



Argentina

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Why Go?

With its gorgeous landscapes, cosmopolitan cities and lively culture, Argentina is a traveler's paradise. It stretches almost 3500km from Bolivia to the tip of South America, encompassing a wide array of geography and climates. Nature lovers can traverse the Patagonian steppe, climb South America's highest peak, walk among thousands of penguins and witness the world's most amazing waterfalls. Hikers can sample the stunning scenery of the lush Lake District – with its glorious lakes and white-tipped mountains – and revel in Patagonia's glacier-carved landscapes and painted Andean deserts. City slickers will adore fabulous Buenos Aires, where they can dance the sexy tango, shop for designer clothes, sample a wide range of ethnic cuisine and party at nightclubs all night long.

Argentina is a safe, friendly and spirited destination to explore. Now is a great time to visit, so get your spirit in gear and prepare for an unforgettable adventure!

Best Places to Eat

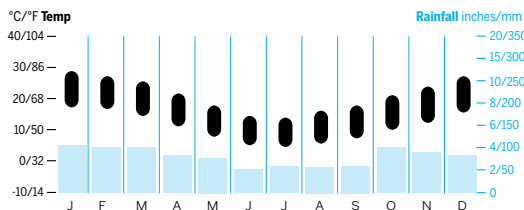
- » Sarkis (p55)
- » La Nieta (p88)
- » Don José (p102)
- » Kalma Resto (p153)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hostel Alamo (p118)
- » Rusty-K Hostal (p95)
- » La Casona de Odile (p135)
- » Nothofagus B&B (p147)

When to Go

Buenos Aires



Dec–Feb Best for Patagonia and beaches. Buenos Aires and the north are hot.

Mar–May & Sep–Nov Great months for Buenos Aires, the Lake District and Mendoza.

Jun–Aug Peak ski season. A good time to visit the north. Beaches shut down.

Connections

Buenos Aires is linked by air to most other country capitals in South America. Overland, Argentina has a few border crossings each with Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay, and many, many border crossings with Chile. Generally, border formalities are straightforward if your documents are in order. When crossing into Chile by air or land, don't take fresh fruits or vegetables (even in sandwiches), dairy products or meat; fines are steep.

ITINERARIES

Two Weeks

Spend your first few days taking in Buenos Aires, then head to Mendoza (for wine tasting and outdoor adventures) and Bariloche (for hiking in summer and skiing in winter). If you love summertime hiking, however, make the Patagonian hamlet of El Chaltén your priority instead; once here you can't miss the nearby destination of El Calafate for its amazing Perito Moreno glacier.

One Month

Seeing all of Argentina in one month will likely require a few key airplane flights. Or, depending on the season you'll be there, concentrate on the north or south. First, take a few days to explore the wonders of Buenos Aires. Spectacular Iguazú Falls is worth a couple of days any time of year. Colonial Salta is best April to November, while Córdoba, Mendoza and the Lake District can be visited year-round. Some Patagonian destinations, such as El Chaltén and Ushuaia, have limited services from June to August (except for skiing).

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Beef** Argentines have perfected grilling beef, instilling a smoky, salty outer layer to their delectable steaks
- » **Wine** Exploring Argentina by the glass will take you from the malbecs of Mendoza to the *torrontés* of Cafayate to the syrahs of San Juan
- » **Maté** Although most first-time maté drinkers can barely choke the stuff down, this bitter, grassy tea is an important social bonding experience
- » **Ice cream** Argentina makes some of the world's best *helado*, swirled into a miniature peaked mountain with a spoon stuck in the side
- » **Italian food** You'll find pizza and pasta at so many restaurants, it's a wonder the locals can consume it all
- » **Dulce de leche** Argentina has turned milk and sugar into the world's best caramel sauce; find it in most of the country's sweetest concoctions

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Argentine peso (AR\$)
- » **Language** Spanish
- » **Money** ATMs wide-spread; credit cards at higher-end places
- » **Visas** Usually not required; some countries pay a 'reciprocity fee'
- » **Time** GMT minus three hours

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 2.8 million sq km
- » **Population** 42 million
- » **Capital** Buenos Aires
- » **Emergency** ☑101
- » **Country code** ☑54

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	AR\$5.2
Canada	C\$1	AR\$5.0
Euro zone	€1	AR\$6.6
New Zealand	NZ\$1	AR\$4.2
UK	UK£1	AR\$7.6
USA	US\$1	AR\$5.1

Set Your Budget

- » **Hostel bed** AR\$70-90, doubles AR\$200-350
- » **Two-course evening meal** AR\$60-70
- » **Beer in a bar** AR\$30
- » **Four-hour bus ticket** AR\$100

Resources

- » **Blogs** (www.bloggersinargentina.blogspot.com)
- » **News** (www.argentinaindependent.com)
- » **Politics, culture, economy** (www.argentinepost.com)