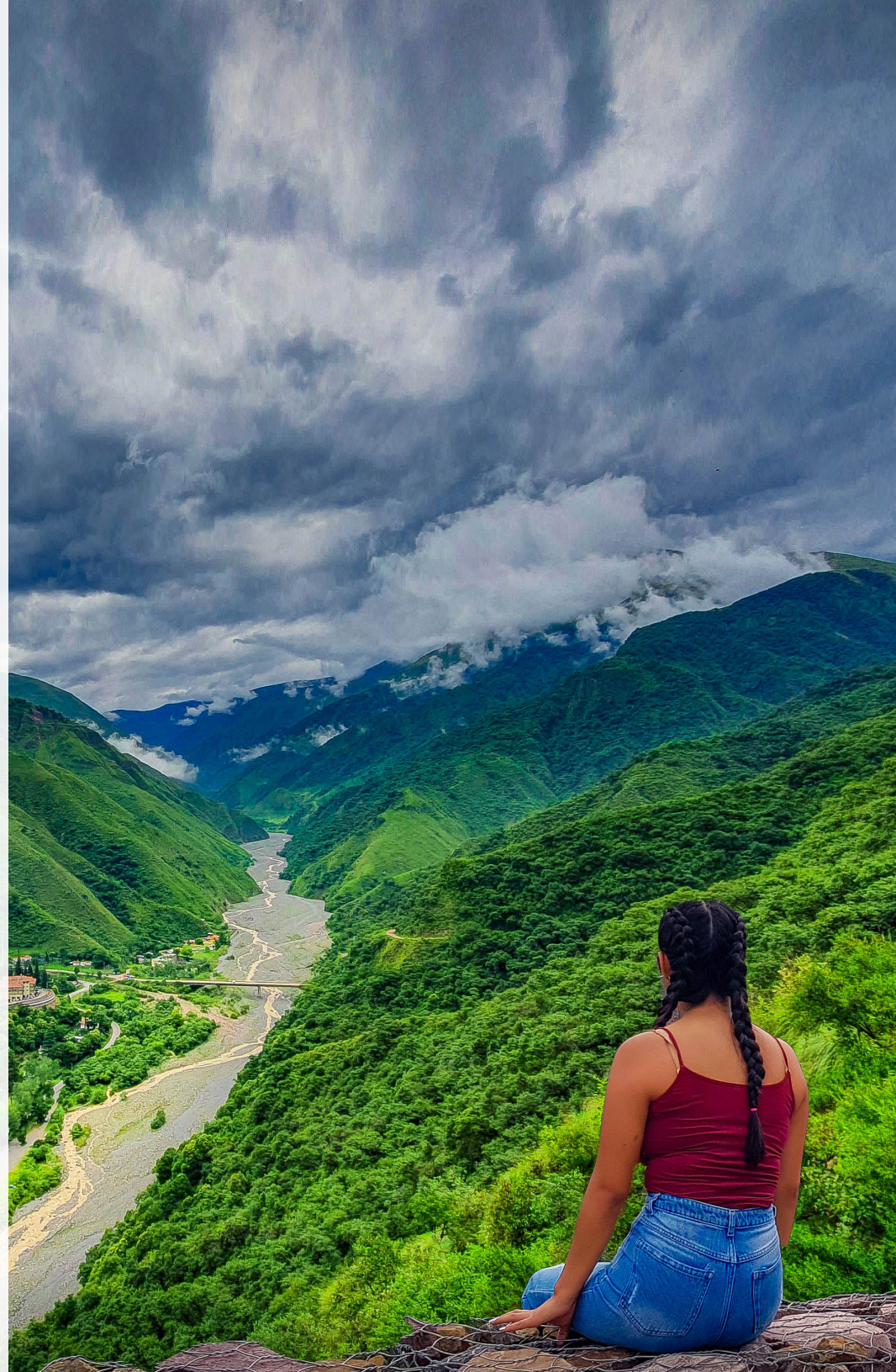




Argentina Handbook



CLIMATE

- The climate in Argentina varies depending on the time of year. Buenos Aires and Córdoba are in a temperate, humid, subtropical region.
- Buenos Aires is more humid than Córdoba. In March/April, it is considered the end of summer and beginning of autumn in Argentina. The temperature is mild to warm, ranging from 55-80F. In June it is the end of fall and beginning of winter in Argentina, and the climate tends to be cool. Average temperatures range from 40-65F. Dress in layers to accommodate the variance in weather.
- The weather is often cooler than students expect, so bring warm layers, water-resistant walking shoes and gloves and a hat if needed!
- Argentina's mountainous regions, including the Andes, La Rioja and San Juan, all feature a dry climate, which turns cold and windy in the Patagonian Andes.
- In Argentina it rains most from December through February. Especially in Buenos Aires, there can be heavy rain spurts in April, May, and June. April tends to have foggy days.

