

# BIG FIVE

TOURS & EXPEDITIONS



# Argentina

## Travel Guide

The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions, and answers to some frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be the definitive guide for your trip.  
**Be sure to check the reading listing included here for more information.**

***“Heroes take journeys, confront dragons, and discover the treasure of their true selves.”***

***--Carol Pearson***

Argentina is still known as “Land of the Gaucho.” Of all South American countries, it is most reminiscent of the United States. Visitors often are amazed to find that Argentina is not just a vast prairie peopled by cowboys on horseback. Argentina is a nation of superlatives - the most sophisticated capital city, Buenos Aires; the highest agricultural production, the greatest degree of industrialization, the highest consumption of beef, the highest literacy rate, and the largest number of European immigrants.

The second largest country in South America, Argentina is bordered on the north by Bolivia, on the northeast by Paraguay, on the east by Brazil, the Atlantic Ocean and Uruguay, and on the west by Chile. Argentina has enormous variations in climate and geography, from the northern jungles of the Chico region to the temperate climate of the central pampas to the frigid zone of Patagonia in the south. The Argentine people are predominantly of European origin. People of Indian-European descent make up only about two percent of the population, and there is virtually no black or pure Indian population.

About two-thirds of the people live in Buenos Aires, and the surrounding Pampas region. Other urban centers and points of interest include Mendoza at the foot of the high Andes in the west, Bariloche in the Lake District near Chile, Mar del Plata and Peninsula Valdez on the Atlantic coast, and Iguassu Falls on the Border with Brazil.

### **WEATHER**

Comprising almost the entire southern half of South America, Argentina is the world's eighth largest country, covering an area of 2.8 million square km. Argentina possesses some of the world's tallest mountains, most expansive deserts, and impressive waterfalls. The terrain ranges from wild, remote areas in southern Patagonia to the bustling metropolis of Buenos Aires in the north. Its climates vary widely as well from sub-tropical in the north to temperate in the densely populated central zone to cold temperate in Tierra del Fuego.

The winter months of June, July and August are best for a business visit; though spring weather in Buenos Aires is often very pleasant indeed. The skiing season in Bariloche ends by August 30th. Corrientes and Misiones provinces are wet in August and September. *Generally speaking, you will need to dress in layers in many areas of Argentina to be comfortable. This allows you to subtract or add, according to your needs.*

On the next few pages is an overview of climate in some of the more popular regions of Argentina.



**Buenos Aires:** Seasons in Buenos Aires are exactly opposite of those in North America: Summer runs December-February, and winter is June-August. From mid-December to the end of February, Buenos Aires can be oppressively hot and humid, with temperatures ranging from 27 C (80 F) to 35 C (95 F), and an average humidity of 70%. The climate seems increasingly to be melding into one long warm-to-hot season and one shorter cool-to-cold season.

Buenos Aires summers are hot (averaging 82 F/28 C) and humid, with few cool evenings. Winters are mild (averaging 40 F/5 C), but there can be at least a couple of very cold and wet weeks. Rain can hit any time of the year. *Dress according to season, and casual but neat in the city.*

Buenos Aires, Argentina												
Elevation: 66 feet			Latitude: 34 49S				Longitude: 058 32W					
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	75	73	69	62	56	51	50	53	56	61	66	72
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	4.2	4	4	3.3	3.1	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.4	4	3.6	3.3

**Iguassu Falls (Iguaçu):** The best time to visit Iguassu Falls is August to October when temperatures are lower and the spring colors are at their brightest. Rain falls year round, dropping about 80 inches annually. Summer temperatures (January-February) usually range in the high 90's to low 100's. Winter temperatures (June-August) drop considerably. *Please note that when visiting the falls, you will need rain gear and boots/shoes with good tread as wet surfaces are slippery. Also, it rains year round in the region so you'll need to be prepared for it with the proper clothing such as a packable rain poncho. You will also want to have a second pair of dry shoes to change into. Also, bring plastic bags to keep camera gear and other items dry.*

Iguassu, Argentina												
Elevation: 886 feet			Latitude: 25 44S				Longitude: 054 28W					
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	79	80	77	72	66	61	63	64	67	72	75	78
Average Number of Days With Precipitation												
Days	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	7	7	6	7	7	8	7	7	8	8	9	7

**Salta:** Salta city is the capital city of the homonymous province. Lying on Lerma a Valley, the city is situated in one of the most fertile and nicest sites ever created in this region. It is located at 1,187 meters above sea level, at the bottom of 20 de Febrero and San Bernardo Hills. Summer is mild and Winter is warm and dry, registering an annual average temperature of 22°C which makes the city an ideal place to live or visit.

Salta, Argentina												
Elevation: 3988 feet			Latitude: 24 51S				Longitude: 065 29W					
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	71	69	68	63	58	53	53	56	59	66	69	71
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	6.9	5.9	4.3	1.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	1	2.4	5

**Mendoza:** Argentina's wines are growing in popularity, and most of the vineyards and wine industry are located in Mendoza province. Besides wine tasting, scenic sights and festivals, Mendoza provides year-round sports: skiing, of course, at Los Molles and Las Leñas, white water rafting and kayaking on the very fast Río Mendoza; climbing, hiking and trekking on Cerro Aconcagua and other peaks and foothills, paragliding from 2997-foot Cerro Arco, horseback riding, fishing, and wildlife watching. Mendoza has a predominantly continental climate being template, dry and with only a few cloudy days. Temperatures never exceed 97° F in summer. Temperature rises considerably after noon, thus resulting in warm afternoons in winter and hot ones in summer. The hottest month is January, with an average high of near 90° F and an average low of 65° F. The coldest days occur in July, when average temperatures range from 35° F to 60° F. Rain is usually scarce and mostly in summer as short but strong storms. The rainiest month is January and the driest are May and August. Strong winter frosts take place in fall and winter, when temperatures may drop to even 26° F. Southwestern winds prevail in the area. The most typical wind is called Zonda, a dusty and dry wind blowing only in August and originating in the west. When Zonda is blowing, temperature rises and humidity drops to 0% but it is of great help to clear the air. After Zonda blows the classical southern wind features humid and cold gusts.

Mendoza, Argentina												
Elevation: 2309 feet			Latitude: 32 50S				Longitude: 068 47W					
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	77	75	71	63	55	48	48	52	57	65	71	76
Average Number of Days With Precipitation												
Days	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	10	8	8	5	5	5	6	4	6	5	7	9

**Trelew:** Since it is situated in the lower valley of the river Chubut, Trelew possesses a mild dry weather. During the winter, temperatures oscillate between 0°C and 15°C, for what it is advisable to count on thick clothes if you wish to visit the city during this period. In spring and fall temperatures oscillate from 10°C to 20°C. In summer, between December and March, temperatures reach 38°C, for what we advise not to forget the swimming suit, the sun screen and some warm clothes for the evenings when the temperature descends.

Trelew, Argentina												
Elevation: 131 feet			Latitude: 43 14S			Longitude: 065 19W						
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	70	69	64	56	49	45	45	47	52	58	62	68
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	0.2	1.1	1.1	1	0.5	0.4	2.1	0.3	1.2	0.3	0.5	0.3

**Bariloche (Patagonia Alpine Lake District):** Lush rain forests receive more than three times as much moisture (snow and rain) annually than the Amazon. Skiers come from July to early September; deer hunters from March to April; and trout fishermen from November to April. Nature lovers who like to boat on mountain lakes prefer late November for spring wildflowers or April, when strands of yellow and red beech transform the dense green forests. Summer temperatures can get up into the high 70's, but most of the year, temperatures range from 30's to 60's. *Dress according to season, but be prepared for wet weather with a packable rain poncho and a spare pair of dry shoes.*

San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina												
Elevation: 2755 feet			Latitude: 41 09S			Longitude: 071 10W						
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	59	58	54	47	42	38	37	39	43	47	52	56
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	1	1	1.6	2.4	5.9	6.1	5.7	4.5	2.5	1.6	1.1	1.3

**El Calafate:** The weather is dry with about 12 inches of rain a year. In the National Park, situated to the west, the rains are rich (1500 mm a year). It's located at an equivalent latitude to that of the city of London in the north hemisphere.

