



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP

photo: Alexander Zabara

24 Hours of Tango

Buenos Aires, 1 Day

Table of contents:

Guide Description 2

Itinerary Overview 3

Daily Itineraries 4

Buenos Aires Snapshot 7

Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Buenos Aires is the birthplace of the romantic tango, and foreigners have long drifted down south to partake of the sultry music and passionate dance, and the culture that it has spawned. You could spend weeks here and visit a different milonga (tango club) every night; unfortunately, most visitors have a more limited timeframe. For those with just 24 hours to kill, here is an itinerary with activities that vary from learning about the history of the development of the dance, to watching everyone from street performers to the country's top dancers, to learning a few steps and trying them out in the midst of locals who spend their evenings this way all the time.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Buenos Aires

DAY NOTE: 24 hours isn't nearly enough time to experience all of the tango-related activities that Buenos Aires has to offer, but if one day is all you've got, the essentials are easy enough to pick out. Begin with a stroll down El Caminito, the strips of brightly-colored houses in the southern neighborhood of La Boca that is also known as Vuelta de Rocha. Here you will see tango dancers maneuvering through the cobblestoned alleys, and you may want to sit and enjoy a show during your lunch. Note that this is the single most touristy spot in all of Buenos Aires, so the prices are inflated and the quality relatively low, but the sights are enjoyable nonetheless. Catch the bus or a taxi to the neighborhood that borders La Boca to the north, San Telmo. Also a traditional tango neighborhood, San Telmo's Plaza Dorrego tends to have less flashy, more sophisticated tango duos performing for the guests at the plaza's outdoor tables. You can also just watch from the edges of the square or take a seat on the low stone wall that borders Plaza Dorrego. From here continue north to Cafe Tortoni on Avenida de Mayo. Tortoni is one of the oldest still-functioning cafes in the city, and is certainly one of the most grand. Very affordable afternoon and evening tango shows run throughout the week - reservations must be made for this most authentic (and very intimate) of tango shows. If the World Tango Festival is in town, this is the time to check it out. Look at the website to get the schedule of events, which run throughout the day, all over the city. If your wallet is up to it, make a reservation at Madero Tango for a dinner show, where you will be dazzled by the spectacle of glamorous, high-kicking men and women, as you learn a little bit about the history and development of the dance as a cultural movement. If the show leaves you itching to get out on the dance floor and try for yourself, La Diabla is where you want to be, where you can partake in tango classes led by professional dancers. The classes give way to the public as the night goes on and La Diabla transforms from a dance school to a milonga (tango club). If you haven't quite quenched the tango bug, finish your night at La Beba, another milonga.



Plaza Dorrego

European-style plaza in charming San Telmo



Café Tortoni

Legendary literary and tango café



Madero Tango

Amazing Argentinean cuisine and fun



Diabla (La)

Tango, salsa & rock'n'roll dance classes



Beba (La)

Tango and milonga



El Caminito

Colorful rowhouses in BA's original port



Vuelta de Rocha

Venue for the birth of tango



Caminito Tango Show

Criollo 'n' tango



Barrio de San Telmo

Colonial barrio brims with antiquarian shops

Day 1 - Buenos Aires

QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: 24 hours isn't nearly enough time to experience all of the tango-related activities that Buenos Aires has to offer, but if one day is all you've got, the essentials are easy enough to pick out. Begin with a stroll down El Caminito, the strips of brightly-colored houses in the southern neighborhood of La Boca that is also known as Vuelta de Rocha. Here you will see tango dancers manuvering through the cobblestoned alleys, and you may want to sit and enjoy a show during your lunch. Note that this is the single most touristy spot in all of Buenos Aires, so the prices are inflated and the quality relatively low, but the sights are enjoyable nonetheless. Catch the bus or a taxi to the neighborhood that borders La Boca to the north, San Telmo. Also a traditional tango neighborhood, San Telmo's Plaza Dorrego tends to have less flashy, more sophisticated tango duos performing for the guests at the plaza's outdoor tables. You can also just watch from the edges of the square or take a seat on the low stone wall that borders Plaza Dorrego. From here continue north to Cafe Tortoni on Avenida de Mayo. Tortoni is one of the oldest still-functioning cafes in the city, and is certainly one of the most grand. Very affordable afternoon and evening tango shows run throughout the week - reservations must be made for this most authentic (and very intimate) of tango shows. If the World Tango Festival is in town, this is the time to check it out. Look at the website to get the schedule of events, which run throughout the day, all over the city. If your wallet is up to it, make a reservation at Madeo Tango for a dinner show, where you will be dazzled by the spectacle of glamorous, high-kicking men and women, as you learn a little bit about the history and development of the dance as a cultural movement. If the show leaves you itching to get out on the dance floor and try for yourself, La Diabla is where you want to be, where you can partake in tango classes led by professional dancers. The classes give way to the public as the night goes on and La Diabla transforms from a dance school to a milonga (tango club). If you haven't quite quenched the tango bug, finish your night at La Beba, another milonga.

contact:

tel: +54 (0)11 4545 2073
<http://www.museosargentinos.org/museos/museo.asp>

location:

