

# Important Names & Addresses

## In the United States

### Learning Abroad Center

Study, Work, Intern, Volunteer, & Travel Services

University of Minnesota

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612.625.9383

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612.625.9888

In case of emergency, contact the Learning Abroad Center at 612.626.9000 at any time. After business hours, page the emergency beeper number given on the voicemail. The Learning Abroad Center has someone on call to deal with emergencies and can contact the on-site director if needed.

## In Argentina

### Fundación Ortega y Gasset—Argentina

Viamonte esq. San Martín

Centro Cultural Borges, 3° Piso

C1053ABK Buenos Aires, Argentina

Phone: 54.11.4314.2809

Fax: 54.11.5555.5452

[www.ortegaygasset.com.ar](http://www.ortegaygasset.com.ar)

Inés Viñuales—Director

Beatriz Comte—Program Coordinator

Carola Bracco—Student Coordinator

Diego Vélez Funes—Coordinator

**Please make copies of this information to give to family and friends.**

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*The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities and employment, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status or sexual orientation.*

# Program Calendar

## Spring Semester 2008

Departure	January 19
Arrival	January 20
On Site Orientation	January 20
First day of classes	January 22
Spring break	TBA
Last day of program	May 2

## Introduction

With over one-third of Argentines living in and around the capital, vibrant Buenos Aires provides the ideal backdrop for the study of Argentine language and culture. As one of the foremost economic centers of Latin America, and the political and economic heart of Argentina, it is also the ideal place to delve into the complex history and present state of Argentina's government and business. Boasting several premier universities and a lively student population, Buenos Aires is renowned for its museums, theatre, restaurants, high fashion, polo events, and soccer matches that inspire passionate inter-city rivalries. Despite this larger-than-life quality, Buenos Aires still retains small neighborhoods, the barrios, each with its own unique character.

While in Buenos Aires, you will be working with the Fundación Jose Ortega y Gasset. They are located next to the Galerías Pacifico on Calle Florida in central Buenos Aires. You will check email, take classes, and receive all program support at the Fundación.

There are many similarities between Argentina and the United States, but in many ways Argentine society and culture is not like our own. Although some differences may seem obvious, it is important to prepare yourself for your upcoming experience by reading the enclosed information carefully and by preparing for unexpected differences in the new culture. While the program can provide support for you on-site, the ultimate success of your experience abroad depends on your ability and commitment to make the most of the experience and to successfully adjust to the changes you will meet.

The information contained in the *On Site Guide* is intended to acquaint you with aspects of Argentine life that may not be familiar to you. It also addresses

academic issues and considerations at your home institution. It is recommended that you take this guide with you to Argentina. Take into consideration that this guide is not comprehensive. You are also encouraged to read other sources of information including the Learning Abroad Center's *Know Before You Go Guide*. The Learning Abroad Center also sells Lonely Planet-Argentina guidebooks for program participants.

To help you along the way, the Learning Abroad Center provides a full range of services from preliminary program advising to assistance with re-entry. As you read through this guide, do not hesitate to contact the Learning Abroad Center or your study abroad adviser with any questions you may have.

*¡Buena suerte!*

## Preparation & Planning

### Documents

**A passport is required to enter Argentina.** Apply for your passport if you have not done so already. Your passport must be valid for the full duration of your stay abroad. If it is due to expire within this period, you should obtain a new one.

A student visa is not required for the program. Once you arrive in Argentina, the program staff will assist you in obtaining and extending your tourist visa.

An International Student Identity Card (ISIC) is recommended. You can obtain this card at the Learning Abroad Center. With your ISIC card, you can enter many places at a cheaper rate than the general public. Use this card as your student ID card. Your home university ID card will not work as a student ID card in Argentina.

Bring a photocopy of your passport and photocopies of any credit cards you plan on using in Argentina.

If your passport is lost or stolen while in Buenos Aires, you should contact the American Embassy. The address of the American Embassy in Buenos Aires is:  
Avenida Colombia 4300—C1425GMN  
Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Phone: 54.11.5777.4533  
Fax: 54.11.5777.4240  
Web site: [usembassy.state.gov/posts.ar1](http://usembassy.state.gov/posts.ar1)

## Customs

You will probably want to buy souvenirs for yourself and gifts to bring back home. You are allowed to bring up to \$400 worth of items purchased in Argentina back to the US without paying duty.

Small gifts under \$50 in value may be mailed to friends duty-free, but only one package per address is allowed. All packages mailed to you are subject to duty. You are advised not to send packages into Argentina; duty on such packages may exceed the value of their contents.

Please note that when you leave Argentina you may be required to pay an airport/departure tax of \$40–\$50 before your return to the US.

## Health & Safety

All participants were required to complete the Health Information form. This information is used to advise the on-site director and the Learning Abroad Center and assist in making any necessary preparations. If there is any further information regarding your health that you would like to share with the program staff, please contact the Learning Abroad Center.

Be sure to bring all necessary prescription medications with you. You should carry a sufficient supply of prescription medications to last for the duration of your stay abroad, and carry a list of the generic names of all of your prescription medication. If you are bringing a large quantity of medication with you, you should also have a statement from your physician explaining the purpose of the medication and all medication should be kept in their original bottles.

No vaccinations are necessary to enter Argentina. If you plan on traveling to jungles, forests, or rural areas in Argentina and South America check out the Center for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for more information on vaccinations. You can also receive vaccinations in

Argentina.

After you arrive, eat and drink lightly for several days until your system has had a chance to adjust to changes in climate and food. In general the water is safe to drink, but drinking a lot of tap water right when you arrive may give you a stomachache. Adjusting to a new diet often causes mild intestinal upsets or diarrhea. If this occurs, let a staff member know. In the event you become ill, notify the on-site staff, who will assist in finding you the appropriate medical care. They are accustomed to dealing with students with similar problems; so don't be afraid to ask for help. Argentine doctors have a very good reputation. In the event of an emergency, or if you are too ill to get out of bed, a doctor will be able to make a house call.