**Coastal Deserts:** Located on the infamous Roaring Forties, as sailors refer to the southern latitude, Patagonia is subject to westerly storms roar across the Pacific and batter the coast throughout the year. Thirty-mile-per-hour winds are common, and winds of 100 miles per hour are not uncommon. Summer daytime temperatures are in the low 80's but can drop suddenly to the 50's; winter temperatures hover around freezing. Winter waters are rough until spring.

This area south of Puerto Montt and Chiloé covers about 30% of the total land area of Chile. It is a rugged, mountainous area of tremendous beauty. Westerly winds and storms often drop enormous amounts of snow and rain on the seaward slopes.

In the Magallanes and Tierra del Fuego areas, temperatures in summer average 52°F, but dampness and wind chill can make it feel cooler. The weather year-round is highly unpredictable, and in summer be prepared for incessant winds that do lessen in the winter. In the shoulder season months - November and March - you are likely to find the winds not as strong as they are during the peak of summer. *You will need to be prepared with layers of well-insulated cold-weather clothing and boots/shoes and rain gear. Be prepared for sudden drops in temperature.*

El Calafate, Argentina												
Elevation: 730 feet			Latitude: 50 20S			Longitude: 072 16W						
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	55	55	50	45	39	35	34	36	41	47	50	54
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	0.7	0.6	0.9	1	1	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5

**Ushuaia (South Patagonia, Ushuaia & Rio Gallegos):** Region includes a still-growing glacier and the southernmost town in the world. Windy, milder temperatures than one would expect so close to Antarctica -- from the 20's to the 40's in winter, and summers in the 40's and 60's. There is a moderate precipitation. Chunks of glaciers fall into southern lakes throughout the summer thaw from October to the end of April. The biggest spectacle comes at the end of March when one of the higher lakes ruptures through the blue ice dam of Periot Moreno Glacier, shattering gigantic pieces of ice in its path, but this happens only once every two or three years. *Dress according to season. Make sure you have adequate well-insulated clothing and sturdy hiking boots/shoes.*

Ushuaia, Argentina												
Elevation: 10 feet			Latitude: 54 49S			Longitude: 068 19W						
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	49	49	46	40	36	32	32	34	38	43	45	47
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	2	2.6	1.9	2.1	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.9

## TIME ZONE & FLIGHT TIME

Argentina is about three hours behind Greenwich Mean Time, which is about two hours ahead of Eastern Time in North America.

**Flight Times:** Flying time from Miami to Buenos Aires is approximately nine hours, while the return trip is approximately nine and a half hours.

## PASSPORTS / VISAS

For international travel, a U.S. passport valid for at least six months from date of departure, containing at least two blank pages is necessary. U.S. and Canadian citizens do not require visas in advance. Citizens from other countries, consult the nearest Argentina(a) consulate.

**Important:** Please look at your passport prior to travel to insure that:

1) Your passport is valid for at least six months after the date of travel.

2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa stamps that will be added as you travel in and out of various countries.

**Please note:** Pages reserved for amendments and endorsements cannot be used for visas.

## AIRPORT FORMALITIES

**From U.S. To Argentina:** Argentina has several international airports, and you will generally fly into one of these – Buenos Aires, Mendoza, Bariloche, Rosario, Cordoba, depending on your itinerary and carrier. You may also arrive into Buenos Aires via hydrofoil from Uruguay. Please refer to your trip itinerary for more details.

Upon arrival in Argentina, proceed through Customs and Immigration. After obtaining your luggage, exit the airport. If you have booked a complete package with Big Five tours, a representative will be holding a sign identifying you or him/her. We recommend you change money at airports, hotels, or local banks.

## TAXES & INTERNATIONAL DEPARTURE TAX

Argentina's departure tax is approximately US\$18. For flights to Montevideo (Uruguay) and regional flights, the departure tax is US\$8. Passengers in transit and children under two years of age are exempt. Visitors are advised to check with their airline or travel agent as the departure tax is subject to frequent changes. There is also an immigration tax of US\$10 on all international flights.

Always ask for a receipt; it is mandatory. Be sure you have the exact change. All taxes are subject to change without notice. Credit cards or travelers checks are not accepted.

## CUSTOMS

Visitors arriving from countries other than those bordering Argentina are exempt from all taxes on traveling articles and new articles with a value not more than US\$300 with an additional US\$300 allowed if items are purchased in the duty free shops within the national territory.

## U.S. CUSTOMS

Returning U.S. residents are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. Regulations frequently change. You can write the U.S. Customs Service at Box

7407, Washington, DC 20044, or go to the U.S. Bureau of Customs website at: [www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/home.xml](http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/home.xml).

## LUGGAGE

**Traveling light is always the first and best rule!** We recommend passengers limit their luggage to one medium-sized soft bag per person or two small duffle bags. In this security conscious era, airline luggage restrictions may change without notice. Also, luggage limits vary depending on ticket class, plane size, destinations, etc. It is always best to confirm with airlines for specific limitations.

Generally speaking, from the US, economy class passengers are currently allowed to check in two (2) normal size pieces of luggage (each piece measuring no more than about 62 linear inches, which means length plus width plus height), and not exceeding 70 pounds per bag.

Scheduled flights from other countries and within foreign countries generally limit luggage to 44 pounds total, plus one carry-on personal item. Further restrictions may apply for charter flights. This will vary according to destination. We will advise you of those restrictions in your final documents. Note that flights within Argentina are strictly limited to 15 kgs (33 lbs) for checked luggage.

Most airlines now allow only one carry-on bag in addition to one personal item such as a laptop or handbag. Most bags within the 22 x 14 x 9 (or, a total of 45 linear inches) size restriction will be considered legal carry-on size by major domestic U.S. airlines. Many US airlines check-in desks have sizing boxes within which your bag must fit. Obviously, no knives or cutting instruments are allowed in carry-on baggage.

**All luggage should have identification inside as well as secure baggage tags on the outside.**

*Please note that the US National Transportation and Safety Board now suggests that you do not lock your checked luggage. If a screener has to open your bag, the locks may have to be broken. This applies to flights within the US and international flights originating in the US. This, however, does not address other international travel issues. We suggest that you lock your luggage and bring a couple of spare locks in the event one or more are cut off. But the choice is up to each individual traveler to make.*

## HEALTH

**General Information:** Visitors should be in generally good health. If you wear contact lenses or glasses, we suggest you bring an extra pair and cleaning fluid. Please be sure to take a sufficient supply of any prescription medicines with you and any over-the-counter items you feel necessary. Prescription medicines should always be carried in their original containers in your hand luggage.

Many people traveling for any length of time in Latin America are likely to have occasional, mild stomach upsets. But if you take appropriate precautions before, during and after your trip, it is unlikely that you will become seriously ill. Sudden dietary changes, especially on the first day or two, may result in digestive problems, often leading to headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Please be careful.

**Altitude Sickness:** Altitudes above 8,000 feet may cause some degree of altitude sickness, ranging mild to severe. Symptoms may include digestive problems, light dizziness, headache, vomiting, and sleeplessness. We recommend that you only eat light foods the first day or two, and avoid alcohol.

**Inoculations:** At the time of this writing, no inoculations are required for entry into Argentina except for passengers coming from countries where cholera and yellow fever are endemic. Malaria prophylaxis is recommended, for passengers traveling to the rural areas of Iruya, Oran, San Martin, Santa Victoria Dep. (Salto Province), Ledesma, San Pedro and Santa Barbara Dep. (Jujuy Province). Talk with your personal physician about any shots or boosters that are recommended depending on your personal health profile.

