom. It's crucial to remember that Argentines are night owls and hostellers tend to follow suit, so earplugs can be handy indeed.

**Hostelling International** (HI; [www.hihostels.com](http://www.hihostels.com)) members get discounts at HI facilities. Other hostel networks include **minihostels** ([www.minihostels.com](http://www.minihostels.com)) and **HoLa** ([www.holahostels.com](http://www.holahostels.com)).

## Hotels

Argentine hotels vary from depressing, utilitarian one-star places to luxurious five-star hotels with all the usual top-tier services. Oddly enough, many one- and two-star hotels can prove

better value than three- and four-star lodgings. In general, hotels provide a room with private bathroom, often a telephone and usually a TV with cable. Sometimes they have a *confitería* or restaurant and almost always include breakfast, whether it be a few *medialunas* with coffee or full American-style buffet.

## Rentals & Homestays

House and apartment rentals often save you money if you're staying in one place for an extended period. This can be an especially good deal during high season at resort locations, such as Bariloche or beach cities along the Atlantic coast (just book way ahead) – especially for groups. Tourist offices are good sources for listings.

During the tourist season, mostly in the interior, families rent rooms to visitors. Often these are excellent bargains,

## BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodations reviews by Lonely Planet authors, check out <http://hotels.lonelyplanet.com>. You'll find independent reviews, as well as recommendations on the best places to stay. Best of all, you can book online.

permitting access to cooking and laundry facilities while encouraging contact with Argentines. Generally we do not cover homestays in this book, since they change regularly. Tourist offices in many smaller towns or cities often maintain lists of such accommodations, so ask.

## Courses

Argentina is a hot destination in which to learn Spanish. Most opportunities for Spanish-language instruction are based in Buenos Aires, though larger cities such as Mendoza and Córdoba are also excellent.

Tango classes are hugely popular in Buenos Aires, where cooking classes – both for Argentine and international cuisine – are also available.

## Customs Regulations

Argentine officials are generally courteous and reasonable toward tourists. Electronic items, including laptops, cameras and cell (mobile) phones, can be brought into the country duty free, provided they are not intended for resale. If you're over 18 and entering from non-neighborhood countries, you may bring up to 2L of alcohol, 400 cigarettes and 50 cigars.

If you're entering Argentina from a neighboring country, officials focus on different things. Travelers southbound from the central Andean countries may be searched for drugs, while those from bordering countries will have fruits and vegetables confiscated. Carrying illegal drugs will pretty much get you into trouble no matter which country you're coming from.

## Discount Cards

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) is available through [www.isic.org](http://www.isic.org); in Buenos Aires head to the student and discount travel agency **Asatej** ([www.asatej.net](http://www.asatej.net)), with several offices. It can help travelers obtain discounts on public transportation and admissions to museums. Any official-looking university identification may (or may not) be accepted as a substitute.

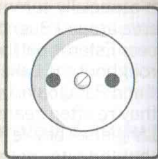
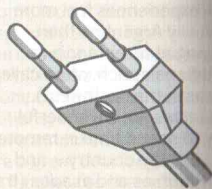
An HI card, available at any HI hostel ([www.hostels.org.ar](http://www.hostels.org.ar)), will get you discounts on your stay at any HI facility. The **minihotel** ([www.minihotels.com](http://www.minihotels.com)) and **HoLa** ([www.holahostels.com](http://www.holahostels.com)) cards work in a similar way for a different network of hostels.

Travelers over the age of 60 can sometimes obtain senior-citizen discounts on museum admissions and the like. Usually a passport with date of birth is sufficient evidence of age.

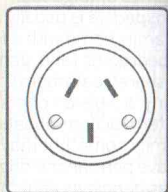
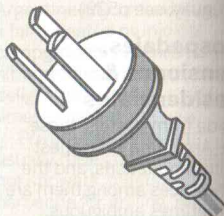
## Electricity

Argentina's electric current operates on 220V, 50 Hertz. Adapters are readily available from almost any *ferreteria* (hardware store).

Most electronic equipment (such as cameras, pdas, telephones and computers) are dual/multi-voltage, but if you're bringing something that's not (such as a hairdryer), use a voltage converter or you might short out your device.



220V/50Hz



220V/50Hz

## Embassies & Consulates

Following is a basic list of embassies and consulates in Buenos Aires. Some other cities around Argentina (especially near the borders) also have consulates to certain countries.

**Australia** (☎011-4779-3500; [www.argentina.embassy.gov.au](http://www.argentina.embassy.gov.au); Villanueva 1400)

**Bolivia** (☎011-4394-1463; [www.embajadadebolivia.com.ar](http://www.embajadadebolivia.com.ar); Corrientes 545, 2nd fl)

**Brazil** (☎011-4515-2400; [www.brasil.org.ar](http://www.brasil.org.ar); Cerrito 1350)  
**Canada** (☎011-4808-1000; [www.canadainternational.gc.ca](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca); Tagle 2828)

**Chile** (☎011-4808-8601; [www.embajadadechile.com.ar](http://www.embajadadechile.com.ar); Tagle 2762)

**France** (☎011-4515-2930; [www.embafancia-argentina.org](http://www.embafancia-argentina.org); Cerrito 1399)

**Germany** (☎011-4778-2500; [www.buenos-aires.diplo.de](http://www.buenos-aires.diplo.de); Villanueva 1055)

**Italy** (☎011-4114-4800; [www.consbuenosaires.esteri.it](http://www.consbuenosaires.esteri.it); Reconquista 572)

**Ireland** (☎011-5787-0801; [www.embassyofireland.ru/home/index.aspx?id=34777](http://www.embassyofireland.ru/home/index.aspx?id=34777); Av del Libertador 1068, 6th fl)

**Japan** (☎011-4318-8200; [www.ar.emb-japan.go.jp](http://www.ar.emb-japan.go.jp); Bouchard 547, 17th fl)

**Netherlands** (☎011-4338-0050; [www.embajadaholanda.int.ar](http://www.embajadaholanda.int.ar); Olga Cossetini 831, 3rd fl)

**New Zealand** (☎011-4328-0747; [www.nzembassy.com/argentina](http://www.nzembassy.com/argentina); Carlos Pellegrini 1427, 5th fl)

**Paraguay** (☎011-4814-4803; Viamonte 1851)

**Peru** (☎011-4802-2000; Av del Libertador 1720)

**Spain** (☎011-4809-4900; [www.embajadaenargentina.es](http://www.embajadaenargentina.es); Av Figueroa Alcorta 3102)

**UK** (☎011-4808-2200; [www.ukinargentina.fco.gov.uk](http://www.ukinargentina.fco.gov.uk); Dr Luis Agote 2412)

**Uruguay** (☎011-4807-3040; [www.embajadadeluruguay.com.ar](http://www.embajadadeluruguay.com.ar); Av Las Heras 1907)

**USA** (☎011-5777-4533; [www.argentina.usembassy.gov](http://www.argentina.usembassy.gov); Colombia 4300)

## Food

In this book, the following price indicators apply (for a main meal):

**\$** less than AR\$45

**\$\$** AR\$45 to AR\$65

**\$\$\$** more than AR\$65

## Gay & Lesbian Travelers

Argentina has become increasingly gay-friendly over recent years. Buenos Aires is one of the world's top gay destinations – with dedicated hotels and B&Bs; bars, nightclubs and restaurants; and even gay cruises calling at the port. The capital is home to South America's largest annual gay pride parade and has numerous gay and lesbian organizations and clubs. In 2002 Buenos Aires became the first Latin American city to legalize same-sex civil unions, and in July 2010 Argentina became the first Latin American country to legalize same-sex marriage.

Although Buenos Aires (and, to a lesser extent, Argentina's other large cities) is becoming increasingly tolerant, most of the rest of Argentina still feels uncomfortable with homosexuality. Homophobia rarely takes the form of physical violence, however; instead it manifests through inappropriate jokes

and chatty disapproval any time the subject comes up. That said, gay people regularly travel throughout the country to return home with nothing but praise.

When it comes to public affection, Argentine men are more physically demonstrative than their North American and European counterparts. Behaviors such as kissing on the cheek in greeting or a vigorous embrace are innocuous even to those who express unease with homosexuality. Lesbians walking hand in hand should attract little attention, since heterosexual Argentine women frequently do so, but this would be very conspicuous behavior for men. When in doubt, it's best to be discreet.

For more on what's gay in Buenos Aires, see the boxed text, p95.

## Health

Argentina is a modern country with good health and dental services. Sanitation and hygiene at restaurants is relatively high, and tap water is generally safe to drink throughout the country. If you want to make sure, ask *¿Se puede tomar el agua de la canilla?* (Is the tap water drinkable?).

Public health care in Argentina is reasonably good and free, even if you're a foreigner. Waits can be long, however, and quality inconsistent. Those who can afford it usually opt for the superior private-care system, and

## TWO-TIER PRICING

Over the last decade, Argentina's popularity as a tourism destination has birthed an annoying two-tier pricing system: some businesses in certain areas (mostly in Buenos Aires, but also in Patagonia and parts of the Lake District) charge Argentines one price and 'nonresidents' a higher price. While you won't find this everywhere, you will encounter it at some tango shows, *estancias*, national parks, the national airline (Aerolíneas Argentinas) and upmarket hotels throughout the country.

Many accommodations also quote prices in US dollars rather than pesos. This doesn't necessarily mean you're getting charged more than Argentines; the peso is just so unstable that places prefer to use a currency that isn't always fluctuating.

here most doctors and hospitals will expect payment in cash. Many medical personnel speak English.

If you develop a life-threatening medical problem you may want to be evacuated to your home country. Since this may cost thousands of dollars, be sure to have the appropriate insurance before you depart. Your embassy can also recommend medical services.

A signed and dated note from your doctor, describing your medical conditions and medications (with their generic or scientific names) is a good idea. It's also a good idea to bring medications in their clearly labeled, original containers. Most pharmacies in Argentina are well supplied.

For more specific information on vaccinations to get before traveling to Argentina, see [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/argentina.htm](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/argentina.htm).

### Dengue Fever

Dengue fever is a viral infection found throughout South America. It is transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes, which prefer to bite during the daytime and breed primarily in artificial water containers, such as cans, cisterns, plastic containers and discarded tires. As a result, dengue is especially common in densely populated, urban environments.

In 2009, several thousand cases of dengue were reported in the northern provinces of Argentina, with Chaco and Catamarca being hit the worst. There were even a few dozen cases in Buenos Aires. Fortunately, relatively few deaths resulted. Dengue usually causes flu-like symptoms, including fever, muscle aches, joint pains, headaches, nausea and vomiting, often followed by a rash. The body aches may be quite uncomfortable, but most cases resolve uneventfully in a few days.

### Malaria

Malaria is transmitted by mosquito bites, usually between dusk and dawn. The main symptom is high spiking fevers, which may be accompanied by chills, sweats, headache, body aches, weakness, vomiting or diarrhea. Severe cases may involve the central nervous system and lead to seizures, confusion, coma and death.

Taking malaria pills is recommended for travel to rural areas along the borders with Bolivia (lowlands of Salta and Jujuy provinces) and Paraguay (lowlands of Misiones and Corrientes provinces).

### Yellow Fever

Yellow fever is a life-threatening viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes in forested areas. The illness begins with flu-like symptoms, which may include fever, chills, head-

ache, muscle aches, backache, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting. These symptoms usually subside in a few days, but one person in six enters a second, toxic phase characterized by recurrent fever, vomiting, listlessness, jaundice, kidney failure and hemorrhage, leading to death in up to half of the cases. There is no treatment except for supportive care.

The yellow fever vaccine is recommended for all travelers greater than nine months of age who visit the northeastern forest areas near the border with Brazil and Paraguay.



### Insurance

A travel insurance policy to cover theft, loss, medical problems and trip cancellation or delays is a good idea. Some policies specifically exclude dangerous activities such as scuba diving, skiing, rock climbing and even trekking; read the fine print. Check that the policy covers ambulances or an emergency flight home.

Keep all your paperwork in case you have to file a claim later. Paying for your flight with a credit card often provides limited travel insurance – ask your credit card company what it is prepared to cover. Worldwide travel insurance is available at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_services](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services). You can buy,

extend and claim online anytime – even if you're already on the road.

### Internet Access

Wi-fi is increasingly available at many (if not most) hotels and cafes, restaurants and airports, and it's generally free. Hotels offering wi-fi are indicated throughout this book with a  icon. If they have a public computer terminal the icon is .