CLOTHING

- Reference the Xperitas Argentina packing list for advice on what to bring.
- March/April travelers: Dress in layers to accommodate for the weather changes that go along with summer and fall temperatures.
- Bring a light jacket for cooler evenings, and apply sunscreen regularly during the day, as the sun is stronger in Argentina than it is in the United States.
- June/July travelers: Dress in layers to accommodate for the weather changes that go along with fall and winter temperatures. A warm jacket and long pants are recommended, as June marks the transition of fall into winter in Argentina, and the temperature tends to be cooler.
- Be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes, as you will be walking a lot each day. In Argentina, people tend to wear either formal shoes or tennis shoes, and they do not wear flip flops.
- Bring an umbrella or raincoat for potential rain regardless of the time of year that you travel.

ELECTRICITY

- You will need an adaptor and converter. The outlets and voltage (220 volts) are different than in the United States You can purchase a combined outlet adaptor/voltage converter that fits both type C and type 1.

MONEY

- The currency in Argentina is called the Argentine *peso* (plural: *pesos*).
- Contact your bank to alert them of upcoming travel plans and ask about international fees.
- Bring a combination of cash (about \$100-\$200) USD bills, as students can exchange them for pesos at the “blue dollar” rate, which is better than the official rate. Avoid taking out money from ATMs, as they will not get as much compared to the blue dollar.
- Exchange your dollars for pesos upon arrival in the country or use your dollars at almost any store and receive change in pesos. If necessary, your guide will bring the group to a bank on the first full day of travel so that you can exchange or take out money. Some hotels also can exchange money at a good rate. Though you can exchange money at the airport, the exchange rate is higher there than at local banks.
- Be sure to carry your cards and most of your money in your money belt or neck pouch!
- Try to use small bills as oftentimes large bills are not accepted at small shops or in markets. Credit cards are accepted in hotels and larger restaurants and stores.
- Credit cards are generally accepted in hotels and restaurants. However, to pay for something with a card in Argentina, you must show your passport as your ID. They will not accept a passport copy, but sometimes they may accept a driver’s license. **We recommend paying for most purchases with cash for this reason.**
- While in country, only walk around with the money that you need and a copy of your passport. The rest can be left in your hotel safe.
- A backup, emergency card is a good idea in case one card is lost or stolen.

CULTURAL TIP

Air conditioning is not as common as in the US. Don't be surprised if your hotel and/or host family don't have AC. The best way to cool down is to wear lightweight clothing and try to stay out of the sun!

TIPPING

Tipping is very important as many in the tourism industry depend on tips as a part of their regular income. Here is a guide to tipping in Peru:

Restaurants: A 10-15% tip is customary. Hand the money directly to your server and say *gracias* when paying. If you would like change back, say *cambio, por favor*.

Hotel Staff: \$1 USD per bag is customary to tip if hotel staff carries your luggage. Please leave \$0.50-\$1 USD per night if a hotel maid has done a nice job cleaning your room. Remember to leave the tip daily, rather than at the end of your stay, as the same person may not be cleaning your room each night.

Local Guides: \$15-30 USD per person for the entire program.

Teatro Colón, El Cabildo in Buenos Aires, double-decker bus guide in Córdoba: \$5-\$10 USD per guide on behalf of the group. We recommend giving \$30-35 USD on behalf of the group to the owner of the Argentine ranch.

Drivers: It is not customary to tip bus drivers unless they help with luggage, in which case you may tip them 10 pesos per person.

If you have any other questions about tipping, ask your guide!

CULTURAL TIP

The sharing of mate, the tea that is the national drink, is a popular ritual. Mate is prepared by steeping dried leaves of yerba mate in hot water. It is then shared and handed around and becomes an enjoyable way to socialize.

FOOD

- Breakfast is included daily and all meals are included during the family stay. Any other included meals are noted on your itinerary.
- Breakfast and dinner are included for leaders during the family stay (if staying with a host family).
- Breakfast in Argentina is usually a light meal of coffee or mate cocido (a simplified version of a traditional tea drink) and either toast or a pastry.
- Lunch is eaten between 1-3pm and is the largest meal of the day. Lunch is often pastas or meats as main courses. Quiche with vegetables, meats, and egg is also very popular.
- If you hear the term cooked *asado* style, it means that the meat was cooked over an open fire, a very common way to enjoy beef, the national dish in Argentina.
- A merienda (afternoon snack) is eaten around 5-6pm and usually includes croissants and coffee or mate, a traditional tea drink enjoyed by most Argentines.
- Dinner is served between 9-11pm. Pastas or meat and potatoes are the most common food items.
- We recommend that you drink bottled water to avoid sickness.
- Most restaurants have a set menu, called the *menu ejecutivo* for around \$10 USD. It will include a drink, main course, and dessert and is not only a great deal but an excellent way to sample delicious, typical Argentine food.
- Travelers can find food for every budget. Most nicer restaurants are comparable in price to the United States, though there are smaller restaurants that are more economical. *Cafeterías*, *carritos*, *kioskos*, *comida rápida* restaurants, or the grocery store is usually the cheapest way to go!