Although the Argentine authorities do not, at present, require anyone to have an up-to-date international vaccination card to enter the country, carrying a copy of your immunization records and prescriptions is always sensible when traveling.

**Current risks:** Hepatitis A and *intestinal parasitosis* are widespread in rural areas. Both *cutaneous* and *muco-cutaneous leishmaniasis* occur. There is some risk of *dengue fever* and *anthrax*. *Rabies* is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If bitten, seek medical advice without delay. *Yellow fever* may occur in epidemics in forested areas (northeast only), but it is very rare. Precautions against *cholera* are advised; some cases were reported in 1996. Up-to-date advice should be sought before deciding whether these precautions should include vaccination as medical opinion is divided over its effectiveness. *Typhoid fever* is not common but a risk exists. *Malaria* risk, exclusively in the benign vivax form is low and exists in pockets in the provinces of Salta, Jujuy, Misiones and Corrientes. Protection in the form of 300mg of chloroquine prophylaxis administered weekly is advised.

*Consult your personal physician and / or the Center of Disease Control in Atlanta, for any recommended general and / or specific health measures at the time of travel. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta has a fax information service with updated travel information. To receive these documents, call 404-332-4565 and follow the prompts. You can also get information on the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/).*

**Insurance:** We recommended each passenger acquire travel insurance prior to foreign travel.

**Medical facilities:** Medical facilities are generally of a high standard, though of varying quality outside Buenos Aires. Immediate cash payment is often expected by doctors.

## **SAFETY**

Common sense safety precautions you normally observe when traveling anywhere should be followed to minimize the risk of personal injury or property loss.

**Leave jewelry at home!** Do not leave cash, traveler checks, airline tickets, passports, etc. in an unattended room, even in a locked suitcase. Most lodges, hotels, and camps have safe deposit facilities at the front desk for your valuables. Use them. Be careful when carrying purses or cameras. Do not carry large amounts of currency or valuables. Do not walk around unfamiliar cities alone at night. Be wary of entering into conversation with unknown people on the street. These are the same precautions a visitor would observe in North American cities.

Zippered compartments of backpacks are excellent targets in the downtown area of San Jose. It's best not to wear backpacks on your back. Don't carry a lot of packages at once. Purses should be zipped and have short shoulder straps so you can protect them with your upper arm. Wallets and passports should not be carried in your back pocket, and

expensive watches, chains and jewelry should not be worn. Don't leave cameras or binoculars in sight of any open window. Do not leave any valuables or money unattended in your hotel room. If you follow these precautions, you probably won't have any trouble. Again, common sense is the best deterrent.

**Carry Your Passport.** Please ensure that you carry your passport or tourist card at all times. Never go anywhere (not even the Post Office) without your passport or tourist card. Should you ever be asked, you should be able to present your identification, your passport, tourist card, or visa. Not having it with you could mean a trip to the Police Station.

It's also a good idea to keep copies of your passport's front page and airline tickets separately from the originals in case the originals are lost or stolen.

*Pamphlets addressing safety issues abroad are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, or Bureau of Consular Affairs' home page: <http://travel.state.gov>.*

## **BUSINESS HOURS**

**Banks and Exchange Bureaus:** Mondays to Fridays from 10.00 to 15.00 hours

**Business Offices:** Generally from 09.00 to 12.00 & 14.00 to 19.00 hours. Offices close for two to two and a half hours for lunch between 12pm and 3pm. Then, around 5pm many people go to a *confiteria* for tea, sandwiches and cakes.

**Shops and Commerce:** In the big cities from 09.00 to 20.00 hours, although in the outskirts and the provinces they tend to close at midday. On Saturdays the hours are from 09.00 to 13.00 hours.

**Cafés, cake shops and pizzerias:** Are open most of the time except between 02.00 and 06.00.

**Restaurants:** Lunch starts from 12.30 and dinner from 20.30 hours. Many places offer fast menus at all times.

## **CURRENCY / BANKING**

The official Argentine currency is the Peso. Notes come in 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100 pesos; and coins of 1 peso and 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50 centavos.

**Methods of payment:** While the dollar is generally accepted, foreign currency can be exchanged in banks and at authorized bureaus. The most commonly accepted credit cards are American Express, VISA, Diners and Master Card. There may be difficulties in changing traveler's checks outside of Buenos Aires.

**Credit Cards:** American Express, Diners Club, Visa and MasterCard are all accepted. There is a 10% surcharge on credit card transactions in many establishments, and many hotels offer reductions for cash. Credit cards are readily accepted in all main towns, but their use is somewhat limited elsewhere.

**Traveler's Checks:** It is often difficult to change Traveler's Checks, particularly on weekends and in the smaller towns. There is a 3% tax and commissions can be as high as 10% (in bank's it's generally 4% commission), but commission can be avoided if you go to a branch of the issuing bank.

**Personal Checks:** Not accepted.

## VAT (VALUE-ADDED TAX)

21% is added on all products and services (other than foodstuffs and medicines).

**VAT Return:** At the airport, you can recover the 21% VAT paid if you have purchased local products for an amount greater than \$ 70 (per invoice) in shops which are members of the scheme "Global Refund".

## COMMUNICATIONS

**Language:** The official language of Argentina is Spanish. Visitors, however, will find that English is widely spoken. Knowing some frequently used words and phrases is always useful. Please refer to the enclosed partial list. French and Italian (especially in Patagonia) may be useful.

**Post:** Letters from Argentina take about 10 days to get to the UK or to the US. Larger parcels must be examined by customs before final packing. There are very specific guidelines for packing large parcels, so check with the local post office for details.

**Telephone:** Rates are high. All charges are payable only in pesos. Public telephones work with cards, which are tokens purchased in kiosks and the offices of the telephone companies, or with legal tender coins. There are call boxes where you can pay in cash (open 24 hours a day). To call from abroad to Argentina you have to dial the country code which is 54 and then the area code of the place you want to call. For domestic calls you have to dial 0 before the area code. For international calls you have to dial 00, the country code and then the city code. Remember that there are reduced tariffs from 22.00 to 08.00 hours.

**Fax:** Most large hotels have facilities.

**Internet:** Public access is available in Internet cafes in main towns.

## HOLIDAYS

January 1 .....	New Year
March/April * .....	Easter - Good Friday
	April 2** Veterans Day and tribute to the fallen at the Malvinas War
May 1* .....	Labor Day
	May 25 Anniversary of the First Independent Argentine Government
June 20*** .....	National Flag Day
July 9 .....	National Independence Day
	August 17*** Anniversary of the death of General José de San Martín
October 12** .....	Columbus Day
December 8 .....	Immaculate Conception Day
December 25 .....	Christmas Day

\* Floating Holiday.

\*\* If the date falls on Tuesday or a Wednesday, the holiday will be effective on the preceding Monday. If it falls on Thursday or Friday, the holiday will be effective the following Monday.

\*\*\* Holiday effective the third Monday of the respective month

## FOOD & DRINK

**Local Cuisine:** National dishes are based, in the main, upon plentiful supplies of quality beef. Many dishes are distinctive and excellent. The *asado* (a roast cooked on an open fire or grill); the *puchero* (a very tasty stew); the *bife a caballo* (a steak topped with a fried egg); the *carbonada* (onions, tomatoes and minced beef); the *churrasco* (a thick grilled steak); and, *parrillada* (a mixed grill of roast meat, offal, and sausages) are some of the popular favorites. Chicken is also available in many varieties and combinations.