Internet cafes and *locutorios* (telephone centers) with very affordable internet access can be found in practically all Argentine towns and cities. To find the @ (*arroba*) symbol, try holding down the Alt key and typing 64. Or ask the attendant '¿Cómo se hace la arroba?' ('How do you make the @ sign?').

### Legal Matters

Police can demand identification at any moment and for whatever reason. Always carry a photo ID or a copy of your passport, and – most importantly – *always* be courteous and cooperative.

The legal drinking age is 18. Marijuana, cocaine and most other substances that are illegal in the USA and many European countries are also illegal here. If arrested, you have the constitutional right to a lawyer, a telephone call and to remain silent (beyond giving your name, nationality, age and passport number). Don't sign anything until you speak to a lawyer. If you don't speak Spanish, a translator should be provided for you.

### Maps

Tourist offices throughout the country provide free city maps that are good enough for tooling around town.

With offices in nearly every Argentine city, the **Automóvil Club Argentino** (ACA; [www.aca.org.ar](http://www.aca.org.ar)) publishes excellent

maps of provinces and cities that are particularly good for driving. Card-carrying members of foreign automobile clubs can get discounts.

Geography nerds will adore the topographic maps available from the **Instituto Geográfico Nacional** (Map p64; ☎011-4576-5576; [www.ign.gov.ar](http://www.ign.gov.ar)) in Buenos Aires.

### Money

The Argentine unit of currency is the peso (AR\$). Prices in this book are quoted in Argentine pesos unless otherwise noted.

Carrying cash and an ATM card is the way to go in Argentina.

### ATMs

*Cajeros automáticos* (ATMs) are found in nearly every city and town in Argentina and can also be used for cash advances on major credit cards. They're the best way to get money, and nearly all have instructions in English. Depending on your home bank there are varying upper limits per withdrawal, and a small fee is charged on ATM transactions by the local bank (not including charges by your home bank). You can withdraw several times per day, but beware these charges – which are per transaction.

### Cash

Paper money comes in denominations of two, five, 10, 20, 50 and 100 pesos. One peso equals 100 *centavos*; coins come in denominations of five, 10, 25 and 50 *centavos*, as well as one and two pesos. At present, US dollars are accepted by many tourist-oriented businesses, but you should always carry some pesos.

Don't be dismayed if you receive dirty and hopelessly tattered banknotes; they'll be accepted everywhere. Some places refuse torn or marked foreign banknotes, however, so make sure you arrive in Argentina with pristine bills.

### CHANGING PESOS BACK TO DOLLARS

In October 2011 the government passed a law severely limiting the buying of dollars with Argentine pesos. For travelers this means that if you have leftover pesos after your trip to Argentina, it is unlikely you'll be able to change them back into dollars (or possibly any other hard currency). This might be the case even if you have a *cajero* (ATM) or *cambio* (exchange house) receipts! Your best bet is to simply use up all your pesos before you leave the country.

Counterfeiting, of both local and US bills, has become a problem in recent years, and merchants are very careful when accepting large denominations. You should be too; look for a clear watermark or running thread on the largest bills, and get familiar with the local currency *before* you arrive in Argentina. See [www.san.telmoloft.com/2011/07/22/fake-money-in-argentina](http://www.san.telmoloft.com/2011/07/22/fake-money-in-argentina). Being aware of fake bills is especially important in nightclubs or taxis (dark places where you should avoid using large bills in the first place).

Changing large denomination bills is a problem throughout the country. Use them at large supermarkets and restaurants. Taxi drivers, kiosks and small stores rarely change them, and you could easily find yourself without a means of paying.

### Credit Cards

The most widely accepted credit cards are Visa and MasterCard, though American Express and a few others are valid in many establishments. Before you leave home, warn your credit-card

### STANDARD HOURS

We've only listed business hours where they differ from the following standards:

**Businesses in big cities** 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday

**Businesses in provinces** 9am to 1pm, 3pm or 4pm to 9pm Monday to Friday

**Restaurants** noon to 3:30pm, 8pm to midnight or 1am (later on weekends)

**Bars** 8pm or 9pm to between 4am to 6am nightly

**Cafes** 6am to midnight or much later daily

**Nightclubs** 1am or 2am to between 6am and 8am Friday and Saturday

**Post offices** 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm Saturday (regional variations)

**Stores** 9am or 10am to 8pm or 9pm Monday to Saturday

## SPARE SOME CHANGE...?

You will quickly notice that small bills and coins are somewhat precious in Argentina, and especially in Buenos Aires. Some vendors won't sell a small item if you pay with a large bill, and even for larger purchases you might hear groans if you hand over a 100-peso note. So start thinking strategically when spending money.

Break large bills when making big transactions, like at restaurants or supermarkets. Save up a stash of small bills and coins for small purchases, and resist giving up coins unless you're begged to – and you will be. In Buenos Aires, obtaining a SUBE card (see p102) and charging it up means you can pre-pay for many bus or *subte* rides at once – and not have to sacrifice your small change. And when you withdraw money from an ATM, punch in an amount, such as 690 or 790 – so you'll get a few non-100 peso bills.

At least there's one silver lining – you're unlikely to be weighed down with too much change in Argentina.

company that you'll be using it abroad.

Some businesses add a *recargo* (surcharge) of 5% to 10% toward credit-card purchases. Also, the actual amount you'll eventually pay depends upon the exchange rate not at the time of sale, but when the purchase is posted to an overseas account, sometimes weeks later.

If you use a credit card to pay for restaurant bills, be aware that tips can't usually be added to the bill. Many lower-end hotels and private tour companies will not accept credit cards. Holders of MasterCard and Visa can get cash advances at banks and most ATMs – for a fee.

### Moneychangers

US dollars are by far the preferred foreign currency, although Chilean and Uruguayan pesos can be readily exchanged at the borders. Cash dollars and euros can be changed at banks and *cambios* (exchange houses) in most larger cities, but other currencies can be difficult to change outside Buenos Aires. You'll need your passport to change money; avoid any sort of street-tout moneychanger.

### Taxes & Refunds

Under limited circumstances, foreign visitors may obtain refunds of VAT (value-added tax) on purchases of Argentine products upon their

departure from the country. A 'Tax Free' (in English) window decal identifies merchants participating in this program. You'll need to spend a total of AR\$70 or more. When making purchases, present your passport to the merchant, who will make out an invoice/refund check for you. On leaving the country keep your invoices and the purchased items in your carry-on bag. Upon leaving the country show your purchases and paperwork to a customs official, who'll stamp it and tell you where to obtain your refund. Enjoy getting some tax money back, but just remember to leave yourself extra time at the airport to get this done.

### Tippling & Bargaining

Note that restaurant tips can't be added to a credit card bill. And an interesting note: when your server is taking your bill with payment away, saying 'gracias' usually implies that the server should keep the change as tip. If you want change back, don't say 'gracias' – say 'cambio, por favor' instead.

Unlike many other South American countries, bargaining is generally not the norm in Argentina.

**Bartenders** they don't expect a tip, but some people give two pesos per drink

**Delivery persons** two to five pesos per delivery

**Hotel cleaning staff** 10 pesos per day (only at fine, upscale hotels)

**Hotel porter** two pesos per bag

**Restaurant servers** 10%; 15% for fine restaurants with great service

**Spas** 15%

**Taxi drivers** no tip unless they help with luggage; many people round up to nearest peso

**Tour guides** 10% to 15%

### Traveler's Checks

Very high commissions are levied on traveler's checks, which are difficult to cash anywhere and specifically *not* recommended for travel in Argentina. Stores will *not* accept traveler's checks, and outside Buenos Aires it's even harder to change them.

### Post

The more-or-less reliable **Correo Argentino** ([www.correoargentino.com.ar](http://www.correoargentino.com.ar)) is the government postal service. Essential overseas mail should be sent *certificado* (registered). You can send packages less than 2kg from any post office, but anything heavier needs to go through *aduana* (a customs office). In Buenos Aires, this office is near Retiro bus terminal and is called Correo Internacional. Take your passport and keep the package open as

you'll have to show its contents to a customs official.

Domestic couriers, such as **Andreani** ([www.andreani.com.ar](http://www.andreani.com.ar)) and **OCA** ([www.oca.com.ar](http://www.oca.com.ar)), and international couriers like DHL and FedEx are far more dependable than the post office. But they're also far more expensive. The last two have offices only in the largest cities, while the first two usually serve as their connections to the interior of the country.

If a package is being sent to you, expect to wait awhile before receiving notification of its arrival. Nearly all parcels sent to Buenos Aires go to the international Retiro office, near the Buquebus terminal. To collect the package you'll have to wait (sometimes hours) first to get it and then to have it checked by customs. There's also a processing fee. Don't expect any valuables to make it through.

### Public Holidays

Government offices and businesses are closed on Argentina's numerous public holidays. If the holiday falls on a midweek day or weekend day, it's often bumped to the nearest Monday; if it falls on a Tuesday or Thursday, then the in-between days of Monday and Friday are taken as holidays. Long-distance buses and hotels can fill up, so reserve ahead.

The following list does not include provincial holidays, which may vary considerably. **January 1** Año Nuevo, New Year's Day

**February/March** Carnaval. Dates vary from year to year, but celebrations always fall on a Monday and Tuesday become holidays

**March 24** Día de la Memoria; Memorial Day. Anniversary of the day that started the 1976 dictatorship and subsequent Dirty War

**March/April** Semana Santa; Easter week. Dates

vary; most businesses close on 'Good Thursday' and Good Friday; major travel week

**April 2** Día de las Malvinas; honors the fallen Argentine soldiers from the Islas Malvinas (Falkland Islands) war in 1982

**May 1** Día del Trabajador; Labor Day

**May 25** Revolución de Mayo; commemorates the 1810 revolution against Spain

**June 20** Día de la Bandera; Flag Day. Anniversary of death of Manuel Belgrano, creator of Argentina's flag and military leader

**July 9** Día de la Independencia; Independence Day

**August (third Monday in August)** Día del Libertador San Martín; marks the anniversary of José de San Martín's death (1778–1850).

**October 12 (second Monday in October)** Día del Respeto a la Diversidad Cultural; a day to respect cultural diversity

**November 20 (fourth Monday in November)** Día de la Soberanía Nacional; Day of National Sovereignty

**December 8** Día de la Concepción Inmaculada; celebrates the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary

**December 25** Navidad; Christmas Day

### Relocating to Argentina

After the devaluation of the peso in 2002, foreigners began moving to Argentina in huge numbers. Although prices for just about everything (including food, apartments and transportation) has skyrocketed since then, Argentina remains a popular destination for expats.

Many folks simply rent an apartment in Buenos Aires and leave the country every three months to renew their visa. Others go the full route, purchasing property and jumping through hoops to

obtain legal residency. Whatever you decide to do, don't expect to easily find work in Argentina, unless you're going to be employed by a foreign company or become an entrepreneur.

For those considering long-term relocation, do your homework. Here are some resources to help you along:

**Argentina Residency & Citizenship Advisors** (ARCA; [www.argentinaresidency.com](http://www.argentinaresidency.com)) Helps foreigners obtain legal residency and citizenship.

**Buenos Aires Expatriates Group** ([www.baexpats.org](http://www.baexpats.org)) Popular expat website.

**Craigslist** ([www.buenosaires.en.craigslist.org](http://www.buenosaires.en.craigslist.org)) Find a job, an apartment, a lover...

**Expatarentina** ([www.expatarentina.wordpress.com](http://www.expatarentina.wordpress.com)) One expat's eclectic musings about living in BA.

**Expatriate Connection** ([www.expatriate-connection.com](http://www.expatriate-connection.com)) Runs events for both expats and locals.

**Just Landed** ([www.justlanded.com](http://www.justlanded.com)) Good expat resources.

**LandingpadBA** ([www.landingpadba.com](http://www.landingpadba.com)) Insider info for expats and travelers alike.

**South American Explorers** ([www.saeexplorers.org/clubhouses/buenosaires](http://www.saeexplorers.org/clubhouses/buenosaires)) Member-based resource club.

### Safe Travel

For tourists, Argentina is one of the safest countries in Latin America. This isn't to say you should skip down the street drunk with your money belt strapped to your head, but with a little common sense you can visit Argentina's big cities as safely as you could London, Paris or New York. That said, crime has been on the rise.

### Petty Crime

The economic crisis of 1999–2001 plucked a lot of people into poverty, and street crime (pickpocketing, bag-snatching

and armed robbery) has subsequently risen, especially in Buenos Aires. Still, most people feel perfectly safe in the big cities. In the small towns of the provinces you'd have to search for a crook to rob you.