Caminito entre Magallanes y Lamadrid.
Buenos Aires 1160

1 El Caminito

DESCRIPTION: This open-air "museum" brings the brushstrokes of painter Benito Quinquela Martín to life in its colors, sculptures and ceramics. In fact, more than a museum, it is an art market where a constant exhibit of works inspired by the surrounding port area and neighborhood are sold. A stroll through here is sure to thrill the tourist for its uniqueness and air of bohemia. Humble dwellings painted in vibrant colors frame the pedestrian street known as el Caminito and immortalized in a tango tune of the same name. Its first inhabitants were the working-class Genoese immigrants who settled along this path, which led from the river to the railroad tracks and is now home to innovative artists. Italian cantinas can be found in the surrounding vicinity near the port area. © wcities.com



wcities

location:

Magallanes Street
Buenos Aires Buenos Aires
1270

hours:

Daily 24 hours

2 Vuelta de Rocha

DESCRIPTION: These picturesque city blocks run along the edge of the winding river inlet Riachuelo, in the famous port neighborhood of La Boca. Genoese immigrants, settling here in the early 1900s, built their housing on elevated sidewalks as a precaution against flooding. Wrought iron balconies characterize these dwellings, painted in spectacular colors, originally from leftover paint from the dockyard ships. Together with the port and the railroad, Vuelta de Rocha, comprises



a unique district, rich in immigrant history and heritage. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 54 11 43011520
fax: 54 11 43011530

location:
Del Valle Iberlucea 1158
Buenos Aires 1160

hours:
10p–5a F-Su

3 Caminito Tango Show

DESCRIPTION: Criollo cuisine, from the north of Argentina, is an obvious stimulus for foodies to step into the Caminito Tango Show. Another reason being the Tango, which is Argentina's famed dance form. The entrance fee includes supper and drinks. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:
tel: +54 11 4312 2232 (Tourist Information)
http://www.buenosairesantiguo.com.ar/paginasbsashoy/san_telmo.html

location:
Defensa 1200
Buenos Aires 1065

4 Barrio de San Telmo

DESCRIPTION: In 1871, with the outbreak of Yellow Fever, these mansions were soon overtaken by squatters, creating the city's historic conventillos (tenement houses). It was not until 1970 that an edict stipulated protection for property owners. Today the neighborhood of San Pedro Telmo is an important historic corner of the city. Locals and tourists alike flock to the Plaza Dorrego on the oldest street in the city, for the antique market and vibrant street performances, including tango. On the corner of Independencia and Balcarce streets is El Viejo Almacén, a traditional tango establishment. © wcities.com



miuchi

contact:
<http://www.bue.gov.ar/recorridos/>

location:
Defensa and Humberto Primo
Buenos Aires Buenos Aires
1065

5 Plaza Dorrego

DESCRIPTION: This historic plaza was the sight of the swearing of National Independence in 1816 before Don Juan Martín de Pueyrredón. During the colony, it was a resting post for wagons travelling from the port to what is now Plaza de Mayo along the first roadway, known today as Calle Defensa. Today it is the site of the San Pedro Telmo Antique Fair, where street performances by tango dancers, musicians, mimes and colourful characters mingle with the painters, antiquarians and street vendors in a bohemian rhapsody of song, dance and nostalgia. Ramble the colonial cobblestone streets of the Barrio de San Telmo to Avenida Independencia and Balcarce, to see El Viejo Almacén from the early colonial days, now a traditional tango bar/restaurant. © wcities.com



~si

contact:

tel: 54 11 4342 4328
<http://www.cafetortoni.com.ar>

location:

Avenida de Mayo 825
Buenos Aires 1084

hours:

M-Th 8a-2a, F-Sa 8a-3a, Su
8a-1a

6 **Café Tortoni**

DESCRIPTION: This café has formed part of the Porteño landscape since 1858. A shrine to local tango culture, it houses the Academia Nacional del Tango and stages performances as well as literary events in the basement. Legendary literati such as the disquieting poets Argentine, Alfonsina Storni and Spanish Federico García Lorca gathered here. Porteño bohemia and nostalgia fuse here over a game of chess, domino and billiards. Chocolate con Churros (hot cocoa and deep fried batter) are a traditional Argentine breakfast. © wcities.com



contact:

tel: 54 11 5239 3009
http://www.maderotango.com/index_eng.htm

location:

Alicia Moreau de Justo and
Brasil
Buenos Aires C1107BSA

hours:

Daily 8p-1a

7 **Madero Tango**

DESCRIPTION: If you visit Buenos Aires, you must see a great tango show and taste the amazing Argentinean meat. Madero Tango lets you kill two birds with one stone. The cuisine is led by up and coming chef Martiniano Molina and offers not only the best meat cuts, but also world-class signature dishes as well. And while you are eating, highly regarded dancer Mora Godoy performs "Tangorama," a wonderful journey throughout the world of tango. Friday is the best day to see the show as the full house creates a wonderful atmosphere. You should make a reservation to avoid unpleasant surprises. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: 54 11 47835814

location:

Monroe 2317
Buenos Aires Buenos Aires
1428

hours:

7:30p-late Thu-Sat

Diabla (La)

DESCRIPTION: La Diabla is located in a lively area in the Belgrano district. This club, unlike others, opens its doors at 7:30pm for tango, salsa, or rock & roll lessons (depending on the day). Professional dancers teach the basic steps, so that beginners don't feel out of place when the real dancing gets under way after the lessons end. It has a bar on each of its two floors. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: 54 11 4854 9226
http://www.welcomeargentina.com/tango/lugares_i.html

location:

1462 Alvarez Thomas
Buenos Aires Buenos Aires
1427

hours:

Call for details

8 **Beba (La)**

DESCRIPTION: This is a neat dance hall in the district of Villa Ortúzar, in front of where composer and pianist Osvaldo Pugliese used to live. His daughter supports the meetings with suburban gracefulness. Patrons' ages are around the 40 years, although the inclusion of tango classes draws young people. Everything moves to the rhythm of the two by four, presided over by disc jockey Néstor Farkas (recognized operator of Radio del Mundo) who also knows to mix some waltzes, milongas and several jazz classics. © wcities.com



Sebastián-Dario

Buenos Aires Snapshot

History

Ports are doorways, and the history of Buenos Aires can best be entered through its port. "The Port City", as the colonizers called it, allowed commerce into a region so vast that it reached the lands of what is now Perú.