**Drinks:** It is best not to drink tap water at all. It is usual to drink soda or mineral water at restaurants. Argentine wines (including champagnes) are available with a wide range of prices. Ordinary *vinos de la casa* or *comunes* are wholesome and relatively cheap, although reds tend to be better than whites. The local beer, mainly the lager-type, is quite acceptable. Hard liquor is relatively inexpensive, except for imported whiskey.

### General Recommendations:

- Do not drink tap water at all, and do not drink your beverages with ice.
- Always drink bottled mineral water and soft drinks (diet soft drinks are not always available).
- Pasteurized milk and dairy products are safe for consumption. Avoid unpasteurized milk as brucellosis occurs.
- Always choose cooked food and avoid any raw foods while traveling in the continent, except in recommended restaurants and hotels, where you may do so if you wish.

## SHOPPING

Argentina's ranching industry affords great buys in kid gloves, shoes, suede and leather goods, and woolen ponchos. Silver and onyx are also good bargains.

Local leather goods are the specialty in Buenos Aires, such as coats (leather or suede), handbags, and shoes. Articles of onyx can be purchased in Salta and silver handicrafts and knitted woolens can be purchased in places such as Bariloche and Mar del Plata.

**Visitors should always be cautious in purchasing any goods made from animal products, as they may be restricted items.**

## ELECTRICITY / MEASUREMENTS

The electrical voltage in Argentina is 220 volts, 50 cycles throughout the country. A voltage converter and two and three prong adapters are necessary for U.S. made appliances

1 inch = 25.417 millimeters; 1 foot = 0.305 meters; 1 mile = 1.609 kilometers; 1 acre = 0.405 hectare. 1 gallon = 4.546 liters; 1 pound = 454 grams

## TIPPING

Tipping is customary in cafeterias, restaurants, hotels, and cinemas and theatres, usually 10%. In hotels, restaurants, and service establishments, a service charge is added to your bill, but you may wish to tip an additional 5% of the bill at your discretion.

Your professional, licensed guides and drivers who accompany you, work very hard to ensure that you receive the best BIG FIVE service, tour quality, and satisfaction.

**Tipping is solely at your discretion.**

If you wish to reward them for their work, we suggest the following:

- \$5-\$10 per person per day for services rendered by any licensed guide/naturalist.
- \$2-\$4 per person per day for services rendered by driver.

### **SMOKING**

We suggest that passengers refrain from smoking in public areas, sightseeing vehicles, and when aboard any cruise vessel while in the cabins, the dining area, or community areas. There are designated areas for smoking on cruise vessels. Please dispose of cigarette butts in the appropriate receptacles/ashtrays. Do not throw cigarette butts on the ground or overboard.

### **CLOTHING**

Shorts can be worn in Buenos Aires and residential suburbs in spring, summer, and autumn, but their use is not common outside the capital. Bermuda type shorts are very fashionable, as are jogging suits. In general, dress tends to be formal (unless casual wear is specified on an invitation) in Buenos Aires and for evening outings to shows, etc. The general standard of dress among Argentines is very high: collar and tie, with jacket, are very much the standard for men, and women "should always err on the side of elegance." Men wearing earrings can expect comments, even hostility, in the provinces.

In northern Argentina, you generally won't need heavy-duty clothing, unless you're going up into the mountains where it can be freezing at any time of the year. Even if you're staying on the plains, you still need warm clothing as it gets quite cold traveling on the trains and buses across the pampas. The northern deserts can, of course, be freezing at night. In southern Argentina, warm jackets, socks, solid footwear, gloves, scarves and headgear are essential. Thermal underwear, or at least a thermal underwear top, is a good investment. Your clothing must be wind-proof and water-proof.

**Laundry:** Laundry can be done at the major hotels at the appropriate charges imposed by the hotels. There are no laundry facilities in remote areas or on cruise vessels.

**Please consult weather charts in the front of this book for temperatures and climates in specific Regions**

### **INTRODUCTION TO ARGENTINA**

**Location & Geography:** Geographically, Argentina more closely resembles the United States than Europe. Its vast territory stretches more than 5,000 kilometers from North to South, and encompasses everything from snow-covered mountains to subtropical jungle. In the north, in the sultry province of Misiones, nature is raucous and includes spectacular Iguassu Falls.

In the pampas, or plains, of central Argentina, the countryside recalls the American West. Gauchos still herd cattle that provide Argentina with the top-quality beef that Argentineans love so. In the west, the Andean backbone that Argentina shares with Chile attracts climbers to Mt. Anconagua, the Southern Hemisphere's highest peak.

In Patagonia, where South America slips into the Beagle Channel in Tierra del Fuego, penguins troop along beaches and whales populate the nearby waters.

**Population:** Argentines are a fusion of diverse national and ethnic groups, with descendants of Italian and Spanish

immigrants predominant. Waves of immigrants from many European countries arrived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Syrian, Lebanese, and other Middle Eastern immigrants number about 500,000, mainly in urban areas. Argentina has the largest Jewish population in Latin America, about 250,000 strong. In recent years, there has been a substantial influx of immigrants from neighboring Latin American countries. The indigenous population, which includes Mapuches, Collas, Tobas, Maticos and Chiriguano, is estimated at 700,000, and is concentrated in the provinces of the north, northwest, and south. The Argentine population has one of Latin America's lowest growth rates. Eighty percent of the population resides in cities or towns of more than 2,000, and over one-third lives in the greater Buenos Aires area. With 13 million inhabitants, this sprawling metropolis serves as the focus for national life. Argentines enjoy comparatively high standards of living; half the population considers itself middle class.

**Current Population:** 37,812,817

**Religion:** There is complete religious freedom in Argentina. The official religion is Roman Catholic, although the country is nominally Roman Catholic, which means that while 92% claim to be Catholic, less than 20% are practicing. There are also other religions such as Protestant 2%, Jewish 2%, and other such as Moslem, Greek Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox make up 4%.

**Constitution and Government:** Following independence from Spain in 1816, Argentina experienced periods of internal political conflict between conservatives and liberals and between civilian and military factions. The current Constitution dates from 1853. Nevertheless, it has undergone changes on various occasions. The last time was in August 1994, which allowed the re-election of the President of the nation for one more term.

After World War II, a long period of Peronist authoritarian rule and interference in subsequent governments was followed by a military junta that took power in 1976. Democracy returned in 1983, and numerous elections since then have underscored Argentina's progress in democratic consolidation.

Argentina consists of 23 provinces plus a federal district, Buenos Aires. The Constitution establishes a republic under a representative, federal system, and separate branches of power: the executive, the legislative and the judicial.

Executive power is exercised by the President and Vice-president, elected for four-year terms. They can be re-elected for a single additional term.

The legislative branch is bicameral: the Senate (composed of three senators from each province and from the City of Buenos Aires) and the Chamber of Deputies (composed of representatives elected directly and in proportion to the population in each district). The judicial power "is vested in the supreme Court and in lower courts".

In conformity with the National Constitution, each province adopts its own Constitution to rule its acts of government.

The current Constitution dates from 1853. Nevertheless, it has undergone changes in 1860, 1898, 1957 and 1994. The last one, August 1994, allows the re-election of the President of the Nation for one more term.

**Economy:** Argentina benefits from rich natural resources, a highly literate population, an export-oriented agricultural

sector, and a diversified industrial base. It is one of the more highly developed countries of the region. It has the third largest *gdp* in Latin America, but by far the highest per capita income. Wealth traditionally came from farming although agriculture, forestry and fishing now account for only 6% of *gdp*.

In the 1980's large fiscal deficits, monetary expansion, and a high velocity of circulation caused very high inflation, which was difficult to curb because of structural imbalances in the economy, inadequate levels of investment, inefficiencies, and corruption in both public and private sectors.

When President Carlos Menem took office in 1989, however, the country had piled up huge external debts, inflation had reached 200% per month, and output was plummeting. To combat the economic crisis, the government embarked on a path of trade liberalization, deregulation, and privatization. In 1991, it implemented radical monetary reforms which pegged the peso to the US dollar and limited the growth in the monetary base by law to the growth in reserves. Inflation fell sharply in subsequent years.

