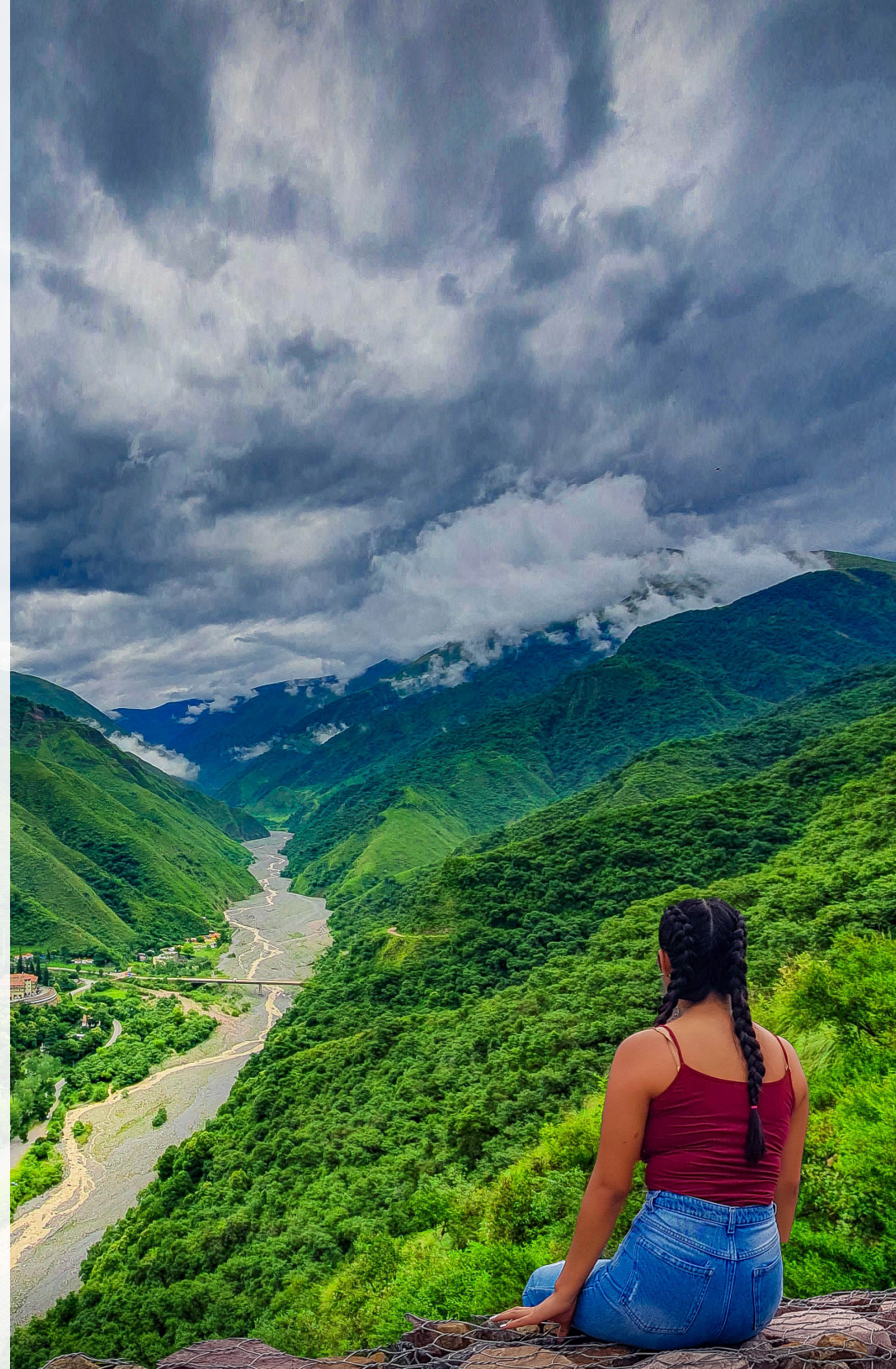




# Argentina Handbook





## 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 dress in layers. Water-resistant walking shoes are recommended in case of rain.
- 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 (such as a jacket, gloves and a hat) since 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.
- 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.
- Please bring a credit card and cash in \$50 or \$100 bills, preferably \$100 bills. Smaller bills are often not accepted, and having larger bills makes it much easier to exchange money upon arrival. Your guide will assist you with the currency exchange process when you get there. 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 your money will not go as far compared to the blue dollar.
- Be sure to carry your cards and most of your money in your money belt or neck pouch!
- Credit cards are widely accepted in Argentina, especially in cities and tourist areas. However, it’s common for shops or restaurants to ask for your passport when you pay with a credit card to verify your identity.
- 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

*Heating and air conditioning aren’t as common in Argentina as they are in the U.S., and some hotels or host families may not have AC or heating. The best way to stay comfortable is to consider layers when packing clothes in case you are hot or cold depending on your season of travel. Nights can be on the colder side generally.*

## 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 Argentina:

**Restaurants:** An 8-10% 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:** Your Program Manager will inform group leaders about number of assigned guides based on group size. **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 1000 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.
- If a meal is listed on your itinerary, that means it is included. Other meals, such as those on travel days and any not listed on your itinerary can be paid out of pocket. Typically a meal in Argentina in a mid-range restaurant is approximately \$10-\$20. Lunch may be cheaper than dinner generally.
- 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 \$13 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.
- If your program has a guide, you will find they are a wonderful support and source of information for the program. Group leaders are still responsible for students during travel. We ask that leaders partner with the guide(s) during travel to work and support them in their efforts or guidelines set for the group. We encourage you to work as a team with your guide!
- 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 data/texting/calling fees if you wish to have these services during travel. 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 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.
- Your family stay information will be relayed to you as soon as we have it available, which often is shortly before departure. In some cases, it could be two weeks beforehand, in other cases the day before departure. Please know we always work hard on securing the best possible family stay placements.
- 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 Argentina, 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.