## Health Insurance

The University of Minnesota has contracted with CISI (Cultural Insurance Services International) to provide international health insurance as part of your program fee during your stay in Argentina. Enclosed in your orientation packet is a letter outlining your insurance coverage, copy of the contract, and your insurance card. You are only covered by CISI insurance while you are on the program. If you plan to travel or stay in Argentina after the program is over, you will need to purchase your own international health insurance. CISI will only provide you medical insurance while you are abroad and will not cover you once you return to the US. If you have any questions or need additional information about CISI insurance coverage, please contact the Learning Abroad Center.

The program insurance does not include dental work, and individuals are advised to consult a dentist in the US to take care of any dental concerns before departure.

## Safety

As in most large cosmopolitan cities, safety should always be a concern for students. However, Buenos Aires is relatively safe as long as you know which areas to avoid. During the on-site orientation, the staff at the Fundación will give you a rundown of the city and advise you on where and where not to go.

Please be advised the petty theft is very common in Buenos Aires and Argentina. Many past participants have had digital cameras stolen. If you go out at night, leave your digital camera at home and bring a disposal one with you. iPods are also a hot commodity in

Argentina. Use caution when walking around with expensive items in hand. Whether you are in a homestay or in the student housing, always lock your doors.

### *Relationships*

For many of you, your stay in Argentina will be your first time outside of the United States. Some of you may have the opportunity to make some very good Argentine friends. These types of strong friendships are encouraged and can lead to life-long relationships between you and your newfound friends. Nevertheless, please keep a few words of caution in mind:

Be careful of persons wanting to make your acquaintance very quickly, as they may have an ulterior motive. Meet people in public places during the day, preferably with one or two of your friends. Do not give out your Buenos Aires phone number or address freely, as this can lead to future problems.

Americans are easily identifiable in Argentina. They look and dress differently from Argentines, speak loudly in groups, carry backpacks, wear tennis shoes, and the American accent is unmistakable. Since some people you run into might believe that all Americans are as wealthy as those on TV, an occasion might arise where someone may want to become friends with you in order to obtain your money or your passport. This has happened in the past, and is a serious problem. Use common sense and be cautious.

Entering into a relationship overseas should be approached with the same precautions as at home. It can be very tempting to be charmed by the idea of a Latin romance, but you should consider any relationship carefully, particularly when you are overseas. There are different cultural values and rules regarding dating and relationships. Proceed cautiously, realizing that you are only in the country for a short period of time. If you decide to start a romantic relationship with an Argentine, it is recommended to get the opinion of a trusted Argentine before pursuing the relationship.

Many female participants are flattered by the masculine attention that they receive in a Hispanic culture like the one found in Argentina. However, proceed with caution with any relationship and only enter into a close relationship after knowing the partner for a sustained period of time. American women are often placed in the stereotype of being an “easy” sexual partner, and each year women find themselves in difficult situations

because they were not cautious. Do NOT go to the home or apartment of someone you do not know well, especially if there is drinking involved. The concept of “date rape” is almost unheard of in Argentina and the general feeling is that if a woman goes home with a man, she is willing to have sex with him, regardless of whether or not she says “no.”

Please be aware that in any type of relationship, whether heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual, you could end up with a sexually transmitted disease, AIDS, and/or pregnancy. This is not meant as a scare tactic, but rather a reminder that it can happen. Be sure that you know the person very well before developing a more intimate relationship and always demand that you both take necessary precautions.

### *Drug Use*

The Learning Abroad Center has a very strong “No Tolerance” policy on drug use on any Learning Abroad Center program. If you use drugs while in Argentina, you will be expelled from the program, all credit will be lost, and there will be no refund of any kind. It is extremely dangerous for an American in Argentina to be caught with drugs. If you are at a party where drugs are being used you should leave immediately. If the police arrive, more than likely the only people to be arrested will be the Americans and there will be nothing the Learning Abroad Center can do to help you. Students who say, “I know my rights” are sadly mistaken. You leave all of your rights as a US citizen when you cross the border and you are subject to the laws and “rights” of Argentina. Please do not take that kind of risk.

## Money Matters

The Argentine monetary unit is the peso (\$). The peso is subdivided into 100 centavos. Coins come in 1, 5, 10, 25, 50 centavos and 1 peso. Paper money starts at 2 pesos denomination. As of July 2007, one Argentine peso is worth US \$.30 Check out [www.oanda.com/convert/classic](http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic) for the latest information on exchange rates.

It is very difficult to obtain Argentine pesos in the US so the Learning Abroad Center suggests that you bring about \$100 US to have money on hand, in small bills. When you arrive in the Airport you can use a debit card to withdraw pesos from the ATMs in the airport. Banking hours in Argentina are from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm Monday through Friday. A note of caution, it

can be very difficult to get change for large bills  
anywhere in Argentina. Whenever possible try to only  
carry bills less than 20 pesos with you.

**An easy, safe, and cheap way to deal with finances in Argentina would be to bring or have access to:**

- **US \$100 in cash**
- **A debit card for regular use**
- **\$200 dollars in traveler's checks**
- **A credit card for larger purchases and in case of emergency**

Personal spending habits vary too greatly to state exactly how much it will cost to live in Argentina. The amount of money that is generally spent during one semester, including moderate travel, varies anywhere from \$1000 to \$3000. This amount depends on your personal spending habits, the amount of traveling you plan to do, and the value of the dollar. You should also keep in mind the amount of money you plan to spend on gifts for yourself, family, and friends. Many former students state that their one regret was not taking enough money with them to take advantage of the opportunities that came up. Most students should figure that they would be spending more than they would if they stayed on their home campus. Take as much as you are able, combining cash, travelers' checks, a debit card, and a credit card. You can always bring back what you don't spend.