Bus terminals are common places where tourists become separated from their possessions. For the most part bus terminals are safe, as they're usually full of families traveling and saying goodbyes, but they can also be prime grounds for bag-snatchers. Always keep an eagle eye on your goods. This is especially true in Buenos Aires' Retiro station.

At sidewalk cafe or restaurant tables, always have your bag close to you, preferably touching your body. You can also place the strap around your leg or tied around the furniture. Be careful showing off expensive electronics like laptops, iPods or iPads. Other places to be wary are tourist destinations and on crowded public transportation.

In Buenos Aires the **Tourist Police** (Comisaría del Turista; ☎011-4346-5748, ☎0800-999-5000; Av Corrientes 436; Ⓢ24hr) provides interpreters and helps victims of robberies and rip-offs. For more on safety in BA, see p99.

### Pickets & Protests

Street protests have become part of daily life in Argentina, especially in Buenos Aires' Plaza de Mayo area. Generally these have little effect on tourists other than blocking traffic or making it difficult to see Buenos Aires' Plaza de Mayo and the Casa Rosada. The country has many *gremios* or *sindicatos* (trade unions), and it seems that one of them is always on strike. Transportation unions sometimes go on strike, which can affect travelers directly by delaying domestic flights and bus services. It's always a good idea to keep your eye on the news before traveling.

### Drivers

Being a pedestrian in Argentina is perhaps one of the

country's more-difficult ventures. Many Argentine drivers jump the gun when the traffic signal is about to change to green, drive extremely fast and change lanes unpredictably. Even though pedestrians at corners and crosswalks have legal right of way, very few drivers respect this and will hardly slow down when you are crossing. Be especially careful of buses, which can be reckless and, because of their large size, particularly dangerous.

### Police & Military

The police and military have a reputation for being corrupt or irresponsible, but both are generally helpful and courteous to tourists. If you feel you're being patted down for a bribe (most often if you're driving), you can respond by tactfully paying up or asking the officer to accompany you to the police station to take care of it. The latter will likely cause the officer to drop it – though it could also lead you in to the labyrinthine bureaucracy of the Argentine police system. Pretending you don't understand Spanish may also frustrate a potential bribe.

### Smoking

Many Argentines are heavy smokers, and you can't help but be exposed to it on the street. The good news for nonsmokers is that Argentina bans smoking in most restaurants, cafes, internet cafes, bars and other public places. Regulations and enforcement differ throughout the country. Smoking is prohibited on buses and all domestic flights.

### Telephone

Two companies, Telecom and Telefónica, split the country's telephone services.

The easiest way to make a local phone call is to find a *locutorio*, which has private cabins where you make your calls, and then pay all at once at the register. *Locutorios*

can be found on practically every other block. They cost about the same as street phones, are much quieter and you won't run out of coins. Most *locutorios* are supplied with phone books.

To use street phones, you'll pay with regular coins or *tarjetas telefónicas* (magnetic phone cards available at many kiosks). You'll only be able to speak for a limited time before you get cut off, so carry enough credit.

Toll-free numbers begin with ☎0800; these calls can only be made within Argentina. Numbers that start with ☎0810 are charged on at a local rate only, no matter where (in Argentina) you are calling from.

The cheapest way to make an international call is to use an online service (such as Skype or Google Voice) or use a phone card. International calls can be made at *locutorios*, but they're more expensive this way. When dialing abroad, dial '00' followed by the code of the country you're calling, then the area code and number.

Faxes are cheap and widely available throughout Argentina.

**Medical emergency** ☎107  
**Police** ☎101 (or ☎911 in some larger cities)

### ELECTRONICS WARNING

Note that buying a smart phone, and especially an iPhone, is extremely expensive in Argentina due to import restrictions – and they are not widely available. If you do bring your smart phone, don't flash it around unnecessarily or leave it unprotected somewhere. This goes for tablet computers and laptop computers, too.

### CALLING TO ARGENTINA

To call a number in Argentina from another country, dial your international exit code, then the country code for Argentina, then the area code (without the zero) and number. For example, if you're calling a Buenos Aires landline number from the United States, you'd dial:

011-54-11-xxxx-xxxx

011 is the United States' international exit code

54 is Argentina's country code

11 is Buenos Aires' city code without the beginning zero

xxxx-xxxx is your local Buenos Aires phone number, usually eight digits

When dialing an Argentine cell phone from another country, dial your international exit code, then ☎54, then ☎9, then the area code without the 0, then the number – leaving out the ☎15 (which most Argentine cell phone numbers start with). For example, if you're calling a Buenos Aires cell phone number from the United States, you'd dial:

011-54-9-11-xxxx-xxxx

**Fire** ☎100

**Directory assistance** ☎110

**Tourist Police** ☎011-4346-5748, ☎0800-999-5000

### CELL PHONES

It's best to bring your own unlocked tri- or quad-band GSM cell phone to Argentina, then buy an inexpensive SIM chip (you'll get a local number) and credits (or *carga virtual*) as needed. Both SIM chips and credits can be bought at many kiosks or *locutorios*; look for the '*recarga facil*' signs. Many Argentines use this system with their cell phones. Phone unlocking services are available; ask around.

You can also buy cell phones that use SIM chips; these usually include some credits for your first batch of calls. Be careful renting phones as they're not usually a better deal than outright buying a cell phone.

If you plan to travel with an iPhone or other G3 smart phone, prepare yourself – you may need to purchase an international plan to avoid being hit by a huge bill for roaming costs. On the other hand, it's possible to call internationally for free or very cheap, using a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) system such as Skype. This is a constantly changing field, so do some research before you travel.

Cell phone numbers in Argentina are always preceded by '15.' If you're calling a cellular phone number from a landline, you'll have to dial 15 first. But if you're calling a cell phone from another cell phone, you don't need to dial 15 (at least within the same area code).

### PHONECARDS

Telephone calling cards are sold at nearly all kiosks and make domestic and international calls far cheaper than calling direct. However, they must be used from a fixed line such as a home or hotel telephone (provided you can dial outside the hotel). They cannot be used at most pay phones. Some *locutorios* allow you to use them, and although they levy a surcharge, the call is still cheaper than dialing direct. When purchasing one, tell the clerk the country you will call so they give you the right card.

### Time

Argentina is three hours behind GMT and generally does not observe daylight saving time (though this situation can easily change). When it's noon in Argentina, it's 10am in New York, 7am in San Francisco, 3pm in London and 1pm the next day in Sydney

(add one hour to these destinations during their daylight saving times). Argentina uses the 24-hour clock in written communications, but both the 12- and 24-hour clocks can be used conversationally.

### Toilets

Public toilets in Argentina are better than in most of South America, but there are certainly exceptions. For the truly squeamish, the better restaurants and cafes are good alternatives. Large shopping malls often have public bathrooms, as do international fast-food chains. Always carry your own toilet paper, since it often runs out in public restrooms, and don't expect luxuries such as soap, hot water and paper towels either. In smaller towns, some public toilets charge a small fee for entry.

Bidets are always available in hotel rooms and private homes, but not in public restrooms.

### Tourist Information

Argentina's national tourist board is the Secretaría de Turismo de la Nación; its main office is in Buenos Aires. Almost every city or town has a tourist office, usually on or

near the main plaza or at the bus terminal. Each Argentine province also has its own representation in Buenos Aires. Most of these are well organized, often offering a computerized database of tourist information, and can be worth a visit before heading for the provinces.

## Travelers with Disabilities

Travelers with disabilities will find things somewhat difficult in Argentina. Those in wheelchairs in particular will quickly realize that many cities' narrow, busy and uneven sidewalks are difficult to negotiate. Crossing streets is also a problem, since not every corner has ramps (which are often in need of repair) and Argentine drivers don't have much patience for slower pedestrians, disabled or not.

Nevertheless, Argentines with disabilities do get around. In Buenos Aires there are a few buses described as *piso bajo* – which lower to provide wheelchair lifts – and the Subte (subway) has a few accessible stations, especially the newer ones.

Except at four- and five-star properties, hotels usually do not have wheelchair-accessible rooms, meaning doors are narrow and there is little space to move around inside the room. Bathrooms at mid-range and budget hotels are sometimes notoriously small, making it difficult for anyone (disabled or not) to get around in. For truly accessible rooms, you'll have better luck in pricier hotels. Call ahead and ask specific questions – even if a hotel defines a room as wheelchair-accessible, it may not be up to standards to which you're accustomed.

Other than the use of Braille on ATMs, little effort has been dedicated to bettering accessibility for the blind. Stoplights are rarely equipped with sound alerts. The **Biblioteca Argentina Para Ciegos** (Argentine Library for

the Blind, BAC; ☎011-4981-0137; [www.bac.org.ar](http://www.bac.org.ar)) in Buenos Aires maintains a Braille collection of books in Spanish, as well as other resources.

In Buenos Aires, **QRV Transportes Especiales** (☎011-4306-6635, 011-15-6863-9555; [www.qrvtransportes.com.ar](http://www.qrvtransportes.com.ar)) offers private transport and city tours in vans fully equipped for wheelchair users.

Also check out the following international organizations:

**Accessible Journeys** [www.disabilitytravel.com](http://www.disabilitytravel.com)

**Flying Wheels Travel** [www.flyingwheelstravel.com](http://www.flyingwheelstravel.com)

**Mobility International USA** [www.miusa.org](http://www.miusa.org)

**Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality** [www.sath.org](http://www.sath.org)

## Visas

Nationals of the USA, Canada, most Western European countries, Australia and New Zealand do not need a visa to visit Argentina. Upon arrival, most visitors get a 90-day stamp in their passport.

Those from the USA, Canada and Australia, however, must pay a significant 'reciprocity fee' upon arrival; see the boxed text, p602.

Dependent children traveling without both parents theoretically need a notarized document certifying that both parents agree to the child's travel. Parents may also wish to bring a copy of the custody form; however, there's a good chance they won't be asked for either document.

Depending on your nationality, very short visits to neighboring countries sometimes do not require visas. For instance, you might not need a Brazilian visa to cross from the Argentine town of Puerto Iguazú to Foz do Iguazú and/or Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, as long as you return the same day. For more information on entering Brazil, see the boxed text (p189).

The same is true at the Bolivian border town of Villazón, near La Quiaca (see the boxed text, p222). Officials at Paraguayan crossings can charge a fine from crossers who don't have a Paraguayan visa (see the boxed text, p177).

## Visa Extensions

For a 90-day extension on your tourist visa, get ready for bureaucracy and visit Buenos Aires' immigration office **Dirección Nacional de Migraciones** (☎011-4317-0234; [www.migraciones.gov.ar/accesibleingles/?categorias;Antártida Argentina 1355; ☉8am-2pm Mon-Fri](http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/accesibleingles/?categorias;Antártida Argentina 1355; ☉8am-2pm Mon-Fri)). The fee is AR\$300 – interestingly enough, the same charge as overstaying your visa.

Another option if you're staying more than three months is to cross into Colonia or Montevideo (both in Uruguay) or into Chile for a day or two before your visa expires, then return with a new 90-day visa. However, this only works if you don't need a visa to enter the other country.

## Volunteering

There are many opportunities for volunteering in Argentina, from food banks to *villas miserias* to organic farms to working with monkeys. Some ask for just your time, or a modest fee – and some charge hundreds of dollars (with likely a low percentage of money going directly to those in need). Before choosing an organization, it's good to talk to other volunteers about their experiences.

Organizations include:

**Centro Conviven** ([www.conviven.org.ar](http://www.conviven.org.ar)) Helps kids in Buenos Aires' *villas*.

**Conservación Patagonica** ([www.patagonialandtrust.org/makeadifference\\_v.htm](http://www.patagonialandtrust.org/makeadifference_v.htm)) Help to create a national park.

**Eco Yoga Park** ([www.ecoyogapark.com/homeingles.html](http://www.ecoyogapark.com/homeingles.html)) One of a kind.

**Fundación Banco de Alimentos** ([www.bancodealimentos.org.ar](http://www.bancodealimentos.org.ar)) Short-term work at a food bank.

**Habitat for Humanity Argentina** ([www.hpha.org.ar](http://www.hpha.org.ar)) Building communities.

**L.I.F.E.** ([www.lifeargentina.org](http://www.lifeargentina.org)) More help for kids in Argentine *villas*.

**Parque Nacional Los Glaciares** (☎02962-430004) Summer work with park rangers in El Chaltén. Spanish-language skills preferred.