In 1995, the Mexican peso crisis produced capital flight, the loss of banking system deposits, and a severe, but short-lived, recession; a series of reforms to bolster the domestic banking system followed. Real GDP growth recovered strongly, reaching 8% in 1997. In 1998, international financial turmoil caused by Russia's problems and increasing investor anxiety over Brazil produced the highest domestic interest rates in more than three years, halving the growth rate of the economy. Conditions worsened in 1999 with GDP falling by 3%. President Fernando DE LA RUA, who took office in December 1999, sponsored tax increases and spending cuts to reduce the deficit, which had ballooned to 2.5% of GDP in 1999. Growth in 2000 was a disappointing 0.8%, as both domestic and foreign investors remained skeptical of the government's ability to pay debts and maintain its fixed exchange rate with the US dollar. One bright spot at the start of 2001 was the IMF's offer of \$13.7 billion in support.

**History:** Europeans arrived in the region with the 1502 voyage of Amerigo Vespucci. Spanish navigator Juan Diaz de Solias visited what is now Argentina in 1516. Spain established a permanent colony on the site of Buenos Aires in 1580, although initial settlement was primarily overland from Peru. The Spanish further integrated Argentina into their empire by establishing the Vice Royalty of Rio de la Plata in 1776, and Buenos Aires became a flourishing port.

Buenos Aires formally declared independence from Spain on July 9, 1816. Argentines revere Gen. Jose de San Martin, who campaigned in Argentina, Chile, and Peru as the hero of their national independence. Following the defeat of the Spanish, centralist and federalist groups waged a lengthy conflict between themselves to determine the future of the nation. National unity was established, and the constitution promulgated in 1853. Two forces combined to create the modern Argentine nation in the late 19th century: the introduction of modern agricultural techniques and integration of Argentina into the world economy. Foreign investment and immigration from Europe aided this economic revolution. Investments, primarily British, came in such fields as railroads and ports. The migrants who worked to develop Argentina's resources--especially the western pampas--came from throughout Europe, just as in the United States.

Conservative forces dominated Argentine politics until 1916, when their traditional rivals, the Radicals, won

control of the government. The Radicals, with their emphasis on fair elections and democratic institutions, opened their doors to Argentina's expanding middle class as well as to elites previously excluded from power. The Argentine military forced aged Radical President Hipolito Yrigoyen from power in 1930 and ushered in another decade of Conservative rule. Using fraud and force when necessary, the governments of the 1930s attempted to contain the currents of economic and political change that eventually led to the ascendance of Juan Domingo Peron (b. 1897). New social and political forces were seeking political power, including a modern military and labor movements that emerged from the growing urban working class.

The military ousted Argentina's constitutional government in 1943. Peron, then an army colonel, was one of the coup's leaders, and he soon became the government's dominant figure as Minister of Labor. Elections carried him to the presidency in 1946. He aggressively pursued policies aimed at giving an economic and political voice to the working class and greatly expanded the number of unionized workers. In 1947, Peron announced the first 5-year plan based on the growth of nationalized industries. He helped establish the powerful General Confederation of Labor (CGT). Peron's dynamic wife, Eva Duarte de Peron, known as Evita (1919-52), helped her husband develop strength with labor and women's groups; women obtained the right to vote in 1947. Peron won reelection in 1952, but the military deposed him in 1955. He went into exile, eventually settling in Spain. In the 1950-60s, military and civilian administrations traded power, trying, with limited success, to deal with diminished economic growth and continued social and labor demands. When military governments failed to revive the economy and suppress escalating terrorism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the way was open for Peron's return.

On March 11, 1973, Argentina held general elections for the first time in 10 years. Peron was prevented from running, but voters elected his stand-in, Dr. Hector Campora, as President. Peron's followers also commanded strong majorities in both houses of Congress. Campora resigned in July 1973, paving the way for new elections. Peron won a decisive victory and returned as President in October 1973 with his third wife, Maria Estela Isabel Martinez de Peron, as Vice President. During this period, extremists on the left and right carried out terrorist acts with a frequency that threatened public order. The government resorted to a number of emergency decrees, including the implementation of special executive authority to deal with violence. This allowed the government to imprison persons indefinitely without charge.

Peron died on July 1, 1974. His wife succeeded him in office, but her administration was undermined by economic problems, Peronist intraparty struggles, and growing terrorism. A military coup removed her from office on March 24, 1976, and the armed forces formally exercised power through a junta composed of the three service commanders until December 10, 1983. The armed forces applied harsh measures against terrorists and many suspected of being their sympathizers. They restored basic order, but the costs of what became known as the "Dirty War" were high in terms of lives lost and basic human rights violated. Conservative counts list over 10,000 persons as "disappeared" during the 1976-83 period.

Serious economic problems, mounting charges of corruption, public revulsion in the face of human rights abuses and the country's 1982 defeat by the U.K. in an unsuccessful attempt to seize the Falklands / Malvinas

Islands all combined to discredit the Argentine military regime. Under strong public pressure, the junta lifted bans on political parties and gradually restored basic political liberties. On October 30, 1983, Argentines went to the polls to choose a president; vice president; and national, provincial, and local officials in elections found by international observers to be fair and honest. The country returned to constitutional rule after Raul Alfonsin, candidate of Radical Civic Union, received 52% of the popular vote for president. He began a 6-year term on December 10, 1983.

In 1985 and 1987, large turnouts for mid-term elections demonstrated continued public support for a strong and vigorous democratic system. The UCR-led government took steps to resolve some of the nation's most pressing problems, including accounting for those who disappeared during military rule, establishing civilian control of the armed forces, and consolidating democratic institutions. However, constant friction with the military, failure to resolve endemic economic problems, and an inability to maintain public confidence undermined the effectiveness of the Alfonsin government, which left office 6 months early after Peronist candidate Carlos Saul Menem won the 1989 presidential elections.

As President, Menem launched a major overhaul of Argentine domestic policy. Large-scale structural reforms dramatically reversed the role of the state in Argentine economic life. A decisive leader pressing a controversial agenda, Menem was not reluctant to use the presidency's extensive powers to issue decrees when the Congress was unable to reach consensus on his proposed reforms. Those powers were curtailed somewhat when the constitution was reformed in 1994 as a result of the so-called Olivos Pact with the opposition Radical Party. That arrangement opened the way for Menem to seek and win reelection with 50% of the vote in the three-way 1995 presidential race.

The 1995 election saw the emergence of the moderate-left FREPASO political alliance. This alternative to the two traditional political parties in Argentina is particularly strong in Buenos Aires but as yet lacks the national infrastructure of the Peronists and Radicals. In an important development in Argentina's political life, all three major parties in the 1999 race espoused free market economic policies. In October 1999, the UCR-FREPASO Alliance's presidential candidate, Fernando de la Rúa, defeated Peronist candidate Eduardo Duhalde. Taking office in December 1999, De la Rúa has not only continued the previous administration's free market economic policies but has followed an IMF-sponsored program of government spending cuts, revenue increases, and provincial revenue-sharing reforms to get the federal deficit under control. De la Rúa also has pursued labor law reform and business-promotion measures aimed at stimulating the economy and increasing employment. Despite these measures, Argentine economic growth remained nearly flat in 2000.