Be careful with your money. Pickpockets do exist in Argentina and generally hit when you are in a crowd. Another commonplace to lose money to thieves is on trains or buses when traveling at night. In this case, be careful to sleep with valuables close at hand. A money belt, available at the Learning Abroad Center for purchase, is a good idea when traveling. You should not carry your passport with you unless you are planning to cash traveler's checks or are going to be staying overnight in a hotel. In most cases, carrying a copy of your passport will be sufficient.

Be sure to let your bank and credit card company know that you will be studying abroad.

### **Cash**

American dollars can be exchanged for Argentine pesos at the airport in Buenos Aires upon arrival. However, the exchange rate is usually best at a local bank in Argentina.

### **Debit Card**

One of the easiest and least expensive means of obtaining money is at an ATM machine. If you have a debit card this money can come directly out of your

bank account and you won't have to pay interest, as you will with a credit card. You don't have to worry about bank hours, you won't have to pay the commission for converting your money, and ATM machines are everywhere in Argentina. The drawback is that if you have a problem with your debit card's magnetic strip, as frequently happens, or your card is lost, you will have to wait for another card to be sent to you. This problem can be avoided by having a back-up method.

If you choose to get a debit card, it should be on the Cirrus or Plus networks and you will need a personal identification number (PIN). *Make sure that your PIN is a numerical code with only four digits.* Many keypads in Argentina do not have letters or have them in a different order than keypads in the US and won't accept more than four digits. Contact your bank for information on obtaining a card or to find out if your card can be used internationally (University of Minnesota ID cards do work to extract money as long as you have a four number code). Always bring someone with you when you take out money to prevent theft at the ATM.

### **Credit Card**

A credit card is a good resource for emergency situations, purchasing plane fare when traveling, and making large purchases. Additionally, money can be transferred to you easily from the US with a Visa International credit card (ask your bank if you will be able to use your card in Argentina and the rest of South America).

### **Traveler's Checks**

If you are going to carry more than \$100, it should be carried in the form of traveler's checks, which can be converted into pesos at most banks in Buenos Aires. Travelers' checks must be purchased in the US, at a bank. In Buenos Aires, travelers' checks can be converted in many places but banks usually have the best rates. Keep in mind how much commission the banks charge as it can vary from place to place.

### **Wiring Money**

Wiring money is another way to receive money while in Buenos Aires but can be slow and costly. If you must have the money wired to you, the easiest and fastest way is to go through an American Express or Western Union office.



## Arrival & Group Flight

A group flight is offered by the Twin Cities based travel agency, Village Travel [www.villageinc.com](http://www.villageinc.com), in consultation with the Learning Abroad Center. Travel can be arranged from any location in the US and every attempt will be made to connect with the group flight. While participants are not required to choose the group flight, it is designed to offer participants the opportunity to travel in the company of other participants in the program. Information, booking, and payment are handled directly by the travel agent for both group and individual flights. If you have not received information about the group flight and would like to, please contact the Learning Abroad Center immediately. Even if you choose to make your own arrangements, you should at least obtain the group flight arrival information. If you arrive before or at the same time as the group, you can travel with the group to the housing.

You will arrive at Ezeiza International Airport in Buenos Aires. There are several options for travel from the airport to the student housing in Buenos Aires.

Those taking the group flight and those meeting up with the group flight at the airport will be met at Ezeiza International Airport by a staff member from the program who will be holding a sign that reads FUNDACIÓN ORTEGA Y GASSET. This person will travel with you to the housing. After you clear customs with your luggage, the program staff member will assist you in catching a taxi to the housing. If you arrive more than one hour after the group flight, a staff member at the airport will not meet you and you will be responsible for making your own way to the housing. You are responsible for the cost of traveling from the airport to the housing.

You will be contacted prior to departure by the Argentine staff to discuss arrival arrangements. If you are not taking the group flight and do not wish, or are unable, to meet the group flight, you will be given instructions on where to meet the group prior to arrival in Buenos Aires.

If you should have any trouble, feel free to call the Fundación and ask for Beatriz (she is an English speaker). The number there is 4314.2809 or 5555.5452. See Phone section on how to make phone calls.

## Practical & Program Information

### On-Site Staff

Once in Buenos Aires, you will meet Inés Viñuales, Beatriz Comte, Carola Bracco, and Diego Vélez Funes, the main Fundación staff members who will help orient you and who are available for questions and concerns at any time during your stay.

### Housing

#### Apart-Hotel

Students who choose to live in an apartment, will be housed approximately a 10 minute walk from the Fundación in an apartment complex most commonly compared to an extended stay hotel, or hotel equipped with everything a typical apartment would have. This is a very convenient living arrangement. There is maid service that comes in to clean your room regularly. You will be provided with bedding and towels, which are changed weekly, and laundry and dry cleaning facilities are available throughout the city at a reasonable cost.

The apartments are fully furnished and are located in central Buenos Aires. Four students may share a two bedroom, one living room apartment (two students per room) or two students may share a one bedroom, one living room apartment. Individual roommates will be determined once you arrive in Argentina. If you have a specific roommate preference, please inform the Learning Abroad Center.

Each apartment comes with a fully equipped kitchen including range, oven, refrigerator, and microwave, a large living room, one bedroom, and full bathroom. All of the apartments have air conditioning, central heating, and cable television.

You will have a key card to your apartment, which you will leave at the front desk when you leave the building. There is also 24-hour security in the building.

Although you have all of your basics in the housing, make sure that you use your time in Argentina to get out and see the city and country and to speak Spanish

with the locals. Luckily, you will be within walking distance from nearly everything that Buenos Aires has to offer. This makes it easy to get out into the community and meet Argentines. You can come and go from your apartment as freely as you wish, which allows you to enjoy the ample nightlife in Buenos Aires. Under no circumstance will you be allowed to invite overnight guests up to your room.