**Refugio del Caraya** ([www.volunteer-with-howler-monkeys.org](http://www.volunteer-with-howler-monkeys.org))

**Unión de los Pibes** ([www.uniondelospibes.blogspot.com](http://www.uniondelospibes.blogspot.com)) Buenos Aires' kids in need.

**Voluntario Global** ([www.voluntarioglobal.org.ar](http://www.voluntarioglobal.org.ar)) Community volunteering. Referral services:

**Anda Responsable Travel** ([www.andatravel.com.ar/en/volunteering](http://www.andatravel.com.ar/en/volunteering))

**Foundation for Sustainable Development** ([www.fsdinternational.org](http://www.fsdinternational.org))

**La Montaña** ([www.lamontana.com/volunteer-work](http://www.lamontana.com/volunteer-work)) Volunteer in Bariloche.

**Patagonia Volunteer** ([www.patagoniavolunteer.org](http://www.patagoniavolunteer.org)) Opportunities in Patagonia.

**South American Explorers** ([www.saexplorers.org/volunteer/home](http://www.saexplorers.org/volunteer/home))

**Volunteer South America** ([www.volunteersouthamerica.net](http://www.volunteersouthamerica.net)) List of NGOs.

**WOOOF Argentina** ([www.woofargentina.com](http://www.woofargentina.com)) Organic farming in Argentina.

**Voluntario Global** ([www.voluntarioglobal.org.ar](http://www.voluntarioglobal.org.ar)) Community volunteering.

Writers can consider penning articles for the **Argentina Independent** ([www.argentinaindependent.com](http://www.argentinaindependent.com)), or interning at the **Buenos Aires Herald** ([www.buenosairesherald.com](http://www.buenosairesherald.com)).

## Women Travelers

Being a woman traveling in Argentina is a challenge, especially if you are young, alone and/or maintaining an inflexible liberal attitude. In some ways Argentina is a safer place for a woman than Europe, the USA and most other Latin American countries, but dealing with its machismo culture can be a real pain in the ass.

Some males brimming with testosterone feel the need to comment on a woman's attractiveness. This often happens when the woman is alone and walking by on the street; it occasionally happens to two or more women walking together, but never to a heterosexual couple. Verbal comments include crude language, hisses, whistles and *piropos* (flirtatious comments), which are often vulgar – although some can be eloquent.

The best thing to do is completely ignore the comments. After all, many Argentine women enjoy getting these 'compliments' and most men don't necessarily mean to be insulting; they're just doing what males in their culture are brought up to do.

On the plus side of machismo, expect men to hold a door open for you and let you enter first, including getting on buses; this gives you a better chance at grabbing an empty seat, so get in there quick.

## Work

Unless you have a special skill, business, and/or speak Spanish, it's hard to find paid work in Argentina other than teaching English – or perhaps putting time in at a hostel or expat bar. And it's

good to realize that you're not likely to get rich doing these things.

Working out of an institute in Buenos Aires, native English-speakers can earn around AR\$40 per hour (and you aren't paid for prep time or travel time, which can add another hour or two for each hour of teaching). Twenty hours a week of actual teaching is about enough for most people. Frustrations include dealing with unpleasant institutes, time spent cashing checks at the bank, classes being spread throughout the day and cancelled classes. Institute turn-over is high and most people don't teach for more than a year.

A TEFL certification can certainly help but isn't mandatory for all jobs (check out [www.teflbuenosaires.com](http://www.teflbuenosaires.com)). You'll make more money teaching private students, but it takes time to gain a client base. And you should take into account slow periods, such as December through February, when many locals leave town on summer vacation.

To find a job, call up the institutes or visit expat bars and start networking. March is when institutes are ramping up their courses, so it's the best time to find work. Many teachers work on tourist visas (which is not a big deal), heading over to Uruguay every three months for a new visa or visiting the immigration office for a visa extension.

For job postings, check out [www.buenosaires.en.craigslist.org](http://www.buenosaires.en.craigslist.org) and the classified section of [www.justlanded.com](http://www.justlanded.com). You could also try posting on expat website forums, such as [www.baxpats.org](http://www.baxpats.org).

# Transportation

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online at [loneplanet.com/bookings](http://loneplanet.com/bookings).

## Entering Argentina

Entering Argentina is straightforward; immigration officials at airports are generally quick to the point, while those at border crossings may take more time scrutinizing your passport. Once you're in the country, police can still demand identification any time. Carry at least a photocopy of your passport around at all times.

## Air

Argentina has direct flights between North America, the UK, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, and from nearly all South American countries. You can fly to a neighboring country, such as Brazil, and continue overland to Argentina.

## Airports

Aerolíneas Argentinas is the national carrier and has a

decent international reputation. Most international flights arrive at Buenos Aires' **Aeropuerto Internacional Ministro Pistarini** (Ezeiza; ☎011-5480-6111), which is a 40- to 60-minute shuttle bus or taxi ride out of town. For information on how to get into town from Ezeiza, see p101.

Close to downtown Buenos Aires is **Aeroparque Internacional Jorge Newbery** (☎011-5480-6111), which handles mostly domestic flights but also a few international ones from neighboring countries.

Basic information on most Argentine airports can be found online at **Aeropuertos Argentina 2000** ([www.aa2000.com.ar](http://www.aa2000.com.ar)).

## Land

### Border Crossings

There are numerous border crossings from neighboring Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay; the following lists are only the principal crossings. Generally, border formalities are straightforward as long as all your documents are in order.

## BOLIVIA

**La Quiaca to Villazón** Many buses go from Jujuy and Salta to La Quiaca, where you must walk across a bridge to the Bolivian border.

**Aguas Blancas to Bermejo** From Orán, reached by bus from Salta or Jujuy, take a bus to Aguas Blancas and then Bermejo, where you can catch a bus to Tarija.

**Salvador Mazza (Pocitos) to Yacuiba** Buses from Jujuy or Salta go to Salvador Mazza at the Bolivian border, where you cross and grab a shared taxi to Yacuiba.

## BRAZIL

The most common crossing is from Puerto Iguazú to Foz do Iguaçu. Check both cities for more information on the peculiarities of this border crossing, especially if you're crossing the border into Brazil only to see the other side of Iguazú Falls. For specifics, see p189. There is also a border crossing from Paso de los Libres to Uruguaiana (Brazil).

## CHILE

There are numerous crossings between Argentina and Chile. Except in far southern Patagonia, every land crossing involves crossing the Andes. Due to weather, some high-altitude passes close in winter; even the busy Mendoza-Santiago route over RN 7 can close for several days (sometimes longer) during a severe storm. Always check road conditions, especially if you have a flight scheduled on the other side of the mountains. The following are the most commonly used crossings:

### Bariloche to Puerto

**Montt** This border crossing over the Andes to Chile is usually no fuss; an optional 'tour' is the famous, scenic 12-hour bus-boat combination. It takes two days in winter. See p371.

**El Calafate to Puerto Natales and Parque Nacional Torres del Paine** Probably

the most beaten route down here, heading from the Glaciar Perito Moreno (near El Calafate) to Parque Nacional Torres del Paine (near Puerto Natales). Several buses per day in summer; one to two daily in the off-season.

### Los Antiguos to Chile

**Chico** Those entering Argentina from Chile can access the rugged RN 40 from here and head down to El Chaltén and El Calafate. Best in summer, when there's actually public transport available.

### Mendoza to Santiago

The most popular crossing between the two countries, passing 6962m Aconcagua en route.

### Salta to San Pedro de Atacama (via Jujuy, Purmamarca and Susques)

A 10-hour bus ride through the altiplano with stunningly beautiful scenery (see p217).

### Ushuaia to Punta Arenas

Daily buses in summer, fewer in winter, on this 10- to 12-hour trip (depending on weather conditions), which includes a ferry crossing at either Porvenir or Punta Delgada/Primera Angostura.

## URUGUAY & PARAGUAY

There are two direct border crossings between Argentina and Paraguay: Clorinda to Asunción, and Posadas to Encarnación. From Puerto Iguazú, Argentina, you can also cross through Brazil into Ciudad del Este, Paraguay.

Border crossings from Argentine cities to Uruguayan cities include Gualeguaychú to Fray Bentos; Colón to

Paysandú; and Concordia to Salto. All involve crossing bridges. Buses from Buenos Aires to Montevideo and other waterfront cities, however, are slower and less convenient than the ferries (or ferry-bus combinations) across the Río de la Plata.

## Bus

Travelers can bus to Argentina from most bordering countries. Buses are usually comfortable, modern and fairly clean. Crossing over does not involve too many hassles; just make sure that you have any proper visas beforehand.

## Train

A new train service between Argentina and Uruguay began in September 2011, linking Pilar in Argentina with Paso de los Toros in Uruguay. It's not currently very practical for travelers, but the hope is to eventually link Buenos Aires and Montevideo by rail.

## River

There are several river crossings between Uruguay and Buenos Aires that involve ferry or hydrofoil, and often require combinations with buses.

### Buenos Aires to Colonia

Daily ferries (one to three hours) head to Colonia, with bus connections to Montevideo (additional three hours).

### Buenos Aires to Montevideo

High-speed ferries carry passengers from downtown Buenos Aires to the Uruguayan capital in only 2¾ hours.

**Tigre to Carmelo** Regular passenger launches speed from the Buenos Aires suburb of Tigre to Carmelo in 2½ hours (services also go to Montevideo from Tigre).

## GETTING AROUND

## Air

### Airlines in Argentina

The national carrier, **Aerolíneas Argentinas** (☎0810-222-86527; [www.aerolineas.com](http://www.aerolineas.com)), offers the most domestic flights, but it's not necessarily better than its competitors. Other airlines with domestic flights include **LAN** (LAN; ☎0810-999-9526; [www.lan.com](http://www.lan.com)) and **Líneas Aéreas del Estado** (LADE; ☎0810-810-5233; [www.lade.com.ar](http://www.lade.com.ar)), the air force's passenger service. The latter has some of the least expensive air tickets and specializes in Patagonia; the airline has very few flights, however, and most are short hops.

Some domestic airlines operate on a two-tier system, where foreigners pay more than locals for the same ticket. If you fly to Argentina with Aerolíneas Argentinas, however, you can get discounted domestic tickets. The catch is that you must purchase these outside Argentina, usually when you purchase your international flight.

Nearly all domestic flights land at **Aeroparque Internacional Jorge Newbery** (☎011-5480-6111;

## IS THAT A BANANA IN YOUR BACKPACK?

You've been warned: don't bring any fresh produce, dairy products or meat when crossing from Argentina into Chile (either overland or by air). There will likely be an inspection of all baggage at the border or airport, possibly with cute Chilean sniffer dogs, and if you're found with any 'contraband' you could be fined up to US\$300. Even dried or dehydrated food – and especially trail mix – might not be allowed.

So finish up that sandwich (quickly) and bring some water to help with all that the chewing. Don't expect such a thorough check when crossing back, however – good or bad, Argentina doesn't seem to care nearly as much about inspecting fruit-munching travelers.

## EZEIZA ARRIVAL TIPS

Citizens from several countries have to pay a 'reciprocity fee' (*tasa de reciprocidad*) when they land in Ezeiza. This is equal to what Argentines are charged for visas to visit those countries. These fees include US\$140 to US\$150 for US citizens (good for five to 10 years), US\$75 to US\$150 for Canadians (good one to five years) and US\$100 for Australians (good for one year). The fee is payable in cash, credit card or traveler's check. It's currently charged at Ezeiza only, but in the future might be collected at all immigration checkpoints.

To change money at Ezeiza, be careful with *cambios* (exchange houses). Their rates are generally bad and rarely they've been known to pass fake bills. For better rates, pass the rows of transport booths, go outside the doors into the reception hall and veer sharply to the right to find Banco de la Nación's small office; it's open 24 hours and has an ATM (there's another ATM nearby, next to Farmacity, and yet another way beyond, at the airline counters).

Ezeiza is about 35km from Buenos Aires' center. For shuttle buses and taxis from Ezeiza to the center, see p101. There's a helpful **tourist information booth** (☎5480-6111, ☎24hr) just beyond the city's taxi stand.

If you need a hotel near the airport, try the pleasant **Posada de las Aguilas** (☎4480-9637; www.posadadelasaguilas.com.ar; José Hernández 128; s/d AR\$340/380; 🍷🍷🍷); it's just a few minutes from Ezeiza and it provides transfers.

www.aa2000.com.ar), a short distance north of downtown Buenos Aires.

Demand for flights around the country can be heavy, especially during some holidays (such as Christmas or Easter) and the vacation months of January, February and July. Seats are often booked out well in advance so reserve as far ahead as possible.

