

# The Center

MICROCENTRO | MONTSEERRAT

## Neighborhood Top Five

**1** Hanging out at **Plaza de Mayo** (p58), steeped in history and surrounded by some of Buenos Aires' most important buildings, including the main cathedral, the Cabildo, the Museo del Bicentenario and – last but not least – Casa Rosada, where Argentina's president's office is located.

**2** Strolling down **Calle Florida** (p69) to see BA's hustle and bustle at its most intense.

**3** Shopping at **Galerías Pacífico** (p61), a beautiful shopping mall with an amazing painted ceiling.

**4** Visiting historic **Manzana de las Luces** (p62), a symbol of the city's culture and higher learning.

**5** Taking a break at **Café Tortoni** (p67), one of BA's most traditional – and touristy – cafes.



For more detail of this area see Map p236 ➔

## Explore: the Center

During the day, the Center is a heaving mass of humanity moving hastily along narrow streets in the shadow of skyscrapers and old European buildings – but in the evening, it's practically deserted. Stretching from Retiro to San Telmo (and flanked by Congreso and Puerto Madero), this area is the heart and brain of the city. It's made up of the Microcentro and Montserrat neighborhoods.

Plaza de Mayo is a good place to start. Here you'll see the Casa Rosada presidential palace, with the Museo del Bicentenario right behind it; plan ahead if you want to visit, as it's closed Monday and Tuesday. The Cathedral Metropolitana is nearby – stop by for a Pope Francis souvenir – and the Cabildo has a nice back patio that's good for a break. If you want to see the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, time your visit for Thursday afternoon (p70).

From here you can head south just one block, crossing over into Montserrat, and visit the Manzana de las Lucas, a city block full of historic buildings. There are also a couple of small but interesting museums to visit around here. Further south a few more blocks is San Telmo (p86).

If you're going north, walk on Calle Florida. This very busy pedestrian street is packed during the day with business men and women, street vendors, tourists, beggars, buskers and hustlers. Every few feet you'll hear *arbolitos* (street money changers, called 'little trees' because they stand in place) chanting '*cambio, cambio, cambio*'. Use their services at your own risk! If you prefer more peace, Reconquista and Suipacha are also pedestrian.

## Local Life

➔ **Shopping** Pedestrian streets Florida and Lavalle are lined with shops and services, and there's great people-watching too.

➔ **Hanging out** Stop for a cup of coffee or – if it's later – a stiff drink at one of the many downtown cafes and bars, alongside locals who're taking a break.

➔ **Tango** True aficionados head to historic Confitería Ideal (p68) for classes, shows and *milongas* (dance events).

## Getting There & Away

➔ **Bus** Take bus 29 from San Telmo; 29, 64 and 152 from La Boca; 59 from Recoleta; 29, 59, 64 and 152 from Palermo's Plaza Italia.

➔ **Subte** Nearly all Subte lines radiate from the Center, going either north-south from Retiro to San Telmo, or towards Palermo and other points west.

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Because there are so many business people in the Center, many restaurants offer *menu ejecutivos* – or lunch specials – to attract this valuable clientele. These set lunches are offered weekdays and usually consist of a main course with dessert and drink, all for a reasonable fixed price. Sometimes an appetizer is included as well. It's a good way to try out otherwise pricey restaurants.

Parts of downtown can be a bit sketchy at night, so tread carefully.

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Tomo 1 (p66)
- ➔ Aldo's Vinoteca (p66)
- ➔ Granix (p66)

For reviews, see p63 ➔

## Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Café Tortoni (p67)
- ➔ La Cigale (p67)
- ➔ London City (p67)

For reviews, see p67 ➔

## Best Museums

- ➔ Museo del Bicentenario (p60)
- ➔ Museo de la Ciudad (p63)
- ➔ Museo Etnográfico Juan B Ambrosetti (p63)

For reviews, see p61 ➔