## Homestay

Students may also choose to live with an Argentine family. Students will be placed according to family availability and preferences indicated on the Housing Placement Form. You will typically receive your home placement information two weeks prior to departure, but may not find out who your host family is until after you arrive in Argentina. Your family will meet you at the Fundación on the day of arrival.

Your family will provide you with two meals a day (typically breakfast and dinner). Sometimes lunch will be subbed out for one of the meals on weekends. Due to your class schedule, it will typically be difficult to eat the midday meal at your house. If this is the case, there are numerous restaurants accessible to you at and around the school. Remember to tell your host family if you will not be home for lunch so that they are not waiting for your arrival.

One of the best parts of living with a family is that you will have authentic Argentine meals. Be honest about your likes and dislikes, but please be prepared to adjust to the diet of your family. Be adventuresome and try new dishes. You may be surprised at the new dishes for which you will acquire a taste.

Day to day living arrangements will be different with each family. For example, the host mother may do your laundry, or you will do it in the house, or you may go to a Laundromat to wash your clothes. Sheets and towels will be provided but you may want to bring one towel for traveling. You will also be able to use household items such as the iron, stove, refrigerator, etc. Make sure that you ask before using anything, especially before you have established a comfortable pattern of everyday interaction. It is better to be over-courteous than under-courteous.

Students may share a room with another program participant, have their own bedroom, or share a room with a host family son/daughter. As with many other

parts of your new life in Argentina, it will take a little while to become accustomed to the changes, but if you are flexible it will soon feel like you have been doing it your whole life. For many people, living with a family is one of the best parts of their experience while in Argentina. You will have a first-hand look at Argentine culture and society and a better opportunity to be immersed in the Spanish language than those staying in the apartments. Your family can become a way for you to meet other Argentines. Keep in mind that families in Argentina can be as diverse as families in the US. Every family will be different. More than likely you will be living in an apartment as single-family houses are not as common in Argentina. You will have your own room and private space where you will be able to study. Sometimes a family is made up of just one or two members.

Living with a family is what you make of it. But sometimes people are just not compatible. When frustrations or concerns arise, the staff at the Fundación are there to help you, and can even arrange a new family if necessary. Many students make life-long ties to their Argentine families.

Students who choose to live in an apartment will have access to the gym at the Sarmiento Suites.

## Excursions

Several excursions to places like San Isidro, Tigre, San Antonio de Areco, Luján, and, in Uruguay, the historical city of Colonia del Sacramento are included in the program fee. You will also attend cultural fairs in Buenos Aires, including San Telmo's in Buenos Aires' art quarter; Matadero, the only folk and gaucho fair inside the city; and Parque Avellaneda.

Specific dates and itineraries of all excursions will be communicated via the program calendar, which you will receive two weeks prior to departure. Since classes meet Monday through Thursday, this leaves a number of three-day weekends that you may use for travel.

## Electricity

Electrical current runs on a different system in Argentina. Their system uses 220 volts, while the American system uses 110. Without the use of a converter/adaptor, your appliance will burn out in a matter of seconds. Converters are available in most

electronic stores but are somewhat expensive, approximately US \$35. Besides the converter, you will need an outlet plug adapter. Since most types of appliances can be purchased in Argentina, there is not a need to bring any electrical appliances with you.

## Communications

### Mail

Don't have mail sent to the apartments or to your homestay. Mail can be sent to you at the following address:

Your Name

Fundación Ortega y Gasset —Argentina

Viamonte esq. San Martín

Centro Cultural Borges, 3° Piso

C1053ABK Buenos Aires, Argentina

Mail that arrives after the end of the program will be returned to the sender, as the post office does not forward international mail. Mail from Argentina to the US usually takes a week to ten days to arrive. Mail to Argentina may take from one to three weeks for delivery. Packages mailed to the US by surface mail will take six to eight weeks.

All care packages or mailed pieces coming from the US should be sent priority mail to ensure a timely delivery. Never send money in any form or medication though the mail as it is illegal to do so in Argentina and there are no guarantees that any envelop with medication or money will arrive. Stamps are only available in local post offices. It is recommended that you write out your letters or postcards and bring them to the post office to buy stamps and mail them simultaneously.

### Phone calls & Cell phones

It is possible to call home from the phones that are in the Fundación or at the housing, but you will be required to either call collect or use an international calling card. Prepaid phone cards are available throughout Argentina. A phone card for 300 minutes to the US costs approximately \$30 US. If friends or family call you from the US, it is a good idea for you to arrange a time so you can be sure to be around to answer the phone.

The phone number of the Fundación is: 011.54.11.5555.5452 or 011.54.11.4314.2809. The international access code for calling from the US outside the US is 011. Instructions for international

calling are in all phone books.

The phone at the Fundación is answered until 7:00 pm. Argentina is three hours ahead of Minnesota. Keep in mind, the people who answer the phone in the Fundación might not speak English. When someone from home calls you, the caller should be prepared to repeat your name slowly a number of times or ask for Beatriz or Carola who both speak English.

Pay phones are readily available in Buenos Aires. Telefónicas are places where your calls are placed for you allowing you to pay with cash, calling cards, or a credit card. This also lets you place calls without worrying about exact change. Payphones require prepaid phone cards, which can be purchased in local convenience stores.

You may rent or purchase cell phones in Argentina for approximately \$50 US. To place calls you will additionally have to purchase minutes for your phone. In Argentina, you only pay for the phone calls you make and not for the ones that you receive. If friends or family call you from the US, you do not need to have minutes on your phone in order to receive the call and you will not be billed for the call. If you wish to bring your own cell phone from the US, contact your cell phone company to check on fees and to verify that your phone will function in Argentina. It can be very expensive to use your US cell phone in Argentina. Purchasing a cell phone in Argentina will be very economical but you will not be able to use your Argentine cell phone in the US. If you want to purchase a cell phone, ask the staff at the Fundación for assistance.