## Bicycle

If you dig cycling your way around a country, Argentina has potential. You'll see the landscape in greater detail, have far more freedom than you would if beholden to public transportation, and likely meet more locals.

Road bikes are suitable for many paved roads, but byways are often narrow and surfaces can be rough. A *todo terreno* (mountain bike) is often safer and more convenient, allowing you to use the unpaved shoulder and the very extensive network of gravel roads throughout the country. Argentine bicycles are improving in quality, but are still far from equal to their counterparts in Europe or the USA.

There are two major drawbacks to long-distance bicycling in Argentina. One is the wind, which in Patagonia can slow your progress to a crawl. The other is Argentine motorists: on many of the country's straight, narrow, two-lane highways, they can be a serious hazard to cyclists. Make yourself as visible as possible, and wear a helmet.

Bring an adequate repair kit and extra parts (and the know-how to use them) and stock up on good maps, which is usually easier to do once you're in Argentina. Always confirm directions and inquire about conditions locally; maps can be unreliable and conditions change regularly. In Patagonia, a windbreaker and warm clothing are essential. Don't expect much traffic on some back roads.

For some good places around the country in which to spin your wheels, see p32.

## Rental

Bicycle rentals (mostly mountain bikes) are available in many popular tourist destinations, such as along the Atlantic Coast, Mendoza, Bariloche and other towns throughout the Lake District

and Córdoba's Central Sierras. Prices are by the hour or day, and are affordable.

## Purchase

Many towns have bike shops, but high-quality bikes are expensive, and repair parts can be hard to come by. If you do decide to buy while you're here, you're best off doing so in Buenos Aires – selection in other major cities is pretty slim. Prices for an imported bike (which you'll want if you're doing serious cycling) are much higher than in their country of origin.

## Boat

Opportunities for boat or river travel in and around Argentina are limited, though there are regular international services to/from Uruguay and to/from Chile via the Lake District. Further south, from Ushuaia, operators offer boat trips on the Beagle Channel in Tierra del Fuego.

Otherwise, if you must be on the water, head to the Buenos Aires suburb of Tigre, where there are numerous boat excursions around the delta of the Río de la Plata.

## Bus

If you're doing any serious traveling around Argentina, you'll become very familiar with the country's excellent bus network, which reaches almost everywhere. Long-distance buses (known as *micros*) are fast, surprisingly comfortable and can be a rather luxurious experience. It's the way most Argentines get around. Larger luggage is stowed in the hold below, security is generally good (especially on the 1st-class buses) and attendants tag your bags. If you have a long way to go – say, Buenos Aires to Mendoza – overnight buses are the way to go, saving you a night's accommodations and the daylight hours for fun.

Hundreds of bus companies serve different regions but a few bigger lines (listed here) dominate the long-haul business:

**Andesmar** (☎0261-429-9501, 011-6385-0883; www.andesmar.com) Serves the entire country.

**Chevallier** (☎011-4000-5255; www.nuevachevallier.com) Routes from Bariloche to Salta.

**El Rápido Internacional** (☎0261-429-9501, 011-6385-0883; www.elrapido.com.ar) Buenos Aires, Mendoza, Córdoba and Rosario. International service to Santiago and Viña del Mar (Chile) and Lima (Peru).

**Via Bariloche** (☎0810-333-7575; www.viabariloche.com.ar) Serves most destinations in La Pampa province, the Lake District and Patagonia.

Most cities and towns have a central bus terminal where each company has its own ticket window. Some companies post schedules prominently, and the ticket price and departure time is always on the ticket you buy. Expect restrooms, left luggage, fast-food stalls, kiosks and newspaper vendors inside or near almost every large terminal.

In tourist destination cities they'll often have a tourist information office. There are generally few if any hotel touts or other traveler-hassling types at terminals; El Calafate is one notable exception.

One well-run Buenos Aires company where you can buy practically any long-distance bus ticket online (and without commission) is **Omnilíneas** (☎011-4326-3924; www.omnilineas.com). Its excellent website has bus travel tips and more.

## Classes & Costs

Better bus lines such as Chevallier and Andesmar have modern coaches with spacious, comfortable seats, large windows, air-conditioning, TVs, toilets (though don't expect luxury here – and bring toilet paper) and sometimes an attendant serving coffee and snacks.

On overnight trips it's well worth the extra pesos to go *coche cama* (sleeper class), though the cheaper *semi-cama* (semisleeper) is definitely manageable. In *coche cama* seats are wider, recline almost flat and are far more comfortable. For even more luxury there's *ejecutivo* (executive) which is available on a few popular runs. If pinching pesos, *común* (common) is the cheapest class. For trips less than about five hours, there's usually no choice and buses are *común* or *semi-cama*, which are both usually just fine.

Bus fares vary widely depending on season, class and company. Patagonia runs tend to be the most expensive. Many companies accept credit cards.

## Reservations

Often you don't need to buy bus tickets beforehand unless you're traveling on a Friday between major cities, when overnight *coche cama* services sell out fast. During holiday stretches, such as late December through February, July and August, tickets sell quickly so buy ahead

of time. As soon as you arrive somewhere, especially if it's a town with limited services, find out which companies go to your next destination and when, and plan your trip.

When the bus terminal is on the outskirts of a big town or city, there are often downtown agencies selling tickets without commission. Ask at your hotel.

## Seasonal Services

In the Lake District and northern Patagonia, bus services are good during summer (November through March), when there are many microbus routes to campgrounds, along lake circuits, to trail heads and to other destinations popular with tourists. Outside summer, however, these services slow way down.

In Patagonia the famed stretch of RN 40, or Ruta Nacional Cuarenta (Route 40), is infrequently traveled and rough, though it's slowly being paved. There's little public transport, and it's mostly via expensive, summertime microbus 'tours.' For more details, see p417.

## Car & Motorcycle

Because Argentina is so large, many parts are accessible only by private vehicle, despite the country's extensive public transport system. This is especially true in Patagonia, where distances are great and buses can be infrequent.

## Automobile Associations

Whenever driving in Argentina, it's worth being a member of the **Automóvil Club Argentino** (ACA; www.aca.org.ar), which has offices, gas stations and garages throughout the country and offers road service and towing in and around major destinations. ACA recognizes members of most overseas auto clubs and grants them privileges including road service and discounts on maps and accommodations. Bring your card.

## Bring Your Own Vehicle

Chile is probably the best country on the continent for shipping a vehicle from overseas, though Argentina is feasible. Getting the vehicle out of customs typically involves routine but time-consuming paperwork.

## Driver's License & Documents

Technically you're supposed to have an International Driving Permit to supplement your national or state driver's license (though you can rent a car without one). If you are stopped, police will inspect your automobile registration and insurance and tax documents, all of which must be up to date.

Drivers of Argentine vehicles must carry their title document (*tarjeta verde* or 'green card'); if it's a rental, make sure it's in the glove box. For foreign vehicles, customs permission is the acceptable substitute. Liability insurance is obligatory, and police often ask to see proof of insurance at checkpoints.

## Fuel

*Nafta* (gas) prices are roughly similar to the US. Avoid *común* (regular) as it's usually low quality. Super and premium are better choices. In Patagonia gas prices are about a third what they are elsewhere. *Estaciones de servicio* (gas stations) are fairly common, but outside the cities keep an eye on your gas gauge. In Patagonia it's a good idea to carry extra fuel.

## NOW WE'RE GETTING SOMEWHERE

A very handy website for those driving around Argentina is [www.ruta0.com](http://www.ruta0.com). Among other things, you can punch in two destinations and get the recommended routes (and whether they're paved or not), distances (in kilometers), driving times and even how much it will cost in gas consumption. Now if it could only warn you where to avoid those crazy Argentine drivers.

## Rental

To rent a car, you must be at least 21 years of age and have a valid driver's license and a credit card. Agencies rarely ask for an International Driving Permit.

When you rent a vehicle find out how many kilometers are included. Unlimited-kilometer deals exist but are usually much more expensive, depending on the destination. Reserving a car with one of the major international agencies in your home country sometimes gets you lower rates.

One of the cheapest places to rent a car is Bariloche; if you're heading to Patagonia for example, this is a good place to rent. Taking a rental car out of Argentina is not usually allowed.

For motorcycle rentals, be at least 25 years of age and head to **Motocare** (24761-2696, [www.motocare.com.ar/rental](http://www.motocare.com.ar/rental)) located in Buenos Aires or Neuquén. Honda Transalps 700 are available; bring your own helmet and riding gear. For driving outside big cities only.

## Purchase

Purchasing a vehicle in Argentina can be complicated for foreigners. This usually involves having a permanent local address, obtaining a CDI (a tax ID number) and paying for the vehicle in cash. To buy a used vehicle, you must transfer the title at a title transfer office, with the current owner and all his/her proper papers present. Make sure all licenses, unpaid tickets and taxes have been paid.

Speaking Spanish helps. Getting insurance without a DNI (national document) can be difficult but not impossible. As a foreigner without a DNI you may own a vehicle in Argentina; however, you theoretically cannot take it out of the country without a notarized authorization, which can be difficult to obtain.

It's wise to supplement this information with your own current research.

## Insurance

Liability insurance is obligatory in Argentina, and police ask to see proof of insurance at checkpoints. If you plan on taking the car to neighboring countries, make sure it will remain covered (you'll have to pay extra). Among reputable insurers in Argentina are **Mapfre** ([www.mapfre.com.ar](http://www.mapfre.com.ar)) and **ACA** ([www.aca.org.ar](http://www.aca.org.ar)).

## Road Rules & Hazards

Anyone considering driving in Argentina should know that Argentine drivers are aggressive and commonly ignore speed limits, road signs and even traffic signals. Night driving is not recommended; in many regions animals hang out on the road for warmth.

Have on hand some emergency reflectors (*balizas*) and a fire extinguisher (*matafuego*). Headrests are required for the driver and passengers, and seatbelts are obligatory (though few wear them). Motorcycle helmets are also obligatory, although this law is rarely enforced.

You won't often see police patrolling the highways, but might meet them at major intersections and roadside checkpoints where they conduct meticulous document and equipment checks. Sometimes these checks are pretexts for graft. If you are uncertain about your rights, politely state your intention to contact your embassy or consulate. If you do want

to pay a bribe for the sake of expediency, ask *¿Puedo pagar la multa ahora?* ('Can I pay the fine now?').

## Hitchhiking

Hitchhiking (*hacer dedo*) is never entirely safe in any country in the world. Travelers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk. People who do choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and let someone know where they are planning to go.

Along with Chile, Argentina is probably the best country for hitching in all of South America. The major drawback is that Argentine vehicles are often stuffed full with families and children, but truckers will sometimes pick up backpackers. A good place to ask is at *estaciones de servicio* (gas stations) at the outskirts of large Argentine cities, where truckers gas up their vehicles.

Women can and do hitchhike alone, but should exercise caution and especially avoid getting into a car with more than one man. In Patagonia, where distances are great and vehicles few, hitchhikers should expect long waits and carry warm, windproof clothing and refreshments.

Having a sign will improve your chances for a pickup, especially if it says something like *visitando Argentina de Canada* (visiting Argentina from Canada), rather than just a destination. Argentines are fascinated by foreigners.

For good information (in Spanish) see [www.auto-stopargentina.com.ar](http://www.auto-stopargentina.com.ar), or try [www.wander-argentina.com/hitchhiking-in-argentina](http://www.wander-argentina.com/hitchhiking-in-argentina).

## Local Transportation

### Bus

Local Argentine buses, called *colectivos*, are notorious for charging down the street and spewing clouds of black smoke while traveling at breakneck speeds. Riding on them is a good way to see the cities and get around, providing you can sort out the often complex bus systems. Buses are clearly numbered and usually carry a placard indicating their final destination. Sometimes, identically numbered buses serve slightly different routes (especially in big cities), so pay attention to the placards. To ask 'Does this bus go (to the town center)?' say *¿Va este colectivo (al centro)?*

Most city buses operate on coins; you pay as you board. In some cities, such as Mendoza or Mar del Plata, you must buy prepaid bus cards or – in the case of Córdoba – *cospeles* (tokens) as well. In both cases, they can be bought at any kiosk.

### Subway

Buenos Aires is the only Argentine city with a subway system (known as the Subte), and it's the quickest and cheapest way of getting around the city center.

### Taxi & Remise

The people of Buenos Aires make frequent use of taxis, which are digitally metered and cheap by US and European standards. Outside the capital, meters are common but not universal, and you'll need to agree on a fare in advance. For more on taking taxis in BA, see p102.