## **ARGENTINA'S DIVERSE REGIONS**

**Buenos Aires:** This is the country's capital and largest city. Sophistication is the key word here. Buenos Aires' heart today, as in colonial times, is the Plaza de May with the Casa Rosada (Pink House - Presidential Palace) and the National Cathedral where Jose de San Martin, Argentina's father of independence, is buried. The *Avenida 9 de Julio* is the world's widest boulevard and a main city artery. The avenue's imposing obelisk commemorates the 400th anniversary of the city. Tree-lined streets, parks and plazas are abundant, and the skyline, though punctuated with a few new

skyscrapers, resembles that of Paris. Nightlife begins late with dinner around 10:00 pm. There are several tango houses offering music only or music and dance. Discos and clubs are abundant. Calle Lavalle is lined with movie houses and theaters. The world famous Colon Opera House spans an entire city block and features a wide range of cultural performances from March through December. City sightseeing tours are available as well as trips out to nearby haciendas or an authentic "Gaucho Fiesta." In town, there are plenty of places to enjoy a steak dinner and a traditional tango show. Budget at least three days to explore and enjoy the sidewalk cafes, chic boutiques, and excellent museums.

**Iguassu Falls:** Bordering Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil, a spectacular view of the great falls can be seen from the Argentine side. With 275 individual falls, Iguassu is higher and wider than Niagara. The jungle surroundings abound with gorgeous flora, exotic birds, and magnificent butterflies protected by a multi-national park. From Buenos Aires, daily direct flights are available to Iguassu (1 hour, 40 minutes). By bus, the trip takes approximately 21 hours. Train service is available as far as Posadas on the Paraguayan border. The Hotel International on Iguassu's Argentine side overlooks the falls, and is convenient to the walkways. Several other hotels are located near the falls on the Brazilian side. For a visit the Brazilian side of the falls, a visa is required for entry.

**Mendoza:** At the foot of the Andes, Mendoza is a modern city with a historic past. The great Liberator San Martin departed from Mendoza to cross the Andes and help liberate Chile.

Though rainfall is slight, irrigation turns the countryside into a green oasis, covered with productive vineyards and fruit plantations. Wine making season is March/April and there are numerous wine cellars or bodegas where wine tasting is a popular activity.

The city is modern with low buildings and many gardens and trees. It has excellent museums as well. Mountain climbing and trekking expeditions to Mt. Aconcagua (highest in the Americas) are popular activities. Argentina's newest ski resort, Las Lenas, is south of the city in Valle Hermosa.

**Salta / Jujuy:** Historic Salta, founded in 1582, and Jujuy, founded for the third time in 1593, offer excellent excursions from Buenos Aires. Salta is in a hilly and strikingly beautiful district filled with fine old colonial buildings. From Salta, a magnificent round-trip can be made to Cafayate to view the Andean foothill desert with its strange rock formations and unexpected colors. The population around Cafayate is largely Indian and native costumes abound. The drive from Salta to Jujuy includes a 57-mile winding road through the mountains known as La Cornisa. Jujuy also offers classic colonial buildings.

**Bariloche:** Located at the foot of the Andes in Lake Nahuel Hauapi National Park, the famed city is both a summer and winter resort. Bariloche is spectacularly set overlooking the lake and facing the snow-capped peaks of the Andes. There are many hotels, restaurants, pubs, discos and shops. White chocolate is a popular buy.

Brown trout fishing is excellent (October / March) in the numerous lakes. Snow skiing begins June and runs through Sept. Excursions include chair lift rides up Cerro Campanario for a bird's-eye view of the area, boat rides on Lake Nahuel Hauapi visit Victoria Isle and the Bosque de Arrayanes forest of light-bark trees. Bariloche is also embarkation point for the crossing of the spectacularly scenic Lake District via Peulla into Chile, ending at Puerto Montt.

**Lake Crossing:** From Bariloche, departures are year-round, but daily departures are from December through March, and cross in one day, or overnight, stopping mid-way at Peulla. The trip encompasses crystalline lakes, snowcapped mountains, and green valleys. This crossing is made by a regular series of buses and motor launches.

**Mar del Plata:** 240 miles south of Buenos Aires, is a popular summer resort with five miles of great beaches, including fashionable Playa Grande with its private clubs and summer estates of the wealthy. Bristol Beach has a casino, and other beaches feature fishing piers, yacht clubs, and ports. Night life is continuous during high season (December - April), when summer is in full swing. Mar del Plata is also known for its golf courses, polo tournaments, and pato (an Argentine ballgame played on horseback).

**Peninsula Valdes:** Trewlew is the gateway for visiting the northern edge of Patagonia. From here, visits can be made to the largest migrating penguin rookery in the Western Hemisphere at Punta Tombo, and to Peninsula Valdes to view the sea lion and sea elephant colonies at Puerto Piramides. During October and November, one may take a small boat excursion for whale watching. Excursions can also be made to Gaiman, a small, charming Welsh town with museums and nearby nature reserves.

**Lago Argentino:** In the heart of Patagonia, beside the Andes, is one of Argentina's most scenic areas, Lago Argentino. Flights connect Buenos Aires to Calafate, gateway to the area. From Calafate, excursions are available to Perito Moreno Glacier, one of the few growing glaciers in the world. Today, the glacier has a three-mile frontage and is 180 feet high. Other special sights include Upsala Glacier at the north end of the lake, Glaciares National Park and the spectacular mountain Cerro Fitz Roy.

**Tierra del Fuego:** Tierra del Fuego is the island at the extreme southern tip of South America bounded by the Strait of Magellan, the Atlantic Ocean and the Beagle Channel. The eastern side belong to Argentina; the western to Chile. Ushuaia, Argentina's southernmost city, is situated at the base of Cerro Martial, overlooking the Beagle Channel's green waters.

Friendly inhabitants are involved in raising sheep, lumbering, fishing, and trapping. The area has impressive views of snow clad peaks, rivers, waterfalls, and dense woods. From Ushuaia excursions can be made to Lapataia, Kake Fagnano, Kake Escondido and Islas de los Lobos.

## **TRAVELER'S ETIQUETTE**

In addition to looking out for one's own safety, the conscientious guest has the obligation to treat his hosts with respect and courtesy. Argentina and its people have much to offer the visitor and the visitor should be willing to offer something in return beyond mere financial compensation. An effort to speak the local language, no matter how rudimentary, is always appreciated as are good manners and discretion in the use of cameras. Above all, one must remember that the polite guest, in a country no less than in a private home, is obliged to learn from and adapt to the ways of his hosts, rather than expecting them to accept his customs.

Travel necessitates being a good-natured realist as well as a romantic, and requires an agreeable acceptance of situations as they exist, not as each of us might prefer them to be. A good attitude makes for an enjoyable travel

experience. If you are this appreciative traveler, we want you with us because we know you'll be a wonderful companion and have the time of your life.

A concern for conserving the remaining natural wonders, boundless beauty, and diversity of our small planet is necessary, and always appreciated. You are entering the blissful and rejuvenating world of discovery; be open to the experience. Our tours are dedicated to the individual with an inquiring mind. This is a time for you to escape the stresses and strains of your everyday life.

## **CAMERAS & FILM**

**Photography:** Always approach people with an attitude of respect and ask permission before taking photographs. Do not take anyone's picture without permission. Many times it is necessary to negotiate a fee beforehand. The same general rule about asking permission also applies to photographing places of worship, religious festivals, and rural homesteads. Never take any photos of airports, police or government buildings, military installations, or borders.

**Equipment:** Bring cameras and lenses you are comfortable using. If you get new equipment before you go, do so as far in advance as possible. Shoot and develop at least a dozen rolls before departure to work out problems. And, don't forget your camera operation manual, filters, and a flash unit. *Cameras should be packed with good cushioning.* The roads are sometimes rough, and vibration can do damage. Make sure you have lens caps for all your lenses. Clean your equipment frequently. Bring along a puffer brush and lens cleaning tissues.