### Computers & Email

There will be computers with Internet access available to you in Buenos Aires. There is a computer lab available at the Fundación with six computers open from 10:00 am until 7:00 pm. Both are available at no additional cost. There are several Internet cafés in and around Buenos Aires that are inexpensive and fast (usually one peso per hour.) Some Internet cafés will have wireless Internet but it is not as common as in the US.

You are encouraged to bring your laptop but it is not required. If you choose to bring a laptop, you will have to be responsible for it the entire time you are abroad. There will not be as much of a need to use computers for

your course work as not all of your work is expected to be typed. If you live with a host family, you will most likely not be able to access the Internet from your family's house. It is not commonplace for Argentine families to have computers in their homes.

## Academics

### Overall Structure

All academic program courses take place on-site at the Fundación José Ortega y Gasset. You will pre-register for classes prior to departure. Once in Buenos Aires, you will be placed in classes that coincide with your pre-registration plans. Students on the fall or spring semester program take 15 credits, generally five classes.

Spanish classes meet for two hours daily from Monday through Thursday. You will have classes scheduled anywhere from 10:00 am–2:00 pm and 4:00–7:00 pm.

Classes taken by program participants in Buenos Aires will show up on transcripts as University of Minnesota credits. Grades will figure into GPA just as they would in the US. All courses must be taken on an A–F grade base. Pass-fail grade base is not an option for any class in Argentina.

The Fundación offers a wide variety of courses in several disciplines to suit a range of academic needs, including Spanish, literature, Latin American studies, and more. Most courses engage the city, people, and surroundings as a living laboratory.

### Registration

All University of Minnesota Twin Cities students will be responsible for registering themselves using the University of Minnesota on-line registration system. Students from the University of Minnesota Morris, Crookston, or Duluth will be registered on their home campus. If you are not a University of Minnesota Twin Cities student, please contact your study abroad office to verify you are enrolled for study abroad. Non-University of Minnesota students will be registered by the Learning Abroad Center and can disregard these instructions.

Prior to departure, you will receive all the necessary information for registration. Do not look for your class number to appear on the on-line class list. The numbers

you need for registration can only be obtained from the Learning Abroad Center. If you register for a course that is listed on-line, you have registered for the wrong course and may be subject to tuition charges.

Register yourself as soon as you receive the emailed instructions. This ensures that you are guaranteed a spot in your study abroad program courses.

Complete your registration no later than two weeks prior to the start of the University of Minnesota term during which you will be studying abroad. Failure to complete registration may result in late registration fees and may delay or prevent financial aid disbursement. Contact [helpingu@umn.edu](mailto:helpingu@umn.edu) or visit [www.onestop.umn.edu](http://www.onestop.umn.edu) with questions about financial aid.

If you do not register for study abroad, your grades cannot be processed. Failure to register before departing for study abroad may result in no credit for your study abroad program.

### Before Registration:

1. Meet with your academic adviser(s) and complete the Academic Planning for Study Abroad Form.
2. Check online for holds or required registration approvals that would prevent you from registering for classes and clear them before the registration date. The Learning Abroad Center cannot remove holds on student accounts. To check for holds, go to [www.onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Registration/Holds.html](http://www.onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Registration/Holds.html)
3. On-line registration requires that you have Netscape or Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher, that you have registered at least once during the two previous terms, and that you have initiated your Internet account. If you have not initiated your Internet account, you will be prompted to do so when you enter the registration system.
4. On-line registration is available Monday-Saturday 6:30 am–2:00 am and Sunday 12:30 pm–2:00 am, after your queue time.

### Drop/Add

You must speak with the on-site staff, prior to dropping or adding a class. You will have two weeks from the beginning of the program to drop/add classes. After the second week you will receive a “W” on your transcript if you drop and you will need the approval of on-site staff as well as the Learning Abroad Center in order to

add.

## Extracurricular & Volunteer

### Activities

There will be opportunities for you to discover Argentine culture through extracurricular activities. Some examples of what may be offered are international meals, cooking classes, dances and tango lessons, parties and special events arranged with native Argentines, and sports activities.

Volunteering is an excellent way to come in contact with Argentines and therefore utilize your Spanish and learn more about the culture. If you would like to volunteer you will be able to do so at various locations. Students have volunteered at places like Casa Cuna, Hospital Rivadavia, Villa 31, and Comedores. If you are interested in arranging a volunteer experience, contact the Learning Abroad Center prior to departure as volunteer possibilities can take a while to set up.

## Life in Argentina

### Geography & Climate

Since Argentina is in the Southern Hemisphere, seasons are the reverse of what they are in the United States; that is, summer occurs between December and February and the coldest months are June through August. The climate in Argentina varies greatly from the north to the south. In Buenos Aires, temperatures usually range from the seventies to the nineties during October to April and from the forties to the sixties during May to September with temperatures rarely dropping below 32 degrees while in southern Argentina the temperatures hover right around 50 degrees year round. Buenos Aires also experiences little rainfall averaging less than four inches per month. Summer months, December, January, and February are quite hot while the winter months tend to be very humid.

### History

Europeans first arrived in the region in the early 16th century. Subsequent Spanish colonization led to the establishment of Buenos Aires in 1580. Independence from Spain was achieved in 1816, after which a conflict between centralists and federalists developed until a

new constitution was proclaimed in 1853. Argentina was then marked by periods of internal political conflict between conservatives and liberals and between civilian and military factions. In the beginning of 20th century Argentina was one of the leading economies in the world. After World War II, the country saw the rise of the populist Peron movement, which to a large extent polarized Argentina. Increasingly bloody military juntas alternated with democratic governments until 1983. Since then, four free elections have underscored Argentina's progress in democratic consolidation, even with an unprecedented economic implosion at the end of 2001.

