

San Telmo



Neighborhood Top Five

- ❶ Jostling with fellow shoppers at the Sunday **Feria de San Telmo** (p95), where vendors sell all manner of goods, and buskers and tango dancers compete for your spare change.
- ❷ Taking a break in peaceful **Plaza Dorrego** (p88) – when it's *not* a Sunday.
- ❸ Exploring the reconstructed tunnels at **El Zanjón de Granados** (p89).
- ❹ Visiting the **Museo Histórico Nacional** (p89) at historic Parque Lezama.
- ❺ Strolling cobbled streets and taking in old-time atmosphere at places like **Plaza de la Defensa** (p89).

Explore: San Telmo

Two central thoroughfares in this barrio are Balcarce and Defensa; they're where you'll find most things of interest to travelers.

Everyone is drawn to Plaza Dorrego, the heart and soul of San Telmo. It's a nice leafy place to snag an outdoor table under an umbrella and have a coffee or full meal (though on Sundays the *feria* takes over and tables disappear). Sometimes tango dancers provide entertainment for a few pesos, though you can also be hassled for spare change by beggars or asked to buy items by roving vendors. Keep a good hold of your bag, just in case.

Generally everything of interest is reachable by walking in this neighborhood. From Plaza Dorrego you can stroll up or down the main drag of Defensa, window-shopping for pricey antiques or trendy new trinkets along the way. Several museums are also on or just off this street. If you head south, you'll hit Parque Lezama, a local park where families hang out at the playground and lovers smooch on benches. Heading north, you can be in the Plaza de Mayo area in 15 minutes.

The adventurous can walk further south down busy Av Almirante Brown to La Boca (note: this will take you along the gritty edges of this blue-collar neighborhood).

Local Life

➔ **Markets** Explore the Mercado de San Telmo (p96) to get a dose of history and a feel for how the locals buy their meats and vegetables.

➔ **Hangouts** Classic cafés like Bar Plaza Dorrego (p92), Bar El Federal (p91) and La Poesia (p92) drip with traditional atmosphere and old-time locals taking in their morning *medialunas* (croissants) or afternoon coffee breaks.

➔ **Games** Like chess? Then head to Parque Lezama (p89) and find the cluster of chess tables there – and, if you dare, make a challenge.

Getting There & Away

➔ **Bus** Take bus 59 from Recoleta and Palermo, bus 29 from La Boca, Plaza de Mayo and Palermo.

➔ **Subte** Línea C connects the western edge of San Telmo with the Center, Congreso and Retiro.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

On Sundays the *feria* (street market) is full-on, which means tons of people are visiting and you'll need to watch for pickpockets and over-charging more carefully. On the other hand, it's a fun time to be in the neighborhood and the museums and most stores are all open. For more peace, visit San Telmo from Monday to Saturday, especially to sit at one of Plaza Dorrego's outdoor tables.

East of Balcarce the streets become industrial and, along with the more southern edges toward La Boca, should probably be avoided at night. During the day they're fine, however, and provide access to Puerto Madero.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Café San Juan (p91)
- ➔ Casal de Catalunya (p91)
- ➔ Origen Café (p91)

For reviews, see p91 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Bar Plaza Dorrego (p92)
- ➔ Doppelgänger (p92)
- ➔ Gibraltar (p92)

For reviews, see p92 ➔

Best Shopping

- ➔ Feria de San Telmo (p95)
- ➔ Materia Urbana (p95)
- ➔ Puntos en el Espacio (p95)

For reviews, see p95 ➔