On February 2, 1536, the conqueror Don Pedro de Mendoza arrived by land at the coast of Buenos Aires. His mission was to populate the lands of the Rio de la Plata, which were of great interest to the Spanish crown. Mendoza christened the city Espiritu Santo and named its port Nuestra Señora del Buen Aire. He was faced with food scarcities and hostilities from the indigenous people that stifled his progress. For these reasons, he decided to leave and return to Spain.

Nearly 40 years later, Juan de Garay arrived on a second attempt: on May 29, 1580, he made the second founding. Garay and his crew began working to organize the city. They selected the highest ground as a defensive point against potential attacks. The acclaimed monument, Palo de la Justicia, was built on what today is the la In addition, they organized the Cabildo, which was the highest administrative institution, and they erected a church where the Metropolitan Cathedral now stands. The city was then named Santísima Trinidad, and its port, Santa María de los Buenos Aires.

Not until the 18th Century and the creation of the viceroyalty did Buenos Aires cease to be a village. The first viceroy of the transformation, Juan José de Vértiz, installed street lamps, cobblestones and the first printing press. The fort was used as the seat of the viceroy, located on the site of the current government offices. Another point of reference from this era is the church of San Ignacio. Constructed by the Jesuits, it is one of the oldest buildings in the city.

Buenos Aires played an essential role as the main connecting port for goods between the New World and Europe. Tempted by the growing business of the port, the English tried to take control of the river, invading the city of Buenos Aires in 1806 and 1807. Both attempts failed.

In 1810, with King Fernando VII in prison and the Seville council in French hands, the town of Buenos Aires rose up in the famous

May Revolution. The people revoked the viceroy's title, and on May 25, the First Government Council was formed with Cornelio Saavedra presiding. This was the first step toward the independence of the provinces of the Rio de la Plata, proclaimed on July 9, 1816. This date is still celebrated as Argentina's most important national holiday.

Buenos Aires grew. In 1857 the first railroads appeared, in 1865, the streetcars, and in 1876, the first shipment of wheat left for Europe. The bonanza prompted the declaration of Buenos Aires as the country's capital(1880). The city extended from what is now the Plaza Once to the Riachuelo River.

The Romantic style and the latest Art Nouveau design from the old continent began to appear in buildings such as the Children's Hospital and the Escuela Normal de Maestras. The typical Buenos Aires tenement houses or conventillos that housed the European immigrants clashed with the new palaces. Slowly, Buenos Aires had grown from a small port town into a large city that emulated the cities of Europe, and European immigrants fed this growth. First arrived the Italians and the Spanish, the majority of whom were poor farmers. Afterward came the Jews, Poles, Croats, Czechs and Ukrainians, among others.

In the beginning, immigration policies were very liberal, but with time, the pretentious Argentine oligarchy decided to close its doors to all but Northern Europeans, which led to the English arriving in numbers. They were bankers, office workers, engineers and financial experts. They designed the railroad network, and their architectural designs were stamped across train stations and the docks of the port. In 1895, 72 out of every 100 Buenos Aires inhabitants were foreigners.

Two main events characterized 20th-century Argentina: successive military coups commanded by the Fuerzas Armadas and the birth of a native political movement known as Peronism.

The leader of this movement, Juan Domingo Perón, was elected president three times. He rose to power in 1946 with the support of the lower classes and the labor unions. With him, the lower classes were able to participate in political

action. In addition, he redistributed the nation's wealth, and the state took control of public services. Another feature of Perón's government was the growing publicity of his wife, Eva Duarte and the myth of the eternal "Evita" asking for Argentina not to cry for her. From the offices of the Ministry of Labor, Evita personally sought aid for the poor through social welfare.

But the role of Evita was always controversial. Los Descamisados ("the shirtless ones"), as she called the poor, adored her to the extent of giving up their lives for her. The upper classes, on the other hand, considered her an opportunist blinded by power. In 1952, during her husband's second presidency, Evita fell victim to cancer. In 1955, the military overthrew Perón, and he was banished to Madrid. After 18 years in exile, Perón returned to power in 1973. One year later, upon the death of Perón, the presidency reverted to his new wife Isabel. The country was submerged in social violence, and the government's disarray led to another coup d'état.

Among all of Argentina's 20th-century dictatorships, that of 1976 was the worst. The military named Jorge Videla president and supreme commander of the three Armed Forces. He devised a plan to combat the subversive elements of the population (the extreme right and left of the political spectrum). The military created a sort of terrorist state and used it to control and persecute political dissidents. The military kidnapped children, assassinated people and left 30,000 people missing. Even today, relatives still search for their loved ones.