Where public transportation is scarce, it's possible to hire a taxi with a driver for the day. If you bargain, this can be cheaper than a rental car, but always negotiate the fee in advance.

*Remises* are unmarked radio taxis without meters that have fixed fares (comparable to taxis) within a given zone. Any business will phone one for you if you ask.

## Train

For many years there were major reductions in long-distance train service in Argentina, but recent years have seen some rail lines being progressively reopened. A good source for information is [www.seat61.com/southamerica.htm](http://www.seat61.com/southamerica.htm).

Trains continue to serve most of Buenos Aires and some surrounding provinces. During the holiday periods, such as Christmas or national holidays, buy tickets in advance. Train fares tend to be lower than comparable bus fares, but trains are slower and there are fewer departure times and destinations. Long-distance trains have sleepers.

Train buffs will want to take the narrow-gauge *La Trochita* (see p418), which runs 20km between Esquel and Nahuel Pan. Another legendary ride is Salta's touristy but spectacular *Tren a las Nubes* (Train to the Clouds; p234), which at one point spans a desert canyon at the altitude of 4220m. And finally, a scenic stretch of track (and luxurious service aboard the *Tren Patagónico*, see p386) connects the Lake District hub of Bariloche to Viedma, on the Atlantic coast of Patagonia.

# Language

Latin American Spanish pronunciation is easy, as most sounds have equivalents in English. Read our coloured pronunciation guides as if they were English, and you'll be understood. Note that **kh** is a throaty sound (like the 'ch' in the Scottish *loch*), **v** and **b** are like a soft English 'v' (between a 'v' and a 'b'), and **r** is strongly rolled. Also note that the letters *ll* (pronounced *ly* or simplified to *y* in most parts of Latin America) and *y* are pronounced like the 's' in 'measure' or the 'sh' in 'shut' in Argentina, which gives the language its very own local flavor. In this chapter, we've used the symbol **sh** to represent this sound. You'll get used to this idiosyncrasy very quickly listening to and taking your cues from the locals.

The stressed syllables are indicated with an acute accent in written Spanish (eg *días*) and with italics in our pronunciation guides.

The polite form is used in this chapter; where both polite and informal options are given, they are indicated by the abbreviations 'pol' and 'inf'. Where necessary, both masculine and feminine forms of words are included, separated by a slash and with the masculine form first, eg *perdido/a* (m/f).

## BASICS

<b>Hello.</b>	<i>Hola.</i>	<i>o-la</i>
<b>Goodbye.</b>	<i>Adiós./Chau.</i>	<i>a-dyos/chow</i>
<b>How are you?</b>	<i>¿Qué tal?</i>	<i>ke tal</i>
<b>Fine, thanks.</b>	<i>Bien, gracias.</i>	<i>byen gra-syas</i>
<b>Excuse me.</b>	<i>Perdón.</i>	<i>per-don</i>
<b>Sorry.</b>	<i>Lo siento.</i>	<i>lo syen-to</i>
<b>Please.</b>	<i>Por favor.</i>	<i>por fa-vor</i>

## WANT MORE?

For in-depth language information and handy phrases, check out Lonely Planet's *Latin American Spanish Phrasebook*. You'll find it at [shop.lonelyplanet.com](http://shop.lonelyplanet.com), or you can buy Lonely Planet's iPhone phrasebooks at the Apple App Store.

<b>Thank you.</b>	<i>Gracias.</i>	<i>gra-syas</i>
<b>You're welcome.</b>	<i>De nada.</i>	<i>de na-da</i>
<b>Yes./No.</b>	<i>Sí./No.</i>	<i>see/no</i>
<b>My name is ...</b>	<i>Me llamo ...</i>	<i>me sha-mo ...</i>
<b>What's your name?</b>	<i>¿Cómo se llama Usted?</i>	<i>ko-mo se sha-ma oo-ste</i> (pol)
	<i>¿Cómo te llamas?</i>	<i>ko-mo te sha-mas</i> (inf)
<b>Do you speak English?</b>	<i>¿Habla inglés?</i>	<i>a-bla een-gles</i> (pol)
	<i>¿Hablas inglés?</i>	<i>a-blas een-gles</i> (inf)
<b>I don't understand.</b>	<i>Yo no entiendo.</i>	<i>yo no en-tyen-do</i>

## ACCOMMODATIONS

<b>I'd like a ... room.</b>	<i>Quisiera una habitación ...</i>	<i>kee-sye-ra oo-na a-bee-ta-syon ...</i>
<b>single</b>	<i>individual</i>	<i>een-dee-vee-dwal</i>
<b>double</b>	<i>doble</i>	<i>do-ble</i>

### Signs

<b>Abierto</b>	Open
<b>Cerrado</b>	Closed
<b>Entrada</b>	Entrance
<b>Hombres/Varones</b>	Men
<b>Mujeres/Damas</b>	Women
<b>Prohibido</b>	Prohibited
<b>Salida</b>	Exit
<b>Servicios/Baños</b>	Toilets

## LUNFARDO

Below are some of the spicier *lunfardo* (slang) terms you may hear on your travels in Argentina.

<b>boliche</b>	– disco or nightclub
<b>boludo</b>	– jerk, asshole, idiot; often used in a friendly fashion, but a deep insult to a stranger
<b>bondi</b>	– bus
<b>buena onda</b>	– good vibes
<b>carajo</b>	– asshole, prick; bloody hell
<b>chabón/chabona</b>	– kid, guy/girl (term of endearment)
<b>che</b>	– hey
<b>diez puntos</b>	– OK, cool, fine (literally '10 points')
<b>fiaca</b>	– laziness
<b>guita</b>	– money
<b>laburo</b>	– job
<b>macanudo</b>	– great, fabulous
<b>mango</b>	– one peso
<b>masa</b>	– a great, cool thing
<b>mina</b>	– woman
<b>morfar</b>	– eat
<b>pendejo</b>	– idiot
<b>piba/pibe</b>	– cool young guy/girl
<b>piola</b>	– cool, clever
<b>pucho</b>	– cigarette
<b>re</b>	– very, eg <i>re interesante</i> (very interesting)
<b>trucho</b>	– fake, imitation, bad quality
<b>iPonete las pilas!</b>	– Get on with it! (literally 'Put in the batteries!')
<b>Me mataste.</b>	– I don't know; I have no idea. (literally 'You've killed me')
<b>Le faltan un par de jugadores.</b>	– He's not playing with a full deck. (literally 'He's a couple of players short')
<b>che boludo</b>	– The most <i>porteño</i> phrase on earth. Ask a friendly local youth to explain.

### How much is it per night/person?

*¿Cuánto cuesta por noche/persona?* *kwan-to kwes-ta por no-che/per-so-na*

### Does it include breakfast?

*¿Incluye el desayuno?* *een-kloo-she el de-sa-shoo-no*

<b>campsite</b>	<i>terreno de camping</i>	<i>te-re-no de kam-peeng</i>
<b>hotel</b>	<i>hotel</i>	<i>o-tel</i>
<b>guesthouse</b>	<i>hostería</i>	<i>os-te-ree-a</i>
<b>youth hostel</b>	<i>albergue juvenil</i>	<i>al-ber-ge khoo-ve-neeel</i>

<b>air-con</b>	<i>aire acondicionado</i>	<i>ai-re a-kon-dee-syo-na-do</i>
<b>bathroom</b>	<i>baño</i>	<i>ba-nyo</i>
<b>bed</b>	<i>cama</i>	<i>ka-ma</i>
<b>window</b>	<i>ventana</i>	<i>ven-ta-na</i>

## DIRECTIONS

<b>Where's ...?</b>	<i>¿Dónde está ...?</i>	<i>don-de es-ta ...</i>
<b>What's the address?</b>	<i>¿Cuál es la dirección?</i>	<i>kwal es la dee-rek-syon</i>
<b>Could you please write it down?</b>	<i>¿Puede escribirlo, por favor?</i>	<i>pwe-de es-kree-beer-lo por fa-vor</i>
<b>Can you show me (on the map)?</b>	<i>¿Me lo puede indicar (en el mapa)?</i>	<i>me lo pwe-de een-dee-kar (en el ma-pa)</i>

<b>at the corner</b>	<i>en la esquina</i>	<i>en la es-kee-na</i>
<b>at the traffic lights</b>	<i>en el semáforo</i>	<i>en el se-ma-fo-ro</i>
<b>behind ...</b>	<i>detrás de ...</i>	<i>de-tras de ...</i>
<b>far</b>	<i>lejos</i>	<i>le-khos</i>
<b>in front of ...</b>	<i>enfrente de ...</i>	<i>en-fren-te de ...</i>
<b>left</b>	<i>izquierda</i>	<i>ees-kyer-da</i>
<b>near</b>	<i>cerca</i>	<i>ser-ka</i>
<b>next to ...</b>	<i>al lado de ...</i>	<i>al la-do de ...</i>
<b>opposite ...</b>	<i>frente a ...</i>	<i>fren-te a ...</i>
<b>right</b>	<i>derecha</i>	<i>de-re-cha</i>
<b>straight ahead</b>	<i>todo recto</i>	<i>to-do rek-to</i>

## EATING & DRINKING

<b>Can I see the menu, please?</b>	<i>¿Puedo ver el menú, por favor?</i>	<i>pwe-do ver el me-noo por fa-vor</i>
<b>What would you recommend?</b>	<i>¿Qué me recomienda?</i>	<i>ke me re-ko-myen-da</i>
<b>Do you have vegetarian food?</b>	<i>¿Tienen comida vegetariana?</i>	<i>tye-nen ko-mee-da ve-khe-ta-rya-na</i>
<b>I don't eat (red meat).</b>	<i>No como (carne roja).</i>	<i>no ko-mo (kar-ne-ro-kha)</i>
<b>That was delicious!</b>	<i>¡Estaba buenisimo!</i>	<i>es-ta-ba bwe-nee-see-mo</i>
<b>Cheers!</b>	<i>¡Salud!</i>	<i>sa-loo</i>
<b>The bill, please.</b>	<i>La cuenta, por favor.</i>	<i>la kwen-ta por fa-vor</i>

<b>I'd like a table for ...</b>	<i>Quisiera una mesa para ...</i>	<i>kee-sye-ra oo-na me-sa pa-ra ...</i>
<b>(eight) o'clock</b>	<i>las (ocho)</i>	<i>las (o-cho)</i>
<b>(two) people</b>	<i>(dos) personas</i>	<i>(dos) per-so-nas</i>

## Key Words

appetisers	aperitivos	a-pe-ree-tee-vos
bottle	botella	bo-te-sha
bowl	bol	bol
breakfast	desayuno	de-sa-shoo-no
children's menu	menú infantil	me-noo een-fan-teel
(too) cold	(muy) frío	(mooy) free-o
dinner	cena	se-na
food	comida	ko-mee-da
fork	tenedor	te-ne-dor
glass	vaso	va-so
hot (warm)	caliente	ka-lyen-te
knife	cuchillo	koo-chee-yo
lunch	almuerzo	al-mwer-so
main course	plato principal	pla-to preen-see-pal
plate	plato	pla-to
restaurant	restaurante	res-tow-ran-te
spoon	cuchara	koo-cha-ra
with/without	con/sin	kon/seen

## Meat &amp; Fish

beef	carne de vaca	kar-ne de va-ka
chicken	pollo	po-sho
duck	pato	pa-to
fish	pescado	pes-ka-do
lamb	cordero	kor-de-ro
pork	cerdo	ser-do
turkey	pavo	pa-vo
veal	ternera	ter-ne-ra

## EL VOSEO

Spanish in the Río de la Plata region differs from that of Spain and the rest of the Americas, most notably in the use of the informal form of 'you'. Instead of *tuteo* (the use of *tú*), Argentines commonly speak with *voseo* (the use of *vos*), a relic from 16th-century Spanish requiring slightly different grammar. All verbs change in spelling, stress and pronunciation. Examples of verbs ending in *-ar*, *-er* and *-ir* are given below – the *tú* forms are included to illustrate the contrast. Imperative forms (commands) also differ, but negative imperatives are identical in *tuteo* and *voseo*.

The Spanish phrases in this chapter use the *vos* form. An Argentine inviting a foreigner to address him or her informally will say *Me podés tutear* (literally 'You can address me with *tú*'), even though they'll use the *vos* forms in subsequent conversation.

## Verb

hablar (speak): You speak./Speak!
comer (eat): You eat./Eat!
venir (come): You come./Come!

