

# Understand Buenos Aires

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Buenos Aires isn't all about tango. The city is also represented by rock, folk, jazz and electronica.

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Art runs rampant in Buenos Aires, from sophisticated street graffiti to abstract installations. And BA's gorgeous European and modern architecture often surprises newcomers.

# Buenos Aires Today

Whether life in Buenos Aires is on the up or not depends on who you ask. In 2015 a new president was sworn in after 12 years under the Kirchners, signaling a significant shift to the political center. For many, Mauricio Macri's victory was a welcome change; others were distraught at the defeat of *Kirchnerismo*. And while homelessness and unemployment in the capital are on the increase, there is a feeling of optimism among many. After all, *porteños* are nothing if not resilient.

## Best on Film

**La historia oficial** (*The Official Story*; 1985) Oscar-winning film on the military dictatorship.

**Nueve reinas** (*Nine Queens*; 2000) Two con men chasing the big score.

**El secreto de sus ojos** (*The Secret in Their Eyes*; 2009) 2010 Oscar-winning thriller.

**Pizza, birra, faso** (*Pizza, Beer, Cigarettes*; 1998) Four BA gangster youths try to survive on the city streets.

**Esperando la Carroza** (*Waiting for the Hearse*; 1985) Cult comedy about a *porteña* family.

## Best in Print

**Kiss of the Spider Woman** (Manuel Puig; 1976) Two prisoners and their developing relationship in a Buenos Aires prison.

**The Tango Singer** (Tomás Eloy Martínez; 2006) An American graduate student travels to Buenos Aires and tracks down a legendary tango singer.

**The Aleph** (Jorge Luis Borges; 1974) Collection of short stories set in the author's home city.

**And the Money Kept Rolling In (and Out)** (Paul Blustein; 2005) How the IMF helped bankrupt Argentina.

**On Heroes and Tombs** (Ernesto Sábato; 1961) A complex plunge into Buenos Aires' society, aristocracy and family dynamics in the 1950s.

## Enter Macri

Since narrowly winning the 2015 presidential election as the candidate for *Cambiamos* (Let's Change'), a coalition of three political parties, Mauricio Macri has set about implementing his plans to encourage foreign investment, a pro-business, free-market reform stance that sets him apart from his leftist, pro-government predecessor.

Macri had been Buenos Aires' mayor since 2007 and was a former president of the Boca Juniors soccer club. His victory came on the back of his promise to improve international relations and loosen economic controls; for many *porteños* (residents of Buenos Aires), it was Macri's pledge to relax restrictions on the buying of US dollars that decided their vote. President Obama's visit to Buenos Aires in March 2016 made him the first US president to hold high-level talks with an Argentine leader for 20 years, and was a great boost for Macri less than six months into his presidential term.

But already, *porteños* are feeling the pinch of Macri's policies, particularly the end of government subsidies of utility bills. Sky-rocketing heat and electricity bills, and rising unemployment, have dampened any optimism surrounding the new political order, and only time will tell if Argentina's new president can kick-start the sluggish economy. Argentina's problems of high inflation and economic instability may not be over just yet.

## A Taste of the Future

Despite a discouraging economy and a downturn in tourism in the last few years, Buenos Aires' culinary culture continues to evolve. Intrepid young chefs are providing creative twists to the restaurant scene with relatively new-to-BA concepts such as molecular gastronomy. Chefs Gonzalo Aramburu at Aramburu