**Lenses:** A combination of fixed and/or zoom lenses with focal lengths from 28 mm to 200 mm is a good for general travel photography, although you can take excellent photographs with only a 50 mm lens. Zoom lenses such as 35-80mm, 70-210 mm, or 100-300 mm will help you capture the sights in a variety of different settings. A macro lens is helpful for shooting close-ups, but a good set of extension tubes will work well. A 2x converter is also a handy. Point and shoot cameras are nice for a group or indoor shots, but leave something to be desired when photographing animals, scenics and nature. Bring a small cleaning kit and blower brush to keep equipment clean.

**Video:** If you are planning to shoot video on a safari, be sure to bring plenty of tape and batteries with you. Do not plan to buy videotape in abroad. Videotape is not affected by airport x-ray - only magnetic fields or prolonged exposure to heat will damage videotape. Your battery charger should be capable of automatically adjusting to 240 volts. You will probably have no problem finding a plug in most of the lodges and larger tented camps, but be prepared with plenty of batteries

**Batteries:** Put fresh photo-quality batteries in your camera and other electric equipment before you leave and bring at least two sets of spare batteries with you. Your camera will be useless without them, and batteries tend to be expensive

**Film:** It is always best to bring whatever film you need with you. Film is generally more expensive abroad and it may be hard to locate. You'll be surprised at how much film you use when you are trying to capture all those special moments. Even those not all that interested in photography will probably shoot a couple of 36-exposure rolls per day, and enthusiastic shooters will easily double or triple that amount. Be sure film is fresh and, when possible, keep it refrigerated. A film speed

of ASA/ISO 64 is an excellent choice for color slide film. Use this speed when possible rather than higher speed films. There is a noticeable difference in quality that it is worth the extra effort to keep your camera steady at a somewhat slower shutter speed than you would otherwise use. For color prints, there are several good choices, including Kodak and Fuji films (ASA/ISO 100 & 200) for daylight photography, ASA/ISO 400 & 1000 are good for lower light and nighttime situations.

It is helpful to set up a numbering system for your film, marking each roll with masking tape and numbers or letters, before leaving home. This way you can code the rolls of film and where they were shot. It's quite a job to sort through hundreds of pictures with no clue where or when they were taken.

*Avoid airport x-ray machines whenever possible and request a hand search of your film.* While security people are often obliging, some are not so allow a little extra time. X-rays are cumulative on exposed and unexposed film so the more times film is x-rayed, the more risk of damage. This is especially true with older machines found in many countries. Lead bags for film are available for purchase and are worth the small investment. Do not have film in your camera because it may be opened for inspection. Recent news reports warn that new explosive detectors used in more than 100 US airports to scan checked baggage will ruin unprotected, unexposed film. This technology will eventually be in place at all airports worldwide. Experts suggest carrying your film in your carry-on luggage and placing film in safety, lead-lined bags to prevent X-ray damage.

## **DEALING WITH JET LAG**

With the joys and adventures of international travel come certain unavoidable inconveniences such as occasional lost luggage or bouts of jet lag. In fact, studies reveal that as much as 90% of long distance travelers experience a degree of jet lag.

Jet lag describes that out-of-sorts feeling associated with long flights, particularly those across time zones. Symptoms and severity vary but may include drowsiness, fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, headaches, insomnia, and swelling of the extremities.

The number of time zones crossed affects the severity of jet lag. The internal body clock follows circadian rhythm, which is controlled by the hypothalamus that processes nerve signals. That clock is designed for regular cycles of light and darkness. Depending on the number of time zones crossed, it may take several days for that rhythm to be restored.

But that is not the only influence. Other factors include cabin pressure, stale air, lack of humidity, and your overall physical condition at the beginning of your trip.

Although jet lag can not be completely avoided, there are some simple things you can do to help minimize its affects.

### **Consider the following for your next scheduled trip:**

- Start your trip rested with a good night's sleep prior to departure.
- Drink plenty of fluids -- water and juices will help you to stay well hydrated. Seasoned travelers recommend that you carry drinking water with you and drink eight ounces every hour.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine, however, just before and during flights. Both possess diuretic properties that

promote dehydration. Alcohol also causes drowsiness and contributes to feeling sluggish.

- Once comfortably onboard, reset your watch to the time zone to which you are traveling. This small act helps you begin adjusting to your destination's local time.
- As much as possible, create a dark environment on the plane. Bright lights have been shown to have a strong effect on individuals' body clocks. If necessary, try eye shades and earplugs to help block distractions and convince your body that it is nighttime. Closing window shades and turning off overhead lights may also help. Sleep on the plane if your flight has an early morning arrival time.
- Loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes will help in the event you experience mild swelling. Experienced travelers often bring lightweight slippers to wear during flights.
- Get adequate rest before starting on your journey to help minimize the amount of catching up you'll have to do when you arrive at the destination. Once home, try to schedule a day of rest before returning to work.
- Although not always feasible, look for opportunities to walk around while in flight. Do simple isometric exercises (contracting and relaxing as many muscle groups as possible) in your seat. These will improve circulation, help promote increased alertness, and reduce chances of swelling.
- If you arrive in the morning, plan to stay awake. If possible, wait until the local bedtime to sleep. Many people swear that this is the key in determining how quickly they adapt to local conditions. You will sleep better and will be less likely to suffer insomnia than if you nap upon arrival.
- During extended stopovers, showers are sometimes available. Trans-Pacific pilots report that taking a shower helps them recover more quickly from the general effects of jet lag after the flight.

## **SUGGESTED READING LIST**

In addition to the many comprehensive and readily available guides produced by Lonely Planet, Fodor, Insight, The Rough Guide, and others, there are many books relating to the Argentina. Here are a few selections we thought might interest you.

### **ARGENTINA COOKS: TREASURED RECIPES FROM THE NINE REGIONS OF ARGENTINA** **Shirley Lomax Brooks**

From roast turkey with persimmon, sausage and jalapeno stuffing to mango pudding and chicken in sherry wine, *Argentina Cooks!* is packed with fresh new explorations of the entire country's unique cuisine. Chapters are organized by region of Argentina....an excellent guide to a little-covered country.

### **ARGENTINE INDIAN ART** **Alejandro Eduardo Fiadone**

This stunning collection of 284 rare designs is a bonanza for artists and craftspeople seeking distinctive patterns with a South American Indian flavor. The carefully adapted, authentic motifs include animal and totemic designs, geometric and rectilinear figures, abstracts, grids, and many other styles in a wide range of shapes and sizes.

## **EVITA: THE REAL LIFE OF EVA PERON**

**Nicholas Fraser, With Marysa Navarro**

In the colorful, tumultuous setting of postwar Argentina, Eva Peron wielded a power -- spiritual and practical -- that has few parallels outside of hereditary monarchy. In this "fascinating, frightening, straightforward" (Cleveland Plain Dealer) biography, Fraser and Navarro have produced "a work of great political sophistication. . . Factual, nuanced, and absorbing" (Kirkus Reviews)

## **THE LAST COWBOYS AT THE END OF THE WORLD: THE STORY OF THE GAUCHOS OF PATAGONIA**

**Nick Reding**

Twenty-five years ago, the government of Chile began building a road into Chilean Patagonia, one of the least-populated regions in the world. In 1995, when Nick Reding traveled down that still-unfinished road into an unmapped river valley, he found himself in a closed chapter of history: a last, undetected, and unexplored outpost of gauchos so isolated that many of them, some of whom are boys as young as thirteen, still live completely alone with their herds, hours on horseback from the nearest neighbors. In 1998, Nick returned to the valley to witness what happens when time catches up to a people whom history has forgotten." "Reding's account of the ten months he spent in Middle Cisnes, Patagonia, is a riveting, novelistic exploration of the longing for change by a people and a culture that, according to history books and the Chilean government, do not even exist.