Politically, Argentina is a federal republic, divided into 23 provinces and a federal district. This system recognizes three governments: executive (practiced by the president of the republic), legislative (congress of the nation) and judicial (supreme court justice).

The cycle of economic roller coasting, political instability, military brutality, and growing wealth divisions has continued to plague the country for decades. Since 1989 inflation has fluctuated wildly and unemployment soared; the peso was pegged one-to-one against the US dollar with disastrous consequences, leading to harsh restrictions on bank withdrawals and cash shortages.

In December 2001 Argentina defaulted on a US \$132 billion loan repayment—the largest default in history. As a result, rioting, looting, and widespread civil chaos in which 27 people were killed broke out on Buenos Aires' streets. Endemic political corruption has only compounded the economic malaise. This has led to a revolving door of leaders, until January 2002 when Eduardo Duhalde became Argentina's fifth president in two weeks.

Although the social unrest has for the most part eased, Buenos Aires' journey out of this financial pit promises to be long and perilous. The city's famed sense of sophistication and pride will be tested as never before.

If you are interested in learning more about Argentine history and culture, look for more information on Juan and Eva Peron, the Madres de los Desaparecidos, the Islas Malvinas, the Dirty War, and the history of the Tango and Carlos Gardel.

## Meals

Upon arrival in Argentina, you will encounter not only a change in culture and lifestyle, but also a change in the types of food offered. You should be prepared to adjust to the differences in meals and meal times in Argentina: *desayuno*, breakfast, is served from 7:00–11:00 am and is a light meal, usually consisting of coffee or tea, toast, and/or biscuits. The main meal of the day is the *almuerzo*, or lunch served between 12:30 and 2:00 pm, while the *cena*, supper, is eaten between 9:00 or 10:00 pm. A typical Argentine *almuerzo* or *cena* consists of a soup, pasta, or vegetable dish, and meat or chicken. Argentina also has particularly high-quality beef. Fish is served, though not quite as often as it is more expensive. Some meals are accompanied by a green salad, and all are followed by a desert or *postre*, usually consisting of a piece of fruit. Many times coffee or tea also follow a meal. You should keep in mind that you will be eating a large meal in the afternoon. Nevertheless, if you are accustomed to having a large breakfast, you may want to pick up a mid-morning snack to supplement your breakfast.

Because Buenos Aires is a cosmopolitan city it hosts a wide variety of food choices ranging from sushi to Mexican, and Arabic to Indian, in addition to any fast food restaurant you can think of.

Those of you who are fond of tasting regional food will be pleased to find that Argentina offers exquisite regional dishes such as *empanadas*, minced meat and other ingredients covered with puff pastry, and *locro* a pork and corn stew. Additionally, Argentina is famous for *asados*, barbecued and grilled meat dishes, mainly beef, but also pork, lamb, and chicken. *Sandwiches de miga* are wonderful dainty sandwiches made of very thin-crust white bread and filled with slices of ham and cheese. *Churros* are also worth a taste. They are like donuts and can come filled with *dulce de leche* or chocolate. Croissants or *media lunas* are also popular pastries. Be an adventurous eater.

The Argentine national dish is beef. Most restaurants serve steak at very reasonable prices and it is some of the best steak that you will ever eat.

If you live in the apartments, you will be provided with breakfast everyday and a food voucher that is good at various places around the city to buy another meal each day. You only need to walk downstairs to reach the

dining room for your meals and you can choose to prepare your own meals in your apartment at your own expense if you choose to purchase your own groceries. Breakfast will be served in the dining room of the apartment complex. The apartments will have a rotating menu with one main dish served at each meal. If you live with an Argentine family, you will be provided breakfast and dinner (See homestay section for more information).

All students should plan on buying lunch, which costs \$2–\$4 US for a beverage, lunch, and dessert. Be adventuresome and try new dishes. You may be surprised at the new dishes for which you will acquire a taste.

Vegetarian items will be available at all meals. If you are a vegetarian, please be aware that you will have to be very specific when letting people know what you will or will not eat. Because meat is so often served with meals, make sure to inform the necessary people as soon as you are able of your food preferences. That said, because of the large variety of food served in Buenos Aires, you should not have trouble finding food to meet your needs.

Note: Argentines do not eat Peanut Butter and it is very difficult to find Peanut Butter in any Argentine store. It is possible to find it but it is often very expensive and sometimes it has been on the shelf for a long time. If you think you might miss peanut butter, bring your own.

## Language

Spanish is the official language of Argentina. You may be able to use English in the markets and airports, but communicating in English may be more of a challenge in some places.

### Useful Phrases

Yes	Sí
No	No
Good morning/day	Buenos días
How are you?	¿Como está usted?
My name is	Me llamo
Please	Por favor
Do you speak English?	¿Habla usted inglés?
You have been very kind	Ha sido muy amable.
Thank you	Gracias
Too much	Demasiado

You're welcome	De nada
I beg your pardon	Perdón
Good-bye	Adiós/Chau
I don't understand	No entiendo
Where are you from?	¿De donde sos?

The Italian-accented Argentine Spanish, called *castellano*, readily identifies an Argentine anywhere in the world. Though Spanish is the official language and spoken throughout the country, some immigrant communities have retained their languages as a badge of identity. English is studied, spoken and understood by many Argentines, especially in Buenos Aires. Italian is the language of the largest immigrant group and also understood by some, as is French.

Argentina has over a dozen native languages, though some are spoken by very few individuals. In the Andean Northwest, Quechua speakers are numerous; most are also Spanish speakers. In the Southern Andes, there are at least 40,000 Mapuche speakers. In northeastern Argentina there are about 15,000 each of Guaraní and Toba speakers.