In 1982, Argentina declared war against England for sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, in order to justify the continuation of the military's political plan. The war ended with the defeat of Argentine forces. This episode served to end the dictatorship and marked the return of democracy to Argentina. Human rights organizations started to demand information about missing people, and political parties began campaigns and designated presidential candidates. Five million people showed up at the polls, making clear the population's desire to participate in democratic elections.

On December 10, 1983, Raúl Alfonsín assumed the presidency and was handed

Buenos Aires Snapshot continued

a nation in total turmoil. During his time in office, he prosecuted the military juntas. The courts condemned the leaders, but the ratification of the laws of Punto Final and Obediencia Debida granted freedom for the lower-ranking officials. Afterwards came the pardons of President Carlos Menem. Today, most of the leaders who participated in the coup d'état of 1976 remain at large, but are still wanted on international charges. The Argentine courts continue to investigate them on charges of illegal appropriation of minors.

©

Hotel Insights

Buenos Aires offers a wide variety of accommodations in distinct neighborhoods throughout the city; from classic hotels that combine grandiose historical touches with modern infrastructure to personalized boutique hotels to youthful party-centric hostels simple lodgings for the occasional tourist or the restless adventurer, the huge number of lodging options in town can be overwhelming. Many of the city's classic hotels are now owned by international chains, upping the standard of guest attention and comfort.

Recoleta

For travelers who want to stay close to fine museums and restaurants, check out hotels in Recoleta: one of the more expensive and exclusive neighborhoods in Buenos Aires, known for its leafy manicured avenues and upscale shopping. The Caesar Park gets high marks and any person strolling down Calle Posadas will be impressed with its classic European exterior. Inside, the glass cupola lets in ample sunlight and affords a view of the surrounding foliage. Since 1932, the Alvear Palace Hotel has been impressing visitors and is regarded as one of the best hotels in the city; don't miss the extravagant afternoon tea service. For old-world elegance and comfort, there is the wonderfully spacious Hotel Plaza Francia and the equally charming Etoile Hotel, which has a jacuzzi in each room. Combining luxury and sophistication with a touch of French style is the Kempinski Hotel Park Plaza; the hotel is a stone's throw from one of the most upscale shopping centers in Buenos Aires, Patio Bullrich.

Also in Recoleta is the majestic Four Seasons, which occupies the Alzaga Unzué

palace. Construction of this building, which flanks one end of Avenida 9 de Julio, began in 1916 during a flourishing period of urban and economic growth, and the interior of this French-style mansion evokes the memory of the old Argentine aristocracy. A modern apart-tower, constructed by the hotel in recent years, has luxury suites that have hosted such international celebrities as Madonna, Michael Jackson, and the Rolling Stones. For those looking for an alternative lodging experience, try the high-end contemporary boutique hotel, CE Design. A tall narrow tower of concrete, glass and steel, the hotel has a swish bar and dipping pool on the basement level. Creative types might try the spacious, terraced Art Hotel apart suites.

El Centro

While downtown Buenos Aires is mainly known as the city's business district, there is no shortage of perfectly amenable accommodations and nearby entertainment and transportation options for practical travelers. The Claridge was built during Argentina's glamorous belle époque years in the first quarter of the 20th century, a beautiful symbol of that era's architecture and the city's first five-star hotel. The grandeur of the hotel was commemorated by a prize in 1992 for best historical façade in Buenos Aires. The historic employee-run Bauen Hotel offers amenable, 1970s-retro rooms in a delightfully Socialist-tinged atmosphere. For a more customized hotel experience, give the small, stylish, no-fuss Tryp Buenos Aires a try.

Retiro

Long thought a hub for business travelers and conventioners for its proximity to the statuesque Estación Retiro train station and wealth of business hotels like the enormous Sheraton Hotel & Convention Center, the central Retiro district has undergone a revival in recent years and is now home to stylish boutique hotels, design and fashion shops, and swish dining spots and watering holes that offer a variety of options for all types of travelers.

The neighborhood's shining star is the leafy, sprawling Plaza San Martín, surrounded by elegant buildings, including the 325-room luxury Marriott Plaza Hotel, complete with the classic Plaza Bar, always open to the public and well worth a happy hour martini. The Sheraton Libertador Hotel, the less corporate sister to the convention

center, features one of the most popular restaurants in the city, La Pergola. The gorgeous Sofitel Buenos Aires is well-located on Calle Arroyo, Retiro's main art drag and the site for the occasional Gallery Nights open-air art events.

Independent, green-minded travelers might check into Casa Calma, a New Age-type accommodation with jacuzzis and saunas in each room. Families have two great options in the area, the Lafayette Hotel and the Hotel Diplomat. Both are moderately priced and offer great continental breakfasts.

Montserrat

The beautiful, crumbling buildings of Montserrat give an old-world charm to the area, which lies conveniently between charming San Telmo and bustling downtown and is home to several prime options for accommodations. The minimalist art deco Moreno Hotel offers boutique, personalized lodging and access to the tranquil garden or rooftop terrace. The beautiful best-kept secret of the neighborhood is the 1820s home-turned-hotel La Cayetana, where rooms sport exposed brick walls and excellent views of the leafy garden.

The Intercontinental is one of the city's larger, moderately-priced options, ideal for corporate types and with full use of the spa and gym for guests. For tango enthusiasts, the Gran Hotel Hispano and the Concorde Hotel are both conveniently located near many tango halls in this, one of the original tango districts. Two hotels located on picturesque Avenida de Mayo are the Gran Hotel Vedra and the Astoria Hotel, a comfortable place to take the family.

