

DAY TRIPS

DAY TRIPS

Buenos Aires can occupy many enjoyable days' worth of your hard-earned vacation, but when you tire of the big city's noise, concrete and busyness there's a handful of destinations within a few hours' travel that will sweep you into completely different worlds. After all, porteños themselves eagerly take the opportunity to get away from their beloved city on long weekend stretches, but do so especially during their summer vacations – when Buenos Aires resembles Paris in summertime, and it's mainly the overheated tourists dragging their way through the hot and humid streets.

Most of the following trips can be done in a day, but a few are best for in-depth exploration if you have the time to spare. Among your getaway choices you can take a laid-back boat ride along the murky estuaries of Tigre's backwaters, find peaceful town walks in San Isidro or San Antonio de Areco, wander through Colonia's fine colonial architecture or join the summertime hordes at Punta del Este's sunny beaches. Montevideo (Uruguay's capital) sports its own style but is a much less frenetic city than BA, while Luján is a must for those interested in the Christian religion. For more information on the mind-blowing Cataratas de Iguazú – which are not to be missed if you have even the smallest chance of visiting them – see [p203](#).

NATURE

Your best bet for peaceful greenery and river-side views is the delta surrounding [Tigre \(p200\)](#). Only an hour or so away from the center of Buenos Aires, this city provides easy access to the tranquil waterways of the spreading Delta del Paraná. There are no roads in this watery region; instead you'll find boat trips that access summer getaway homes and peaceful nature walks.

CITIES & TOWNS

[San Isidro \(p204\)](#), just north of BA's center, is an upscale suburb offering historical buildings and calm neighborhoods. The devotional center of [Luján \(p205\)](#) to the west provides an interesting look into the Catholic heart of Argentina, while Buenos Aires province's gaucho hub is the serene village of [San Antonio de Areco \(p206\)](#). [Montevideo \(p212\)](#) is Uruguay's capital and lies across the Río de la Plata, but it's easily accessible from downtown BA by ferry; it has a smaller-city feel, a distinct vibe and plenty of old European architecture worth checking out. Also in Uruguay and equally accessible is [Colonia \(p209\)](#), a pleasant little colonial gem with cobbled streets and charming buildings.

BEACHES

[Punta del Este \(p215\)](#) is the ritzy beach destination for many summering Argentines, providing plenty of sun, sand and stars – celebrities, that

is. It fills to the brim January through March, when most porteños flee overheated Buenos Aires, but is much calmer (and less expensive) outside these peak months.

TIGRE & THE DELTA

Only an hour's drive from BA, tranquil Tigre and its huge river delta make a popular weekend getaway for cement-weary porteños. And while Tigre itself is a pleasant enough riverside town, it's really the swampy waterways that everyone is after. Latte-colored waters – rich with iron from the jungle streams flowing from inland Argentina – alongside reedy shores are far from any stereotypical paradise, but there are a few surprises here. Boat rides into the delta offer peeks at local houses and colonial mansions, or you can just get off and explore some nature trails. All along the shores are signs of water-related activity, from sailing, kayaking and canoeing to sculling and even wakeboarding.

Tigre itself is easily walkable and holds some worthy attractions. Check out the [Puerto de Frutos](#) (Sarmiento 160; ☎ 10am–6pm), where housewares, furniture, wicker baskets, dried flowers, plants and a whole lot of kitsch are sold. Friday to Sunday is best, when a large crafts fair sets up; there are several restaurants too. To reach the market from the Tren de la Costa's Delta station, walk past the casino back down the tracks and turn left at the stoplight. There's a tourist office at the entrance to the port.