Argentines are very patient with foreigners who try to speak their language. They appreciate an attempt at the language and would never correct your pronunciation or grammar unless you specifically asked them to, or if they cannot understand what you want to say.

Argentines also use the VOS verb form which commonly replaces the TU verb form. Although all Argentines will understand if you use the TU form, many will speak back to you using the VOS form. You will also get lessons in your Spanish classes on how to use the VOS form.

## Entertainment

There are many festivals in Argentina, especially in the spring and summer. These events usually include markets, carnivals, parades, and folk dancing. Each Argentine province and region has its particular kind of festivals: in the North, colorful carnivals and holy week celebrations take place in the *Puna* and the *Quebrada de Humahuaca*. Another typical event in Salta is the *Peñas folklóricas* in which folklore groups play the guitar while regional meals are served.

The annual Carnivals are very colorful. Walking on a bed of coal is a typical custom on the night before the

feast of San Juan. You may also see the *chamamé*, a dance derived from the polka, mixed with melodic and rhythmic elements from the Guaraní tribes.

Visit Cuyo in February for the National Wine Harvest Fiesta where you can taste the best Argentine wines after enjoying a day of rafting. In Patagonia, the best thing to do is sightseeing. Enjoy beautiful vistas, lakes, mountains, whale watching, penguins, and seals.

Buenos Aires is quite a cosmopolitan city, and theatrical performances and movies from abroad are quite common. Every city in Argentina has its own special film festival.

Nightlife in Argentina runs into the early hours of the morning. Discos don't begin before 12:00 am and they stay open until 7:30 am or later. Movies, discos, and bars are popular gathering places for Argentines after dark. The Costanera (riverside) is the place where the most popular discos are located.

In addition, it is common, especially in the warmer months, to see large groups of people meeting in restaurants and sidewalk cafes. Conversation is a very active art in Argentina, and people will get together for hours to discuss local and world events. Many times these discussions get quite heated, but that is all part of the culture.

When you dine in a restaurant or use services where a tip is customary, the standard tip is 10%.

## Alcohol & Other Beverages

Soft drinks are available everywhere in Argentina. The national non-alcoholic drink in Argentina is called *mate*, which is a tea infusion that Argentines drink any time of the day and is quite famous as an energy drink.

The legal drinking age in Argentina is 18. Most Argentines drink wine. They're used to drinking wine with their families while having dinner and especially while eating *asados*. Beer and other alcoholic drinks are also quite common but it's not common to drink to get drunk.

The Learning Abroad Center expects moderation in the use of alcohol. Keep in mind that the consumption of alcohol may be more socially prevalent in other cultures, but excessive consumption is not appropriate.

Drunkenness can seriously jeopardize your safety and damage relations with host families or communities. Monitor your approach to alcohol consumption; unfamiliar surroundings and the emotional strain of adjusting to another culture can sometimes cause alcohol to affect you differently. If excessive drinking becomes a problem in terms of your safety, class attendance, academic performance, relations with hosts or other students it could be grounds for expulsion from the program.

## Lifestyles

Argentines are friendly and fairly easy to meet. If you want to become friends with the Argentines, don't be afraid to make the first move. You will be the one to benefit the most from the contact made as it will give you the chance to see what the people are really like and also enable you to speak the language more fluently.

In order to be served in a bar or restaurant you must be somewhat aggressive. It is assumed you'll order when ready. The waiter will not bring your check until you ask for it. It is considered rude to rush customers by leaving the check before it is requested.

In Argentina, stores are usually open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 am until 9:00 pm. They are usually open on Sundays only in the morning. Fashion clothing stores, located in big shopping malls, are open every day of the week from 10:00 am until 11:00 pm.

## Religion

The Argentine population is predominantly Catholic. However, there is a large Jewish population, both orthodox and non-orthodox, as well as many Protestants and Evangelists. The city hosts several different places of worship and is welcoming and respectful of all religions.

## Travel

If you are planning on traveling extensively in Argentina or elsewhere, you should investigate the availability of student discounts before purchasing airline or bus tickets. For more information, contact either the Learning Abroad Center or your local travel agent. There are also many student travel options once you arrive in Argentina, and local travel agencies there can assist you in everything from bus to train to air

travel.

Hotels, hostels, and pensiones are controlled by the government and are all rated on a star system with a five-star hotel being the highest class. There is a difference between a three-star hostel and a three-star hotel, as hotels are usually more expensive than hostels. Be sure to bring a copy of your passport with you when checking into a hotel.

There are approximately 90 youth hostels in Argentina. Places with *hostal* written above the door are not the same as the youth hostel. Youth hostels are not rated in the star system and are available only to students traveling. *Hostales* are simply cheap lodging available to all travelers.

Except in popular resort areas, hotels are much cheaper in Argentina than in the rest of South America. Prices are displayed in each room. It is advisable to ask to see a room before you decide to rent it, since they vary greatly in quality. To save money you can ask for a room without a bath since most hotels and *hostales* have the option of sharing a bath. Ask the Fundación for more help with travel arrangements if you have additional questions.

## Life in Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires is like many South American cities in its central design with a central square surrounded by a church, government house, and banks. However the city also reflects French, Italian and Spanish architecture styles from the turn of the century. Old mansions can be seen next to high-rise buildings. Of particular interest are the famous *Teatro Colón* opera house, the Congress palace, the government house, *Casa Rosada*, the *Cabildo*, a municipal government house during the colonial period, the *Obelisco*, a symbol of Buenos Aires, as well as the luxurious neoclassic and French Renaissance style of the *Palacio San Martin* and *Museo de Arte Decorativo*. Other attractions include San Telmo's flea market, La Boca a brightly painted neighborhood, La Recoleta a fashionable area of the city and more than one hundred and fifty art galleries and museums.