## Tuteo

Tú hablas./¡Habla!
Tú comes./¡Come!
Tú vienes./¡Ven!

## Voseo

Vos hablás./¡Hablá!
Vos comés./¡Comé!
Vos venís./¡Vení!

## Fruit &amp; Vegetables

apple	manzana	man-sa-na
apricot	damasco	da-mas-ko
artichoke	alcaucil	al-kow-seel
asparagus	espárragos	es-pa-ra-gos
banana	banana	ba-na-na
beans	chauchas	chow-chas
beetroot	remolacha	re-mo-la-cha
cabbage	repollo	re-po-sho
carrot	zanahoria	sa-na-o-rya
celery	apio	a-pyo
cherry	cereza	se-re-sa
corn	choclo	cho-klo
cucumber	pepino	pe-pee-no
fruit	fruta	froo-ta
grape	uvas	oo-vas
lemon	limón	lee-mon
lentils	lentejas	len-te-khas
lettuce	lechuga	le-choo-ga
mushroom	champiñón	cham-pee-nyon
nuts	nueces	nwe-ses
onion	cebolla	se-bo-sha
orange	naranja	na-ran-kha
peach	durazno	doo-ras-no
peas	arvejas	ar-ve-khas
(red/green) pepper	pimiento (rojo/verde)	pee-myen-to (ro-kho/ver-de)
pineapple	ananá	a-na-na
plum	ciruela	seer-we-la
potato	papa	pa-pa
pumpkin	zapallo	sa-pa-sho
spinach	espinacas	es-pee-na-kas

strawberry	frutilla	froo-tee-sha
tomato	tomate	to-ma-te
vegetable	verdura	ver-doo-ra
watermelon	sandía	san-dee-a

## Other

bread	pan	pan
butter	manteca	man-te-ka
cheese	queso	ke-so
egg	huevo	we-vo
honey	miel	myel
jam	mermelada	mer-me-la-da
oil	aceite	a-sey-te
pasta	pasta	pas-ta
pepper	pimienta	pee-myen-ta
rice	arroz	a-ros
salt	sal	sal
sugar	azúcar	a-soo-kar
vinegar	vinagre	vee-na-gre

## Drinks

beer	cerveza	ser-ve-sa
coffee	café	ka-fe
(orange) juice	jugo (de naranja)	kho-wo (de na-ran-kha)
milk	leche	le-che
tea	té	te
(mineral) water	agua (mineral)	a-gwa (mee-ne-ral)
(red/white) wine	vino (tinto/blanco)	vee-no (teen-to/blan-ko)

## EMERGENCIES

Help!	¡Socorro!	so-ko-ro
Go away!	¡Vete!	ve-te

Call ...!	¡Llame a ...!	sha-me a ...
a doctor	un médico	oon me-dee-ko
the police	la policía	la po-lee-see-a

## Question Words

How?	¿Cómo?	ko-mo
What?	¿Qué?	ke
When?	¿Cuándo?	kwan-do
Where?	¿Dónde?	don-de
Who?	¿Quién?	kyen
Why?	¿Por qué?	por ke

I'm lost.	Estoy perdido/a.	es-toy per-dee-do/a (m/f)
I'm ill.	Estoy enfermo/a.	es-toy en-fer-mo/a (m/f)
I'm allergic to (antibiotics).	Soy alérgico/a a (los antibióticos).	soy a-ler-khee-ko/a a (los an-tee-byo-tee-kos) (m/f)

## Where are the toilets?

¿Dónde están los baños?	don-de es-tan los ba-nyos
-------------------------	---------------------------

## SHOPPING &amp; SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...	Quisiera comprar ...	kee-sye-ra kom-prar ...
---------------------	----------------------	-------------------------

I'm just looking.	Sólo estoy mirando.	so-lo es-toy mee-ran-do
-------------------	---------------------	-------------------------

Can I look at it?	¿Puedo verlo?	pwe-do ver-lo
-------------------	---------------	---------------

I don't like it.	No me gusta.	no me goos-ta
------------------	--------------	---------------

How much is it?	¿Cuánto cuesta?	kwan-to kwes-ta
-----------------	-----------------	-----------------

That's too expensive.	Es muy caro.	es mooy ka-ro
-----------------------	--------------	---------------

Can you lower the price?	¿Podría bajar un poco el precio?	po-dree-a ba-khar oon po-ko el pre-syo
--------------------------	----------------------------------	--

There's a mistake in the bill.	Hay un error en la cuenta.	ai oon e-ror en la kwen-ta
--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

ATM	cajero automático	ka-khe-ro ow-to-ma-tee-ko
credit card	tarjeta de crédito	tar-khe-ta de kre-dee-to
internet cafe	cibercafé	see-ber-ka-fe
market	mercado	mer-ka-do
post office	correos	ko-re-os
tourist office	oficina de turismo	o-fee-see-na de too-rees-mo

## TIME &amp; DATES

What time is it?	¿Qué hora es?	ke o-ra es
It's (10) o'clock.	Son (las diez).	son (las dyes)
It's half past (one).	Es (la una) y media.	es (la oo-na) ee me-dya

morning	mañana	ma-nya-na
afternoon	tarde	tar-de
evening	noche	no-che

yesterday	ayer	a-sheer
today	hoy	oy
tomorrow	mañana	ma-nya-na

Monday	<i>lunes</i>	<i>loo-nes</i>
Tuesday	<i>martes</i>	<i>mar-tes</i>
Wednesday	<i>miércoles</i>	<i>myer-ko-les</i>
Thursday	<i>jueves</i>	<i>khwe-ves</i>
Friday	<i>viernes</i>	<i>vyer-nes</i>
Saturday	<i>sábado</i>	<i>sa-ba-do</i>
Sunday	<i>domingo</i>	<i>do-meen-go</i>

## TRANSPORTATION

boat	<i>barco</i>	<i>bar-ko</i>
bus	<i>colectivo/ micro</i>	<i>ko-lek-tee-vo/ mee-kro</i>
plane	<i>avión</i>	<i>a-vyon</i>
train	<i>tren</i>	<i>tren</i>
first	<i>primero</i>	<i>pree-me-ro</i>
last	<i>último</i>	<i>ool-tee-mo</i>
next	<i>próximo</i>	<i>prok-see-mo</i>

A ... ticket, please.	<i>Un boleto de ..., por favor.</i>	<i>oon bo-lee-to de ... por fa-vor</i>
1st-class	<i>primera clase</i>	<i>pree-me-ra kla-se</i>
2nd-class	<i>segunda clase</i>	<i>se-goon-da kla-se</i>
one-way	<i>ida</i>	<i>ee-da</i>
return	<i>ida y vuelta</i>	<i>ee-da ee vvel-ta</i>

I want to go to ...  
*Quisiera ir a ...* *kee-sye-ra eer a ...*

Does it stop at ...?  
*¿Para en ...?* *pa-ra en ...*

What stop is this?  
*¿Cuál es esta parada?* *kwal es es-ta pa-ra-da*

What time does it arrive/leave?  
*¿A qué hora llega/sale?* *a ke o-ra she-ga/sa-le*

Please tell me when we get to ...  
*¿Puede avisarme cuando lleguemos a ...?* *pwe-de a-vee-sar-me kwan-do she-ge-mos a ...*

I want to get off here.  
*Quiero bajarme aquí.* *kye-ro ba-khar-me a-kee*

airport	<i>aeropuerto</i>	<i>a-e-ro-pwer-to</i>
bus stop	<i>parada de colectivo</i>	<i>pa-ra-da de ko-lek-tee-vo</i>
platform	<i>plataforma</i>	<i>pla-ta-for-ma</i>
ticket office	<i>taquilla</i>	<i>ta-kee-sha</i>
timetable	<i>horario</i>	<i>o-ra-ryo</i>
train station	<i>estación de trenes</i>	<i>es-ta-syon de tre-nes</i>

## Numbers

1	<i>uno</i>	<i>oo-no</i>
2	<i>dos</i>	<i>dos</i>
3	<i>tres</i>	<i>tres</i>
4	<i>cuatro</i>	<i>kwa-tro</i>
5	<i>cinco</i>	<i>seen-ko</i>
6	<i>seis</i>	<i>seys</i>
7	<i>siete</i>	<i>sye-te</i>
8	<i>ocho</i>	<i>o-cho</i>
9	<i>nueve</i>	<i>nwe-ve</i>
10	<i>diez</i>	<i>dyes</i>
20	<i>veinte</i>	<i>veyn-te</i>
30	<i>treinta</i>	<i>treyn-ta</i>
40	<i>cuarenta</i>	<i>kwa-ren-ta</i>
50	<i> cincuenta</i>	<i>seen-kwen-ta</i>
60	<i>sesenta</i>	<i>se-sen-ta</i>
70	<i>setenta</i>	<i>se-ten-ta</i>
80	<i>ochenta</i>	<i>o-chen-ta</i>
90	<i>noventa</i>	<i>no-ven-ta</i>
100	<i>cien</i>	<i>syen</i>
1000	<i>mil</i>	<i>meel</i>

I'd like to hire a ...	<i>Quisiera alquilar ...</i>	<i>kee-sye-ra al-kee-lar ...</i>
4WD	<i>un todo-terreno</i>	<i>oon to-do-te-re-no</i>
bicycle	<i>una bicicleta</i>	<i>oo-na bee-see-kle-ta</i>
car	<i>un coche/auto</i>	<i>oon ko-che/aw-to</i>
motorcycle	<i>una moto</i>	<i>oo-na mo-to</i>

helmet	<i>casco</i>	<i>kas-ko</i>
hitchhike	<i>hacer dedo</i>	<i>a-ser de-do</i>
mechanic	<i>mecánico</i>	<i>me-ka-nee-ko</i>
petrol/gas	<i>nafta</i>	<i>naf-ta</i>
service station	<i>estación de servicio</i>	<i>es-ta-syon de ser-vee-syo</i>
truck	<i>camion</i>	<i>ka-myon</i>

Is this the road to ...?  
*¿Se va a ... por esta carretera?* *se va a ... por es-ta ka-re-te-ra*

Can I park here?  
*¿Puedo estacionar acá?* *pwe-do e-sta-syo-nar a-ka*

The car has broken down.  
*El coche se ha averiado.* *el ko-che se a a-ve-rya-do*

I've run out of petrol.  
*Me he quedado sin nafta.* *me e ke-da-do seen naf-ta*

I have a flat tyre.  
*Tengo una goma pinchada.* *ten-go oo-na-go-ma peen-cha-da*

## GLOSSARY

**abuelos** – grandparents  
**ACA** – Automóvil Club Argentino, which provides maps, road service, insurance and other services, and operates hotels and campgrounds throughout the country

**acequia** – irrigation canal  
**aerosilla** – chairlift

**alcalde** – mayor  
**alfajor** – round, cookietype sandwiches layered with dulce de leche or fruit preserves

**alerce** – large coniferous tree, resembling a California redwood, from which Argentina's Parque Nacional Los Alerces takes its name

**arrayán** – tree of the myrtle family, from which Argentina's Parque Nacional Los Arrayanes takes its name

**arroyo** – creek, stream

**arte rupestre** – cave paintings

**asado** – the famous Argentine barbecue

**autopista** – freeway or motorway

**baliza** – emergency reflector

**balneario** – any swimming or bathing area, including beach resorts, river beaches and swimming holes

**bandoneón** – an accordion-like instrument used in tango music

**barra brava** – fervent soccer fan; the Argentine equivalent of Britain's 'football hooligan'

**bicho** – any small creature, from insect to mammal; also used to refer to an ugly person

**boleadoras** – weighted, leather-covered balls attached to a length of thin rope, historically used as a hunting weapon by gauchos and some of Argentina's indigenous peoples; thrown at a guanaco or rhea's legs, they entangle the animal and bring it down

**boliche** – nightclub or disco

**bombachas** – a gaucho's baggy pants; can also mean women's underwear

**bombilla** – metal straw with filter for drinking *mate*

**buena onda** – good vibes

**cabildo** – colonial town council; also, the building that housed the council

**cacerolazo** – a form of street protest; it first occurred in December 2001 when people took to their balconies in Buenos Aires banging pots and pans (*cacerolas*) to show their discontent;

the banging moved to the streets, then to cities throughout Argentina, and culminated in the resignation of President de la Rúa