Palermo

Posh Palermo is a favorite landing pad for many of Buenos Aires' visitors- Palermo Viejo in particular is ideal for its hip shopping, dining, drinking, and clubbing options on every block. Cool upscale lodging in this area is a cinch; visitors only have to decide whether they prefer the wholly personalized attention at Tailor Made Hotel, the swish luxury at Legado Mitico, or the funky artists' touches at Craft Hip Hotel. Grab evening cocktails poolside on the rooftop terrace at Nuss, and reserve early for Sunday brunch in Home Hotel's tranquil garden. Looking for something really unique? Take over an entire level of award-

Buenos Aires Snapshot continued

winning director Francis Ford Coppola's private residence-turned boutique bed and breakfast, Jardin Escondido, complete with customized regional wine selections and a peek into the maestro's own DVD collection.

© NileGuide

Restaurants Insights

Three hundred years after its second founding in 1580, the port city of Buenos Aires started to thrive on the banks of therío de la Plata. Over this 25-kilometer(15-mile) slope, the city grew and developed, especially in the areas of fine food production, and meat and grain export. The diversity of immigrants who settled in Buenos Aires brought a variety of cultures and, of course, flavors to the region.

Like any bustling metropolitan city, Buenos Aires offers a broad array of dining options. The city is now host to an increasing number of Asian and European restaurants, but is still best known for its parrillas (steak houses) and Italian restaurants. Pizza is as popular here as in any college dorm room. There are a few other things one should keep in mind about dining in Argentina. Breakfast usually consists of medialunas (mini croissants with powdered sugar), or other small pastries, and coffee of course. Americans expecting bacon and eggs will be ridiculed. The most popular time to go out to dinner is probably between 8:30p and 10p. Wines are very common, especially the local red Malbec, which is bold and smooth, often inexpensive, and goes well with many different meals. Coffee is as popular as wine. Most waiters speak English and often Italian. For dessert, dulce de leche (caramel) is king. Don't forget to try a cup of maté (traditional Argentine tea), which is as essential to Argentina's culinary culture as the famous Argentine beef.

Puerto Madero

Parrillas are like enormous steak houses that throw every cut on the grill, and they are some of the best and most well-known restaurants in the city. Siga La Vaca is a great place for a large group. One flat fee and you get all you can eat beef, side dishes and enough wine to draw a bath. Another option on the beautiful docks is the Spettus Steak House. Specialty dishes vary, but the best thing to do is ask the

chef what the best-looking cut of beef is for the day and you won't be steered wrong. One note of caution: be careful what you order because they will serve you parts of the cow you probably thought weren't edible. If you're not in the mood for steak after mulling that over, try Pizza Banana. They offer pizzas with some outrageous fruit and seafood toppings. Don't forget to comfortable shoes because the dance floor gets crowded in the evenings. Also check out Katrine, where the pastas are sublime and the salmon with shrimp and vegetables is a special treat.

San Telmo

San Telmo is another neighborhood known for its restaurants, but the real focus is on tango. Often these two go hand-in-hand as dinner precedes a music or dance show. San Telmo has a reputation for being a bit touristy and consequently being overpriced, but there is still a lot to see and taste here. At La Trastienda, you can order a few empanadas and watch actors, dancers or musicians, depending on the day. For an Japanese treat, Kitayama is an elegant restaurant that serves traditional Japanese cuisine- first and foremost, sushi. La Divina Comedia is as much a social destination as it is a restaurant, very much in accordance with the Argentine way.

Recoleta

Recoleta is the most refined neighborhood in Buenos Aires. Some of the most renowned international dining spots are located here. The famous La Biela is a very traditional café/bar with a lot of local flavor, especially suitable for racing fans. It was once a mecca for racing aficionados and has since retained much of that appeal. For a decidedly upscale outing, Lola is the perfect choice. One of the trendiest places in Buenos Aires, Lola serves contemporary French and European cuisine and is adorned with the artistic works of Hermenegildo Sabat. Champagne is a must, as is the Nahuel Trout with Pine Nuts. For something less ostentatious, there is Circolo Italiano, which offers lots of different dishes, all reasonably priced, including a tantalizing mushroom risotto.

Palermo

Palermo is probably the hottest area in Buenos Aires. There are lots of young people, lots of new bars, and yes, restaurants springing up left and right. El

Trapiche is great for large groups, but don't be surprised if you have to wait- this place is constantly crowded. Another option is Katmandú for Nepalese/Indian food and an intimate atmosphere. Or try Thymus for characteristically classy French cuisine, including spicy grilled deer, at surprisingly low prices.

La Boca

Barrica Restaurante & Bistrot, which also features live tango, is located in this neighborhood famous for its Italian immigrants. For tapas along the seafront try La Ribera where you can try some spicy seafood and right near the crafts market.

Belgrano

Mexican food can be hard to come by in the city, but Frida Kahlo in Belgrano serves tasty tacos and lots of tequila. Nearby Sucre offers a more stylish dining experience, but you'll need a bit more cash. There are also plenty of economical restarants that serve wonderful food and great wines, try Zurich Confitería, a place where the young hang out and Oviedo, where you can search through a list of international wines.