In recent years, Buenos Aires has also become a popular destination for GLBT travelers. In general the city is very accepting of homosexuality and hosts many gay bars and restaurants, most are quite fashionable and

expensive. Argentina as a whole continues to become more and more open minded about homosexual issues and lifestyles. Although Argentines are quite open-minded, public displays of affection between same sex couples tend to attract unwanted attention and comments.

Buenos Aires is a very athletic-based city and is a perfect city for jogging and other outdoor activities. Argentines enjoy playing soccer at the squares, as well as going rollerblading and biking.

Contrary to many areas of Latin America, Argentine young adults tend to be very independent. Most adult children move out on their own in their early twenties and it is very common for them to entertain in their apartments. Argentines in general like to welcome people into their homes and it is not uncommon for visitors to show up unannounced.

Smoking is also common among many people in Argentina. People can smoke at most bars and restaurants and you will be allowed to smoke in your apartments unless you specify to live with non-smokers. It will be uncommon to find non-smoking sections when eating in restaurants.

### **Clothing Trends**

Most Argentines tend to dress with a very fashion conscious eye. They are very concerned about dress and are generally stylish and fashionable. Style and quality of clothing are important indicators of a person's status and respectability. Clothing trends tend to be more casual during the day. You will see many people wearing brand-name clothing common in the US like Gap, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Levi Strauss. At night people tend to dress up more, typically wearing black pants and dressy shirts. You should plan to dress casually during the day and dressy at night. Avoid shorts, gym shoes, and baseball hats.

### **Public Transportation**

Argentina has a subway system called the *subterráneo*, or the *subte*. The *subte* consists of five major lines that run through the city plus one that runs around the perimeter. The subway system covers the city and is an easy, safe, and inexpensive way to get around town. Additionally, Buenos Aires has an extensive bus system. Taxis are also relatively inexpensive in Argentina. At the on-site orientation you will take a city tour and receive more information on how to use

the public transportation. Pick up a *Guía T* available at kiosks around the city for a map of local transportation.

## **Cultural Adjustments**

You can minimize the stress involved with traveling abroad and a new lifestyle by preparing adequately. To gain insight, read as much as possible about where you are going. Talk to international students and veteran travelers who have been where you want to go. The Learning Abroad Center has travel tips from return travelers, many of whom are willing to be contacted and give advice in person.

Argentines meet and greet each other and part with a slight embrace and a kiss on one cheek. The usual greeting exchanged between Argentine males is a handshake. Good friends will often add a pat on the back and, if they have not seen each other for some time, will give an *abrazo* (embrace). Family names and titles, such as *señor* (Mr.), *señora* (Mrs.), and *señorita* (Miss) may be used to address older people or professionals. First names may be used among close friends and young people as well as nicknames.

### **Be Open-Minded**

Learn to slow down. Things move at a slower pace in Argentina. Use your free time to socialize with the people around you. Listen to what they have to say and try not to be judgmental. Find the positives in any situation and take advantage of them.

It is important that you adjust to the Argentines and don't expect them to adjust to you. Try to learn as much about the culture as possible so that you can discuss things intelligently with them. Most Americans are poorly informed about relationships between other countries as well as the countries themselves. Learn to look for commonalities between Americans and Argentines. Learning to adjust to and appreciate the common elements and differences will determine how much you enjoy your experience and how well you will succeed in adapting to life in Argentina.

# Appendix

## Packing

Experienced travelers suggest that you bring half as much luggage as you think you will need. If you cannot comfortably carry your luggage around the block, you may find that you have packed too much. Airline restrictions for luggage on overseas flights must also be considered. (Contact your airline or travel agent for specific information.) Each participant is completely responsible for physically managing their own luggage at all times, including excursions and transport between the airport and the program site. Pack accordingly!

Below is the minimum amount of clothing recommended for your stay in Argentina; what you bring beyond this is limited to your ability to carry the extra luggage!

### Clothing

- 7 pairs underwear
- 7 pairs socks
- 1 pair pajamas
- 1 swimsuit
- 2 pairs jeans or khakis
- 2 dressy shirts
- 3 casual, comfortable shirts
- 2 sweaters
- 1 dress
- 1 pair dressy shoes
- 1 raincoat/umbrella
- 1 skirt
- 1 pair comfortable walking shoes
- 1 pair slippers/house shoes

### Necessities

- Toothpaste & toothbrush
- Shaving kit
- Deodorant
- Comb
- Washcloth
- Towel
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Sewing kit
- Spanish/English dictionary
- 501 Spanish Verbs
- Small flashlight
- Fleece or light winter jacket
- Flash Drive
- Camera, Film, Batteries

- USB Cord
- Peanut Butter
- Gifts for your host family
- Voltage converter and outlet adapter
- Earplugs
- Set of travel-size toiletries for independent excursions
- Hangers
- Nylon duffel bag for independent overnight excursions (this is also useful in packing for return to the US)
- Battery powered alarm clock

### First Aid Kit:

- Extra set of contacts or pair of glasses
- Band-aids
- Cold/cough remedies
- Aspirin and Ibuprofen
- Insect repellent
- Pepto-Bismol / Imodium
- Antacid
- Mild laxative
- Sunscreen or sun block
- Antibacterial ointment
- Condoms
- Prescription Medicine

## Homestay Gifts

Bring a gift (or gifts) for your host family. A host family gift is a nice gesture to say thank you for hosting you. Think of it as a similar gesture you would do if you were invited to someone's house for dinner and you brought a bottle of wine or a bouquet of flowers. Sometimes it is hard think of an appropriate item. Below is a list of good options:

- Fancy soaps or lotions
- Baseball hats
- Necklaces or bracelets
- Clothing or items with a University logo
- Jams made from Minnesota berries
- Regional food to make a special dinner
- Local interest wall calendars
- CDs of American music
- Personal hand-made items
- Candy