



# Iguazú Falls & the Northeast

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## Best Parks & Reserves

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## Why Go?

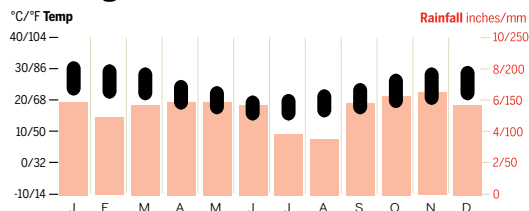
Northeast Argentina is defined by water. Muscular rivers roll through plains that they flood at will, while fragile wetlands support myriad birdlife, snapping caimans and cuddly capybaras. The peaceful Río Iguazú, meandering through jungle between Brazil and Argentina, dissolves in fury and power in the planet's most awe-inspiring waterfalls.

The river then flows into the Paraná, one of the world's mightiest watercourses, which surges southward, eventually forming the Río de la Plata near Buenos Aires. Along it are some of the country's most interesting cities: elegant Corrientes, colonial Santa Fe and booming Rosario, as well as Posadas, gateway to the ruined splendor of the Jesuit missions.

Dotted throughout are excellent parks that represent the region's biological diversity. The Esteros del Iberá harbor a particularly astonishing richness of wildlife.

## When to Go

### Puerto Iguazú



**Feb** Hot weather and flashy Carnival celebrations in Gualeguaychú, Corrientes and Posadas.

**Aug** Cool and dry; good for wildlife-watching as water sources are scarcer.

**Sep & Oct** Moderate temperatures, not too crowded. Iguazú flowing well but flooding and rain less likely.

## ALONG THE RÍO PARANÁ

The mighty Paraná, the continent's second-longest river at 4000km, dominates the geography of Northeast Argentina. The cities along it have their town centers a sensible distance above the shorelines of this flood-prone monster, but have a *costanera* (riverbank) that's the focus of much social life. The river is still important for trade, and large oceangoing vessels ply it to and beyond Rosario, the region's top urban destination.

The Paraná is the demesne of enormous river fish – surubí, dorado and pacu among others – that attract sports fishers from around the world. Their distinctive flavors enliven the menus of the region's restaurants; make sure you try them.

### Rosario

📍 0341 / POP 1.19 MILLION

Birthplace of both the Argentine flag and Che Guevara, Rosario is still an important river port but has done a great job of regenerating its center. The derelict buildings of the long *costanera* (riverbank) have been converted into galleries, restaurants and skate parks, and river beaches and islands buzz with life in summer. The center – a curious mishmash of stunning early-20th-century buildings overshadowed by ugly apartments – has a comfortable, lived-in feel, and the down-to-earth *rosarinos* (people from Rosario) are a delight. All are very proud of Rosario-born-and-bred Lionel Messi, soccer's number-one player.

### History

Rosario's first European inhabitants settled here around 1720. After independence Rosario quickly superseded Santa Fe as the province's economic powerhouse, though, to the irritation of *rosarinos*, the provincial capital retained political primacy.

Rosario was a port of entry for European agricultural colonists and from 1869 to 1914 its population grew nearly tenfold, though a decline of economic and shipping activity during the 1960s hit hard.

Nationalistic Argentines cherish Rosario, home to Cuna de la Bandera (Cradle of the Flag), a monument to the nation's flag.

### 👁 Sights

Though you can't enter, you may want to check out the apartment building at **Entre Ríos 480** (Entre Ríos 480), where the newborn Ernesto 'Che' Guevara had his first home.

### ★ Costanera

WATERFRONT

Rosario's most attractive feature is its waterfront, where what was once derelict warehouses and train tracks has been reclaimed for the fun of the people. It stretches some 15km from its southern end at Parque Urquiza to the city's northern edge, just short of the suspension bridge crossing into Entre Ríos province. It's an appealing place to wander and watch what's going on, from the plentiful birdlife and impromptu *fútbol* games to massive cargo ships surging past on the river.

#### ➔ Costanera Sur

The grassy zone below downtown includes plenty of space for jogging and courting, as well as the **Estación Fluvial** (La Fluvial; 📍 0341-447-3838; [www.estacionfluvial.com](http://www.estacionfluvial.com); 🕒 noon-5pm Mar-Oct, 10am-6pm Nov-Feb) building, offering boat trips and eating and drinking options. Heading further north, you pass various cultural venues before reaching **Parque de España** (Paraná riverbank) and its mausoleum-like edifice. Beyond here is a zone of bars and restaurants that gets lively at weekends, and then the city's contemporary art museum.

#### ➔ Costanera Norte

In summer this strip beginning 5km north of downtown attracts crowds for its beaches. The mediocre public beach of Rambla Catalunya is backed by a promenade and bar-restaurants; beyond, the best beach is **Balneario La Florida** (admission AR\$25; 🕒 9am-8pm Oct-Apr), with services and a safe bathing area. Picturesque stalls behind it sell river fish. The summer-only 'Línea de la Costa' bus heads here from Ríoja/Roca. Otherwise take bus 102N/103N/143N and walk a few blocks east from Blvd Rondeau.

### ★ Monumento Nacional a La Bandera

MONUMENT

([www.monumentoalabandera.gov.ar](http://www.monumentoalabandera.gov.ar); Santa Fe 581; elevator AR\$10; 🕒 9am-6pm Tue-Sun, 2-6pm Mon) Manuel Belgrano, who designed the Argentine flag, rests in a crypt beneath this colossal stone obelisk built where the blue-and-white stripes were first raised. If rampant nationalism isn't your thing, it's nevertheless worth taking the elevator to the top for great views over the waterfront, Paraná and islands. The attractive colonnade houses an eternal flame commemorating those who died for the fatherland.

### ★ Paraná Delta

ISLAND

Rosario sits on the banks of the Río Paraná upper delta, a 60km-wide area of mostly