Centro

A classic tourist destination is Café Tortoni in the incomparable plaza de Mayo. Coffee and pastry dishes here are popular, but the classic decor is the real selling point. Not to mention loads of wine and regular tango and jazz shows. Famous politicians and literary figures used to frequent this famous spot, which is rumored to be the oldest café in Buenos Aires. And for those looking for a pint of Guinness, go to Temple Bar, named after the Dublin neighborhood. For a traditional setting, try Asador La Estancia, this restaurant serves food in the style of the gaucho or the Argentine cowboy. It has been in business for 30 years and regarded as an institution. The most visited Italian restaurant in the downtown area is Broccolino, a place where the multi-lingual staff will certainly help you decide on one the tasty plates. If you would like to have your tarot read while waiting for your drinks, go to Memorabilia, an eccentric restaurant that specializes in pizza.

©

Buenos Aires Snapshot continued

Nightlife Insights

Buenos Aires has everything you expect from a large cosmopolitan city, including fabulous round-the-clock entertainment options.

Art

Art galleries are found scattered throughout the capital. In Recoleta, the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes displays a permanent exhibition of Argentine works. The Centro Cultural Recoleta houses art from all over the world. Modern paintings and sculptures can be found across the street in the Palais de Glace. Towards the north end of the city, the Palermo neighborhood boasts the Museo Nacional de Arte Decorativo, the Museo de Arte Popular José Hernández, and the Museo de Artes Plásticas. Further north, in the charming Belgrano district, there is the Museo de Arte Español. All of these museums and galleries display both permanent and temporary exhibits, in addition to hosting conferences, classes, musical and theatrical performances, and guided tours.

Movies

Two streets, Corrientes and Lavalle, have the majority of the city's traditional movie theaters, although there are many U.S.-style theater complexes inside malls and shopping centers like the Alto Palermo Shopping and the Abasto de Buenos Aires. All but children's movies are shown in their original languages with subtitles. Certain venues show uncommon and alternative films, including the Sala Leopoldo Lugones. Check the local newspapers or their Internet movie listings to get the current schedules.

Dance

The sultry cadence and moves of the tango can be seen in many of the bars located in the San Telmo district, including El Viejo Almacén, the Bar Sur and Tango Taconeando. For those wishing to learn a few a steps, there are many dance halls spread around the city, such as the La Viruta Tango Bar and La Beba in Palermo. In Belgrano, there is La Diabla and downtown there is La Academia Nacional del Tango.

In addition, Buenos Aires has flamenco, folk music, salsa, merengue, samba, rock& roll

and hip-hop classes or dance halls spread around the city.

Museums

Historic and theme museums abound throughout the city. These include the Museo Histórico Nacional, on the Parque Lezama; and the Museo del Cabildo in front of the presidential palace, which has its own museum, the Museo de la Casa de Gobierno. Other museums of interest include the Museo Etnográfico, the Carlos Gardel Museum, the Museo Judío de Buenos Aires, the Natural Sciences Museum, the Puppet Museum, the Film Museum, the Museo de Cera, and a recent addition, the National Museum of Man. Caminito in La Boca neighborhood is clearly an open-air museum of its own. Lastly, visit the floating Fragata Sarmiento Museum, moored in Dock 3 by the promenade in the chic San Telmo district.

Music

All year round, Buenos Aires tango music thrives at Viejo Almacén, La Ventana, Señor Tango and Tango Taconeando, all in the San Telmo district. Brazilian music prevails at Maluco Beleza on Sarmiento. Government-sponsored open-air shows take place at different plazas throughout the city. The San Martín Cultural Center hosts musical performances, including classical, opera and national music. Rock concerts featuring famous international artists are often held in the River Plate Stadium and the Bombonera and the famous Luna Park. Café Tortoni is famous for its tango and jazz shows held in the café's cellar.

Theaters

Dozens of theaters can be found throughout Buenos Aires offering a little taste of everything. The Gran Rex hosts top musical shows. The Teatro Cervantes is an architectural masterpiece, while the Teatro Municipal General San Martín is more modern and avant garde in its presentations. Cultural centers include the Centro Ricardo Rojas, the Centro Cultural Recoleta and the Teatro de la Ribera in La Boca. Others of interest include the Teatro Maipo, along with alternative theaters like La Trastienda.

Cafes, Bars& Nightlife

As legendary as Prague's café society, Buenos Aires is a paradise for Bohemian

lifestyles. The whole city seems to enjoy the burst of creativity a demitasse of espresso can provide. Here too, coffeehouses have been meeting points for famous poets, politicians and even revolutionaries. Las Violetas is a historic cafe and Café Tortoni has preserved its original style.

In the administrative district, foreigners popularized Happy Hour, especially in the Irish and English pubs around Retiro district. This includes the The Shamrock.

Hot nightlife defines the city, and most establishments stay open until the wee hours. Some of the hotspots include La Trastienda in San Telmo; La Ideal in downtown; Caix and Pizza Banana around the Costanera area. Tango is found in the districts of San Telmo and La Boca, flamenco in Palermo, and salsa throughout the city. As in Spain, people start hitting the dance floors after midnight. Most clubs and bars stay open until daybreak, as do some restaurants and pizzerias.

©

Things to Do Insights

Put on your best shoes and prepare yourself for a stroll into Buenos Aires! Whether you tour the city on your own or take a guided tour, you'll be sure to find creative and fascinating entertainment and people. One of the best ways to explore the city is to go to one location and explore the area close to the attraction.