## **IMAGINING ARGENTINA**

**Lawrence Thornton**

Imagining Argentina is set in the dark days of the late 1970's, when thousands of Argentines disappeared without a trace into the general's prison cells and torture chambers. When Carlos Ruweda's wife is suddenly taken from him, he discovers a magical gift: In waking dreams, he had clear visions of the fates of "the disappeared." But he cannot "imagine" what has happened to his own wife. Driven to near madness, his mind cannot be taken away: imagination, stories, and the mystical secrets of the human spirit.

## **A GUIDE TO THE BIRDS AND MAMMALS OF COASTAL PATAGONIA**

**Graham Harris, Foreword by William Conway**

This is the first guidebook to the birds and mammals of the coastal region of Patagonia, a vast area at the southern tip of South America. This guide describes the 185 species of birds and 61 species of mammals known to inhabit the land and sea along two thousand miles of the Patagonian coast, from Peninsula Valdes to the Strait of Magellan. With an area covering over half a million square miles, Patagonia is larger than Spain and Portugal combined. It is scarcely populated and much of its land is desert, swept year-round by winds from both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The greatest abundance and diversity of wildlife occurs where the great dry steppe meets the South Atlantic along a spectacular shoreline of unspoiled beaches and lonely headlands. One of the last truly untouched regions on earth, Patagonia is home to unusual indigenous birds and mammals, including the guanaco, the mara, and the lesser rhea. Huge colonies of Magellanic penguins and sprawling rookeries of Southern Elephant Seals crowd the shore in isolated areas while the bays shelter large pods of Southern Right Whales, occasionally hundreds at a time. Written for both the casual observer and the experienced naturalist, this book contains information on identifying all the birds and mammals of the region, as well as details of the natural history of some of the more common species. Extensively illustrated by the author, this guide provides complete information on every species, including

common names (English, Spanish, and scientific) and descriptions of behavior, status and habitat, range, and distinguishing characteristics. A range map is included for each species, and all but a few species are illustrated, many in full color. This is an essential guide for anyone who is planning a trip to Patagonia.

## **WALKING ON EGGS:**

### **THE ASTONISHING DISCOVERY OF THOUSANDS OF DINOSAUR EGGS IN THE BADLANDS OF PATAGONIA**

**Luis M. Chiappe, Lowell Dingus**

Walking on Eggs is the inside story behind one of the most significant paleontological discoveries in history. In November 1997, Luis M. Chiappe and Lowell Dingus led an elite team of paleontologists and geologists into the rugged and desolate badlands of Argentina. Unsure of what they would find, Chiappe and Dingus knew that this region had produced many spectacular specimens of dinosaurs and fossil birds over the last century. Nothing could have prepared them, however, for the headline-grabbing discovery they were about to make: a massive dinosaur nesting ground covering more than a square mile and littered with tens of thousands of large, unhatched dinosaur eggs. Containing the first fossils of embryonic dinosaur skin ever found, the eggs gave rise to a host of mysteries. What species laid the eggs, and when? How were they preserved? And most intriguingly, what ancient catastrophe - deeply rooted more than 70 million years in the past - prevented them from hatching?"

## **ARGENTINA THE LAND**

**Bobbie Kalman, Greg Nickles**

Argentina is home to an amazing variety of landscapes—from evergreen rainforests in the tropical north and rugged mountains in the west to stormy Cape Horn in the south and sunny beaches in the east. The author briefly discusses the various geographical areas found on this long South American country (the Gran Chaco region, Mesopotamia, the Pampa plains, the Andes mountains, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego) and provides information about Argentina's climate and weather, ancestors, famous cities (Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Rosario, Ushuaia, Mendoza, Salta), crops and livestock, ranches, modes of transportation, industry and resources, and plants and wildlife. This informative volume contains dozens of colorful photographs with captions, detailed descriptions, a map, fascinating sidebars, a glossary and an index. The book is a wonderful learning tool. Part of "The Land, Peoples and Cultures" series. **Recommend Age Range: 12 and up**

## **ARGENTINA THE PEOPLE**

**Bobbie Kalman, Greg Nickles**

Argentina has many faces. In fact, this culturally rich nation contains people from various countries including Spain, Italy, England, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Poland. In addition to these European descendants, today's Argentines also include ancestors of native peoples and immigrants from other South American countries, the Middle East and Asia. The author briefly discusses the history of Argentine people and takes a look at today's culture, including family traditions and rituals, country life, gauchos, city life, schools, and sports and games. This wonderful volume contains full color and black-and-white photographs with captions, informative text, interesting sidebars, a description of a young girl's trip to Buenos Aires, a glossary and an index. Young readers will enjoy this fascinating look at the lives of Argentine people and their rich heritage. Part of "The Land, Peoples and Cultures" series. 2001, Crabtree Publishing Co. **Recommend Age Range: 12 and up**

# **CLOTHING/PACKING CHECKLIST**

Check the items below to be taken with you on your trip. Additional items may be added in the blank spaces provided. This is not intended as an all-inclusive list, but only as a suggested packing guide.

## **CLOTHING – WOMEN**

- Comfortable outfit for air travel
- Sandals or casual shoes
- Walking shoes or tennis shoes
- Rubber thongs (shower)
- Hat
- Windbreaker or jacket
- Pullover sweater or sweatshirt
- Long pants \*
- Shorts \*
- Socks
- Short sleeve shirts \*
- Long sleeve shirts \*
- T-shirts
- Pajamas
- Light-weight robe/cover-up
- Swim-suit/cover-up
- Casual slacks/skirt
- Blouses
- Belt(s)
- Underwear
- Scarves
- Costume Jewelry

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## **CLOTHING - MEN**

- Comfortable outfit for air travel
- Sandals or casual shoes
- Walking shoes or tennis shoes
- Rubber thongs (showers)
- Hat
- Windbreaker or jacket
- Pullover sweater or sweatshirt
- Long pants \*
- Shorts \*
- Socks
- Short sleeve shirts \*
- Long sleeve shirts \*
- T-Shirts
- Pajamas
- Light weight robe/cover-up
- Swim trunks
- Casual slacks
- Shirts
- Belt(s)
- Underwear

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## **TOILETRIES**

- Anti-malarial pills
- Vitamins
- Aspirin/Tylenol
- Motion sickness pills
- Short-acting sleeping pills
- Decongestant
- Antibiotic
- Lomotil / Pepto-Bismol
- Antacid
- Antibiotic ointment
- Insect repellent
- Sun screen/Sun block
- Lip balm
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Prescription medications
- Band-Aids
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste & toothbrush
- Feminine Hygiene supplies
- Dental floss
- Mouthwash
- Hairbrush/comb
- Razor
- Q-Tips/cotton balls
- Nail clippers
- Nail file
- Tweezers
- Make-up
- Hand lotion

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## **CAMERA EQUIPMENT**

- Camera/Lenses
- Plenty of film
- Lead Protective Film Bags
- Camera bag
- Lens filters
- Cleaning Fluid/Tissues
- Lens Brush/Puffer
- Extra Batteries/Charger
- Flash & Flash batteries
- Zip-lock bags
- Camera instruction book
- Stick-on labels for film
- Video Camera/Charger
- Blank video tapes

## **SUNDRIES**

- Passport
- International Certificate
- Vaccinations-Health Card
- Airline tickets/vouchers
- Money Pouch
- Credit Cards
- Travelers Checks
- Small calculator
- Sunglasses
- Prescription glasses
- Eyeglass case
- Small Alarm Clock
- Converter/plug set
- Binoculars
- Small flashlight
- Sewing kit
- Small scissors
- Kleenex
- Handi-wipes
- Zip-lock bags
- Travel clothes line
- Pillowcase for dirty clothes
- Small notebook or journal
- Pen
- Deck of cards
- Books/Magazines
- Address book for postcards
- Photocopy of passport and airline tickets
- Hard candy
- Bandana
- Extra sm. Collapsible bag
- Neck pillow for airline travel

## **OTHER**

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**\*Clothing should be comfortable**

**NOTES:**