**cajero automático** – ATM

**caldén** – a tree characteristic of the dry pampas

**camarote** – 1st-class sleeper

**cambio** – money-exchange office; also *casa de cambio*

**campo** – the countryside; alternately, a field or paddock

**característica** – telephone area code

**carnavalito** – traditional folk dance

**carpincho** – capybara, a large (but cute) aquatic rodent that inhabits the Paraná and other subtropical rivers

**cartelera** – an office selling discount tickets

**casa de cambio** – money-exchange office, often shortened to *cambio*

**casa de familia** – family accommodations

**casa de gobierno** – literally 'government house,' a building now often converted to a museum, offices etc

**castellano** – the term used in much of South America for the Spanish language spoken throughout Latin America; literally refers to Castilian Spanish

**catarata** – waterfall

**caudillo** – in 19th-century Argentine politics, a provincial strongman whose power rested more on personal loyalty than political ideals or party affiliation

**centro cívico** – civic center

**cerro** – hill, mountain

**certificado** – certified mail  
**chacarera** – traditional folk dance

**chacra** – small, independent farm

**chamamé** – folk music of Corrientes

**chimichurri** – sauce made of olive oil, garlic and parsley

**coche cama** – sleeper class

**coima** – a bribe; one who solicits a bribe is a *coimero*

**colectivo** – local bus

**combi** – long-distance bus

**comedor** – basic cafeteria

**común** – common class

**Conaf** – Corporación Nacional Forestal, Chilean state agency in charge of forestry and conservation, including management of national parks like Torres del Paine

**confitería** – cafe serving light meals

**conjunto** – a musical band

**Conquista del Desierto** – Conquest of the Desert, a euphemism for General Julio Argentino Roca's late-19th-century war of extermination against the Mapuche of northern Patagonia

**contrabajo** – double bass

**cortado** – coffee with milk

**correo** – post office

**corriente** – current

**costanera** – seaside, riverside or lakeside road or walkway

**criollo** – in colonial period, an American-born Spaniard, but now used for any Latin American of European descent; the term also describes the feral cattle and horses of the pampas

**cruce** – crossroads

**día de campo** – 'day in the country,' spent at an *estancia*; typically includes an *asado*, horseback riding and use of the property's facilities

**desaparecidos (los)** – the disappeared; the victims (estimated at up to 30,000) of Argentina's *Guerra Sucia* who were never found

**dique** – a dam; the resultant reservoir is often used for recreational purposes; can also refer to a drydock

**Dirty War** – see *Guerra Sucia*

**dorado** – large river fish in the Paraná drainage, known among fishing enthusiasts as the 'Tiger of the Paraná' for its fighting spirit

**edificio** – a building

**ejecutivo** – executive class

**empanadas** – meat or vegetable turnovers

**encomienda** – colonial labor system, under which Indian communities were required to provide laborers for Spaniards (*encomenderos*), and the Spaniards were to provide religious and language instruction; in practice, the system benefited Spaniards far more than native peoples

**epa** – an exclamation meaning 'Hey! Wow! Look out!'

**ERP** – Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo, a revolutionary leftist group in the sugar-growing areas of Tucumán province in the 1970s that modeled itself after the Cuban revolution; it was wiped out by the Argentine army during the *Guerra Sucia*

**esquina** – street corner

**estación de servicio** – gas station

**estancia** – extensive ranch for cattle or sheep, with an owner or manager (*estanciero*) and dependent resident labor force; many are now open to tourists for recreational activities such as riding, tennis and swimming, either for weekend escapes or extended stays

**este** – east

**facturas** – pastries

**facón** – a knife used by gauchos that is traditionally worn in the small of the back behind the belt

**folklore** – Argentine folk music; also known as *folk-lórico*

**fútbol** – soccer

**gasolero** – motor vehicle that uses diesel fuel, which is much cheaper than ordinary gasoline in Argentina

**guardagánado** – cattle guard (on a road or highway)

**guardia** – watchman

**Guerra Sucia** – the Dirty War of the 1970s, of the Argentine military against left-wing revolutionaries and anyone suspected of sympathizing with them; also referred to as the 'military period'

**guitarrón** – an oversized guitar used for playing bass lines

**horario** – schedule

**ichu** – bunch grass of the Andean altiplano

**ida** – one-way

**ida y vuelta** – roundtrip

**iglesia** – church

**interno** – internal bus-route number; also a telephone extension number

**IVA** – *impuesto al valor agregado*; value-added tax, often added to restaurant or hotel bills in Argentina

**jejenes** – annoying biting insects

**jineteada** – rodeo

**libro de reclamos** – complaint book

**locutorio** – private long-distance telephone office; usually offers fax and internet services as well

**lunfardo** – street slang

**manta** – a shawl or bedspread

**manzana** – literally, 'apple'; also used to define one square block of a city

**mate** – tea made from *yerba mate* leaves; Argentina is the world's largest producer and consumer of *mate* and preparing and drinking the beverage is an important social ritual; the word also refers to the *mate* gourd the tea is prepared in

**mazorca** – political police of 19th-century Argentine dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas

**medialuna** – croissant

**mercado artesanal** – handicraft market

**meseta** – interior steppe of eastern Patagonia

**mestizo** – a person of mixed Indian and Spanish descent

**milanesa** – breaded cutlets

**milonga** – in tango, refers to a song, a dance or the dance salon itself

**minutas** – snacks or short orders

**mirador** – scenic viewpoint, usually on a hill but often in a building

**monte** – scrub forest; the term is often applied to any densely vegetated area

**Montoneros** – left-wing faction of the Peronist party that became an underground urban guerrilla movement in 1970s

**mozo** – waiter

**municipalidad** – city hall

**nafta** – gasoline or petrol

**neumático** – spare tire

**norte** – north

**oeste** – west

**Ovnis** – UFOs

**parada** – a bus stop

**paraje** – pump

**parrilla** – mixed grill or steak house; also *parrillada*

**paseo** – an outing, such as a walk in the park or downtown

**pato** – duck; also a gaucho sport where players on horseback wrestle for a ball encased in a leather harness with handles

**peatonal** – pedestrian mall, usually in the downtown area of major Argentine cities

**pehuén** – araucaria, or 'mon-key puzzle' tree of southern Patagonia

**peña** – club that hosts informal folk-music gatherings

**percha** – perch, also means coathanger

**picada** – in rural areas, a trail, especially through dense woods or mountains; in the context of food, hors d'oeuvres or snacks

**pingüinera** – penguin colony

**piqueteros** – picketers

**piropo** – a flirtatious remark

**piso** – floor

**porteño/a** – inhabitant of Buenos Aires, a 'resident of the port'

**precordillera** – foothills of the Andes

**primera** – 1st class on a train

**Proceso** – short for El Proceso de Reorganización Nacional, the military's euphemism for its brutal attempt to remake Argentina's political and economic culture between 1976 and 1983

**propina** – a tip, for example, in a restaurant or cinema

**pucará** – in the Andean northwest, a pre-Columbian fortification, generally on high ground commanding an unobstructed view in several directions

**pulpería** – a country store or tavern

**puna** – Andean highlands, usually above 3000m

**quebracho** – literally, 'ax-breaker'; tree common to the Chaco that's a natural source of tannin for the leather industry

**quebrada** – a canyon

**quincho** – thatch-roof hut, now often used to refer to a building at the back of a house used for parties

**rambla** – boardwalk

**ranchito** – a rural house, generally of adobe, with a thatched roof

**recargo** – additional charge, usually 10%, that many Argentine businesses add to credit-card transactions

**reducción** – an Indian settlement created by Spanish missionaries during the colonial period; the most famous are the Jesuit missions in the triple-border area of Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil

**refugio** – a usually rustic shelter in a national park or remote area

**remise** – radio taxi without a meter that generally offers fixed fares within a given zone; also *remis*

**riacho** – stream

**ripió** – gravel

**rotisería** – take-out shop

**rotonda** – traffic circle, roundabout

**RN** – Ruta Nacional; a national highway

**RP** – Ruta Provincial; a provincial highway

**ruta** – highway

**s/n** – *sin número*, indicating a street address without a number

**sábalo** – popular river fish in the Paraná drainage

**salar** – salt lake or salt pan, usually in the high Andes or Argentine Patagonia

**samba** – traditional folk dance

**semáforo** – traffic light

**semi-cama** – semisleeper class

**sendero** – a trail in the woods

**servicentro** – gas station

**siesta** – lengthy afternoon break for lunch and, sometimes, a nap

**Subte** – the Buenos Aires subway system

**sur** – south

**surubí** – popular river fish frequently served in restaurants

**tapir** – large hoofed mammal of subtropical forests in northern Argentina and Paraguay; a distant relative of the horse

**tarjeta magnética** – magnetic bus card

**tarjeta telefónica** – telephone card

**tarjeta verde** – 'green card'; title document for Argentine vehicles that drivers must carry

**teleférico** – gondola cable-car

**tenedor libre** – all you can eat

**tola** – high-altitude shrubs in the altiplano of northwestern Argentina

**torrontés** – an Argentine white grape and wine

**trapiche** – sugar mill

**turista** – 2nd class on a train, usually not very comfortable

**vereda** – pathway

**vicuña** – wild relative of domestic llama and alpaca, found in Argentina's Andean northwest only at high altitudes

**vino tinto** – red wine

**vinoteca** – wine bar

**yacaré** – South American caiman, found in humid, subtropical areas

**yungas** – in northwestern Argentina, transitional subtropical lowland forest

**zapateo** – folkloric tap dance

**zona franca** – duty-free zone

**zonda** – a hot, dry wind descending from the Andes

## behind the scenes

### SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK

We love to hear from travelers – your comments keep us on our toes and help make our books better. Our well-traveled team reads every word on what you loved or loathed about this book. Although we cannot reply individually to postal submissions, we always guarantee that your feedback goes straight to the appropriate authors, in time for the next edition. Each person who sends us information is thanked in the next edition – the most useful submissions are rewarded with a selection of digital PDF chapters.

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### This Book

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# how to use this book

## These symbols will help you find the listings you want:

- |            |                    |                       |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Sights     | Tours              | Drinking              |
| Beaches    | Festivals & Events | Entertainment         |
| Activities | Sleeping           | Shopping              |
| Courses    | Eating             | Information/Transport |

## These symbols give you the vital information for each listing:

- |                   |                       |        |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Telephone Numbers | Wi-Fi Access          | Bus    |
| Opening Hours     | Swimming Pool         | Ferry  |
| Parking           | Vegetarian Selection  | Metro  |
| Nonsmoking        | English-Language Menu | Subway |
| Air-Conditioning  | Family-Friendly       | Tram   |
| Internet Access   | Pet-Friendly          | Train  |

## Reviews are organised by author preference.

### Map Legend

#### Sights

- Beach
- Buddhist
- Castle
- Christian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery
- Ruin
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo
- Other Sight

#### Activities, Courses & Tours

- Diving/Snorkelling
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Skiing
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity/Course/Tour

#### Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

#### Eating

- Eating

#### Drinking

- Drinking
- Cafe

#### Entertainment

- Entertainment

#### Shopping

- Shopping

#### Information

- Post Office
- Tourist Information

#### Transport

- Airport
- Border Crossing
- Bus
- Cable Car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro
- Monorail
- Parking
- S-Bahn
- Taxi
- Train/Railway
- Tram
- Tube Station
- U-Bahn
- Other Transport

#### Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed Road
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian Overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour Detour
- Path

#### Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

#### Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

## Look out for these icons:

- Our author's recommendation
- No payment required
- A green or sustainable option

Our authors have nominated these places as demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainability – for example by supporting local communities and producers, operating in an environmentally friendly way, or supporting conservation projects.



### Andy Symington

**Iguazú Falls & the Northeast; Salta & the Andean Northwest** Andy's relationship with Argentina is a story of four generations: his grandmother lived here in the 1920s, and her father had a *mate* plantation in Corrientes province. Andy first visited the country with his own father, the start of a long love affair that has involved many trips all around the continent, a spell living and working in Buenos Aires, and a deep-rooted respect for provincial Argentina. Andy hails from Australia, lives in northern Spain, and has contributed to many Lonely Planet guidebooks.



### Lucas Vidgen

#### Córdoba & the Central Sierras; Mendoza & the Central Andes;

**Bariloche & the Lake District** Lucas first visited Argentina in 2001, and was captivated by the country's wide open spaces and cosmopolitan cities. The huge amounts of quality beef and wine didn't go unnoticed, either. Lucas has contributed to a variety of Latin American Lonely Planet titles including various editions of the *Argentina* and *South America* books. He currently lives in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala where he publishes – and occasionally works on – the city's leading nightlife and culture magazine, XelaWho ([www.xelawho.com](http://www.xelawho.com)).