Plaza de Mayo

Every side of the Plaza de Mayo contains an essential piece of history. You'll find the monument Pirámide de Mayo, the Catedral Metropolitana and the National Bank of Argentina. Along busy Bolívar street lies the historic Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires and the San Ignacio Basilica. You can also find Manzana de las Luces "block of lights," at the intersection of Calle Perú. If you get hungry stop by world famous Café Tortoni, full of history and popular with both tourists and locals. For lunch, dinner and a tango show, El Querandí is highly recommended.

Recoleta Cemetery

Visit the famous City of the Dead at Cementerio de la Recoleta where the remains of Evita and other celebrities lie here. Close by is the Plaza Francia and the Centro Cultural Recoleta, an avant garde cultural center. Across the park in

Buenos Aires Snapshot continued

opposite directions you will find the Palais de Glace and the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Take a break in one of the outdoor cafes surrounding the plaza. La Biela and Café de La Paix both offer great people watching.

Teatro Municipal General San Martín

Drop by the Teatro Municipal General San Martín, renowned for the quality of its shows and plays. You can also seek the Bohemian lifestyle in Retiro district bars such as Seddon and Filo. You can also enjoy changing exhibits, classes and shows at Centro Cultural Borges. For avant-garde art head to Fundación Federico Jorge Klemm.

Plaza Dorrego

Located in the historic San Telmo district, Plaza Dorrego is the famous location of the swearing of National Independence in 1816. Every Sunday the plaza holds a San Telmo Antiques Fair where you can shop as well as enjoy live music and performances. Nearby Museo Histórico Nacional is one of the oldest museums in the country and has interesting exhibits. For authentic tango, great music and dance performances, go to Viejo Almacén. On a hot day stop by Nonna Bianca for a cool treat.

Buenos Aires is a fantastic city to explore on your own, with friendly locals and an interesting attraction on practically every corner. However, if you want to learn more about an attraction's significance and history, then a guided tour may be your answer. There are a lot of tours you can choose from.

Walking Tours Buenos Aires Tours(<http://www.buenostours.com/buenos-aires-tours>) BA Walking Tours(+ 54 11 15 5773 1001/ <http://www.ba-walking-tours.com/>)

Bus Tours Hotel Inter-Continental City Tour(+ 54 11 4340 7100) Gray Line(+ 54 11 4375 1976/ <http://www.grayline.com/Grayline/destinations/latinamerica/buenosaires.go>)

Specialty Tours Artists' Atelier Tour(+ 54 11 4814 8700/ <http://www.galeriadearte5006.com.ar/>) Taste of Argentina(+ 1 800 670 6984/ <http://www.mythsandmountains.com/>)

Outside the City Tours Amazing Argentina Tours(+1 800 704 2915/ <http://www.amazingargentina.net/>)

Kallpa Tour(+ 54 11 4394 1830/ <http://www.kallpatour.com/>)

©

Travel Tips

Getting There

By Air

If you are descending into Buenos Aires from outside Argentina, you will touch down at Ministro Pistarini International Airport, more commonly known as the Ezeiza Airport, which resides 34 kilometers(21 miles) from the city center. All domestic flights fly into Aeroparque Metropolitano Jorge Newbery(AEP), but unless you are coming to Buenos Aires from another Argentinean city by air, you will never see this place. The relatively small Ezeiza Airport has three terminals, although Aerolíneas Argentinas(the national airline) takes up one(B) and the other is private(C). Thus, all international airlines taxi up to Terminal A. The selection of retail outlets, including duty free shops, and restaurants and cafes is modest, but you won't go hungry and will be able to take home plenty of last minute impulse buy souvenirs. A post office, ATMs and a currency exchange bank are also in terminal A.

Ministro Pistarini International Airport(EZE)+54 11 5480 6111<http://www.aa2000.com.ar/>

Major airlines at Ezeiza include:

Air France(+1 800 237 2747/ <http://www.airfrance.com/>) Alitalia(+1 800 223 5730/ <http://www.alitalia.com/>) American Airlines(+1 800 433 7300/ <http://www.aa.com/>) British Airways(+1 800 217 9297/ <http://www.ba.com/>) Lufthansa(+1 800 803 5838/ <http://www.lufthansa.com/>) United(+1 800 864 8331/ <http://www.ual.com/>)

From the Airport

Taxi: You will quickly know all about the taxi services at the airport as droves of anxious drivers beg for fares inside the arrivals area, especially in terminal A, where international flights pull in. Haggling is an art form with these guys and you might just get a cheap fare into town or you might end up mugged. If you would rather do things by the book(the wise choice), find a taxi desk(+54 11 4295 5760) and book

an official cab there. Most rides take 45 minutes and fares start at USD30.

Bus: You can catch a bus with Manuel Tinadal Leon(+54 11 5480 0374/ <http://www.tiendaleon.com.ar/>) every 30 minutes from 6a-1:30a. A single one way fare into downtown costs USD18-USD32. The company also has a fleet of remise(town cars, minicabs and limos) to get you to the Capital Federal in style. Prices start at USD48. Transfer Express(+54 11 4852 6776) and VIP Car(+54 11 5480 4590) also have remise service.