CULTURAL TIP

Be ready to try new foods and always offer to help in the kitchen during your family stay.

In-Country Transportation & Lodging

- Greet the driver.
- Keep buses clean and loud noises to a minimum. Remember that smells intensify in small places.
- Be on time and don't make the buses wait for you.
- Student hotel sleeping arrangements may involve sharing beds, as some hotels utilize a single large bed for their double rooms or two large beds for their triple/quadruple rooms. During the family stay, students may share a room with a host sibling (if applicable), but they will have their own bed.

CULTURAL TIP

The lifestyle in Argentina is a bit more relaxed than the U.S, and influences from Spanish, Italian, and indigenous cultures are present throughout the country.

Health & Safety

- Be sure to keep your passport (and other visas, green cards, or documentation), most of your money, and your cards in your money belt or neck pouch!
- If there is a safe in your hotel room, lock your valuables in it while you are out. If there is not a safe, hide money and valuables in your suitcase. **Don't forget to check the safe before you leave the hotel!**
- Pickpocketing is common in large cities, and they are very good at what they do. Pay extra close attention to your belongings and be sure to keep your valuables close to you at all times, especially when in crowds of people or walking on the street.
- If you have a purse/bag, bring a cross-body purse/bag that zips shut. If you are carrying a backpack, be sure that valuables are not located in easily-accessible pockets. We also recommend wearing your backpack in front of you versus on your back as you may normally do.
- Always travel in groups of three or more.
- Remember, the Xperitas emergency line is available 24 hours a day, but please only call it when you are experiencing a true emergency.
- Review the travel and vaccine recommendations for travelers provided by the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC). See Current Health and Safety Updates for information about current world events and illnesses.
- Keep printed insurance card on you at all times.

Communication

- Check with your cell phone provider regarding any international fees. At least one leader needs to have an international phone plan in order to be in touch with Xperitas if needed.
- For students, we advise using WiFi. There is often WiFi (or a computer for public use) available in your hotel, but keep in mind that the connection is often weak. You can download messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, to communicate with people at home for free while connected to WiFi.
- Ask your leader(s) about their policy around technology use while on the program.
- A great way for the entire group to stay in communication with parents/guardians back home is via a blog, WhatsApp group chat, private Facebook group, or group email.
- During the family stay, you may or may not have access to internet. You will have the contact information of both the local Family Stay Coordinator, as well as your group leader(s). If you do have internet, please be mindful of the time spent on your phone and try to focus on engaging with your host family.

CULTURAL TIPS

Argentines greet each other with a beso, or kiss on the cheek. Males greet each other with a handshake.

When entering a room or store, it is very important to greet the other people by saying hola, buenos días or buenas tardes, which is sometimes shortened to buenas. When leaving, be sure to say hasta luego, chao, or adiós. Don't forget to smile --smiling goes a long way when interacting with someone in Argentina!

In some places in Argentina you will need to dispose of toilet paper in the garbage. Check with your host family, hostel or hotel to see what their process is.

Overall, just keep an open-mind and try not to refer to stereotypes!

Xperitas-Arranged Family Stay Experience®

- Your family is excited to meet you! The family stay is a great learning experience. Be sure to keep an open mind, do your best at practicing your Spanish language skills, and have fun getting to know your family.
- Try to be proactive and engage with your host family, such as asking to help cook a meal, offering to go with them to the local market or grocery store, playing a game of cards (Spot-it or Phase 10 are good options), bringing a scrapbook of your family at home), asking to go explore a nearby park, etc. These simple actions can go a long way in breaking the ice, helping with the language barrier/facilitating conversation, and learning about the local culture.
- Try to disconnect during the family stay by not using your phone all the time, and embrace the time to connect with your host family. Disconnecting and truly being present for the experience will allow you to notice more about your surroundings and be more intentional in your observations. We encourage parents/guardians to allow space for their children to disconnect as well.
- If you have any questions or concerns while staying with your host family, please contact your group leader(s) as they can best assist you and work with the local Family Stay Coordinator and Xperitas as applicable.
- If you submitted your family stay applications by the deadline, you should receive your host family's information about 2 weeks prior to departure.
- Respond as soon as possible when your host family contacts you. Keep your social media profiles clean and try not to judge your host by their profiles – better to get to know your host family through talking to them.
- It is nice to bring your host family a gift from your home state and/or a scrapbook or photos to show them what life is like where you live.
- In Costa Rica, toilet paper is usually thrown in the trash can to avoid causing problems with the plumbing. If you have any questions about this, please ask your host family.
- Electricity and gas are much more expensive in Argentina than in the United States. Be conscious of how long your showers are and make sure to turn off the lights behind you.
- Leave a thank you note for your hosts at your house on the last day of the family stay, as sending it via mail can be complicated.