



The Pampas & the Atlantic Coast

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Best Places to Eat

- » Acqua & Farina (p126)
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- » L'Eau Vive (p112)
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- » Epoca de Quesos (p119)

Best Places to Stay

- » Villa Nuccia (p133)
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Why Go?

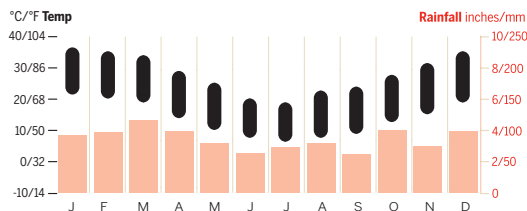
The seemingly endless fertile grasslands that make up the pampas financed Argentina's golden years over a century ago, and the area is still the nation's economic and political powerhouse. Not only does most of Argentina's juicy beef come from here, but the region is also home to 40% of Argentina's voters.

These humble pampas are often overlooked by travelers, but there are hidden gems here and there. A visit to lovely San Antonio de Areco offers a taste of living gaucho culture, while the picturesque hills around Tandil and Sierra de la Ventana offer plenty of opportunities for hiking. And the Atlantic coast's bustling beaches make a great escape from Buenos Aires' summer heat.

You can also spend a few days in one of the region's many historic *estancias* (ranches), where the huge sky and faded elegance of Argentina's past can all be experienced first-hand.

When to Go

Mar del Plata



Jan–Feb Summer means great weather for the beach resorts, though prices and crowds skyrocket.

Oct–Nov & Mar–Apr Spring and fall are fine times to explore Tandil and Sierra de la Ventana.

Early Nov Día de la Tradición – the gaucho celebration – begins in San Antonio de Areco.

NORTHERN PAMPAS

The pampas is both a general term for a large geographic region of fertile plains and the name of the province that lies to the west of Buenos Aires. The pampas grasslands roll southwards from the Río de la Plata to the banks of the Río Negro, stretching west towards the Andes and all the way up to the

southern parts of Córdoba and Santa Fe provinces, taking in the entire Buenos Aires and La Pampa provinces.

The rich soil and lush natural grasses of the northern pampas make it Argentina's best cattle-raising country. The region yields plentiful hides, beef, wool and wheat for global markets, stamping Argentina on the world's economic map.



The Pampas & the Atlantic Coast Highlights

1 Soak up the sun and crowds in the Atlantic Coast's largest city, **Mar del Plata** (p128)

2 Peek through a natural rock 'window' atop the mountain **Cerro de la Ventana** (p121)

3 Go gaucho in **San Antonio de Areco** (p112), the prettiest town in the pampas

4 Sample some country life – and deli meats and cheese – in pleasant **Tandil** (p115)

5 Go windsurfing, kiteboarding or cycling in the beach resort of **Pinamar** (p125)

6 Explore the lagoon, spot flamingos or just chill out in **Mar Chiquita** (p129)

7 Join the masses on their holy pilgrimage to **Luján** (p110)