Car Rentals: Car hire companies have desks in Terminal A on the ground level. For the drive into town take the General Ricchieri Expressway northeast and exit at Avenida 9 de Julio. Turn north from there to hit downtown. Car rental companies include:

Localzia(+54 11 4480 0431/ <http://www.localiza.com.ar/>) Dollar(+54 11 4315 8800/ <http://www.dollarcar.com/>) Annie Millet/Hertz(+54 11 4480 0054/ <http://www.milletrentacar.com.ar/>) Avis(+54 11 4480 9387/ <http://www.avis.com/>)

By Bus

Close to 100 companies covering all of Argentina and most of the other countries on the continent compete for business at the city's massive bus station, Estación Terminal de Omnibus. Make sure you book on a "diferencial" bus, which is usually a comfortable double decker, with cushy seats that recline, an onboard restroom, snack service and the all important bar for the long distances in between destinations. Fares are a bit more than on "comun" buses(which translates to miserable trip on a bus with no shocks and seats that make school buses seem cozy), but the extra cost is more than worth it, especially if the trip is lengthy.

By Water

Several cruise lines navigate the Rio de la Plata from the Atlantic Ocean and call at the Puerto Buenos Aires(+54 11 4342 1727/ <http://www.puertobuenosaires.gov.ar/>). The port is literally the gateway to the central city, so tourists have minimal ground to cover. Ferries and hydrofoils managed by Ferrylineas(+54 11 4314 4580/ <http://www.ferryturismo.com.uy/>) and Buquebus(+54 11 4316 6500/ <http://www.buquebus.com/>) link the port with various cities in Uruguay.

Buenos Aires Snapshot continued

Getting Around

Public Transport

The Subte(subway/underground)(+54 11 4959 6800/ <http://www.metrovias.com.ar/>) is the oldest in Latin America dating back to 1913, and most of the five lines have not been extended an inch since. But the system is still safe, cheap and efficient and stops near most tourist happy areas.

The colectivos(a.k.a. city buses) (www.loscolectivos.com.ar) make up a hodgepodge of buses traversing to all points of the city. Generally the system is a positive and inexpensive complement to the Subte, but before you jump in head first, make sure you pick up a network map. Routes can be bewildering and it doesn't take much to end up someplace you never intended to visit. Many buses operate 24 hours.

Car

Driving around the city is the last thing you want to do if enjoying your stay in Buenos Aires is the ultimate goal. Roads can be baffling and the drivers seem to make up the rules on the fly, but if you happen to have a vehicle to investigate the outer regions of the country, then seek out a car park while you are in town and take to the streets on foot or utilize public transportation. Herds of taxis rove the streets searching for fares and for the most part hailing one is safe, but there are always stories here or there about the tourist who was stiffed or the taxi that was jacked. Basically, if you have a bad feeling, just do not get in the cab, or call to have one pick you up from the likes of City Taxi(+54 11 4585 5544) or Radio Taxi Pidaló(+54 11 4956 1200).

Train

If you are hankering to explore the suburbs, six private commuter rail lines managed by various companies including Trenes Buenos Aires(+54 11 4317 4400/ <http://www.tbanet.com.ar/>) will give you a taste of residential life in the city.

©

Fun Facts

1. Random fact: The standard greeting in Argentina is a kiss on one cheek; men kiss women and vice versa, women kiss women, and men kiss men, whether meeting for the very first time or having already seen one another several times in the same day. Note that failing to greet each person in a group with a kiss is considered rude.

2. The official Argentine currency is the peso. There are bills of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100 pesos, and coins of 1 peso and 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50 cents. A major shortage of coins in Buenos Aires results

3. Fun fact: The tango originated in brothels in the immigrant ghetto of Buenos Aires in the late 19th century, in what is the present-day harbor of La Boca. Various other folkloric dances popped up in other parts of Argentina, like the foot-stomping, kerchief-swinging chacarera, from the north.

4. The Universidad de Buenos Aires(UBA) was founded in 1821 and is the largest institution of higher education in the country, a nation with a 96% literacy rate.

5. In Buenos Aires, soccer is religion, and the best-known clubs are River Plate, Boca Juniors, Independiente, Racing Club and San Lorenzo. The nation boasts two World Cup prizes and countless world footie stars.

6. When it comes to tipping, 10% of the amount of the dining check is usually left in cafes and restaurants. Doormen, porters, and ushers in cinemas and theatres are also generally tipped.

7. Avenida 9 de Julio is the widest street in the world at an imposing sixteen lanes. It typically takes at least 2 traffic light rotations to cross.

8. Interesting fact: At 15.2 million, nearly 40% of Argentina's population of more than 40 million lives in the greater Buenos Aires metropolitan area. The most recent national census took place on October 27, 2010, coinciding with the death of former president Nestor Kirchner, husband of current president Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner.

9. Argentina is one of the leading producers of wines ever since the 16th century and has approximately 1,800 wineries currently.

10. Argentine Spanish spoken in and around Buenos Aires is distinctly different from that spoken elsewhere in Latin America. Aside from a heavy accent, the language is peppered with lunfardo, a local slang derived from the era of tango.

11. Weird fact: Buenos Aires celebrates St. Patrick's Day each March 17th with a massive downtown pub crawl.

12. The city of Buenos Aires has 48 districts called "barrios". Recoleta, Palermo, Boedo, Caballito, San Cristobal and Puerto Madero are some of the districts in the city. When the city was federalized in 1880, the city limits were extended to include the former towns of Belgrano and Flores, now two of the city's largest barrios.

© NileGuide