



Buenos Aires

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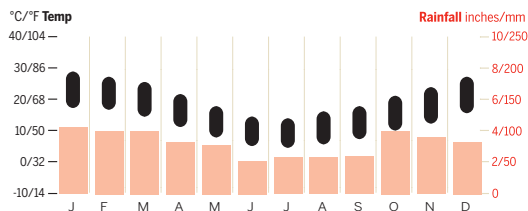
Why Go?

Whip together a beautiful metropolis with gourmet cuisine, awesome shopping and frenzied nightlife – and you get Buenos Aires. It's a rough-hewn mix of Paris' architecture, Rome's traffic and Madrid's late-night hours, all spiked with Latin American flavor. Buenos Aires is cosmopolitan, seductive, emotional, frustrating and chock full of attitude, and there's no other place like it in the world. Seek out classic BA: the old-world cafes, colonial architecture, curious markets and diverse communities. Rub shoulders with Evita at Recoleta's famous cemetery, fill your belly with luscious steaks, dance the sultry tango and take in a crazy *fútbol* (soccer) match. Unforgettable adventures? You'd better believe it.

Everyone knows someone who has been here and raved about it. You've put it off long enough. Come to Buenos Aires and you'll understand why so many people have fallen in love with this amazing city. There's a good chance you'll be one of them.

When to Go

Buenos Aires



Oct–Dec Spring means warm days to drink cocktails outdoors and admire blooming jacarandas.

Aug Winter's peak brings BA's tango festival; or visit museums, art galleries and cultural centers.

Mar–May Explore Buenos Aires in fall and catch the city's Independent Film Festival in April.

Supper Clubs

A hot Buenos Aires trend these days are *puertas cerradas* (closed-door restaurants). These prix-fixe restaurants are usually only open on weekends and are great for meeting fellow diners, since the limited tables are often communal and the atmosphere's intimate. Most won't tell you the address until you make reservations (mandatory, of course). But if you want that feeling of being somewhere 'secret' – and eating special food – these places are highly appealing. For our favorite ones, see p79.

BUENOS AIRES 101

BA is a huge metropolis, but most places of interest are in just a few easily accessible neighborhoods.

The heart of the city is **Microcentro**; it's small enough to walk around fairly easily. Just east is **Puerto Madero**, with scenic docklands and a large ecological park. Further south is **San Telmo**, known for its lovely colonial architecture and Sunday fair. South of here is **La Boca**, famed for colorful houses clad in corrugated metal.

West of the Microcentro sits **Congreso**, BA's seat of politics, boasting some stately buildings. To the north is upscale **Retiro**, home to the city's main train and bus station. And just northwest lie **Recoleta** and **Barrio Norte**, boasting some of BA's most expensive real estate and dotted with art museums, fancy shops and luxurious mansions.

Further north is **Palermo**, an upper-middle-class suburb with spacious parks, plenty of shopping and heaps of restaurants; it's subdivided into the trendy neighborhoods of Palermo Soho, Palermo Hollywood and Las Cañitas, among others. And edging Palermo's borders are **Belgrano** and **Once**, both home to concentrations of ethnic Chinese, Korean, Peruvian and Jewish people.

BA's Ezeiza airport is about 35km south of the center; see p100 for tips on arriving there.

PESKY INFLATION

Be warned: while accurate at print time, prices in this chapter (and book) are likely to rise rapidly. Unofficial inflation rates hover around 25% (officially it's 10%). Check before booking.

Fast Facts

- » Population: 2.8 million
- » Area: 202 sq km
- » Telephone code: 011
- » Per capita meat consumption: 60kg (132lb)

Must-try Foods

- » *Bife de chorizo* – sirloin steak
- » *Dulce de leche* – milk caramel sauce
- » *Empanadas* – baked, savory turnovers
- » *Mate* – a bitter ritual tea
- » *Helado* – the best ice cream in the world

Resources

- » Local journalism: www.goodairs.com
- » Alternative articles and tips: www.landingpadba.com
- » Popular expat website: www.baexpats.org
- » Apartments, jobs, lovers: <http://buenosaires.craigslisr.org>

Top Five BA Splurges

- » Hit the lovely spa at the five-star Four Seasons Hotel (p75)
- » Reserve a seat or two at the closed-door restaurant Casa Mun (p79)
- » Find that perfect Victrola in a San Telmo antiques shop (p97)
- » Set aside a day, head to the countryside and go horseback riding (p66)
- » End your adventures by being driven to the airport in a luxury car (p101)