Argentina: Public Health in Urban Environments

Country Overview & Packing Guidelines

Spring 2027

Country Overview

GENERAL INFORMATION

Argentina has been governed by democratically elected authorities since 1983. Previously, Argentina's history was marked by many non-democratically elected governments, with the years from 1976 to 1983 being the years of greatest institutional violence by de facto governments. Since the return of stable and democratic governments, there has been progress in some respects, but they have not succeeded in promoting sustainable political reforms over time that would achieve a substantial improvement in social welfare.

The Argentine economy exhibited a cyclical pattern of boom and bust, and the worst economic crisis occurred at the end of 2001, when the country collapsed economically and politically. Since 2003, the country managed to recover quickly until 2010. From those years until today the economy has shown no signs of recovery.

Argentina has a long history of immigration, originally with people coming from Spain, Italy, and other European countries, later from Syria and Lebanon, and more recently from Eastern Europe and neighboring Latin American countries. The population is predominantly Catholic, but Argentina has the largest Jewish population in Latin America. The indigenous population is also important to consider. Now numbering less than 1 million (in a country of over 45 million), they live in the northern,



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northwestern, and southern regions of the country. The majority of Argentina´s population lives in the urban centers of the nation.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

Buenos Aires is located in central-eastern Argentina, which has a moderate climate. During our travels we will be in a tropical climate (high probability of rain), warm and humid in Misiones and a dry, sunny desert climate in Mendoza. In no case do we expect extreme temperatures, but rather mild temperatures.

Buenos Aires: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
98/78	95/75	85/65	74/45	65/45

SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
70/58	75/61	77/63	85/75
70/58	75/61	77/63	85/75

LOCAL CUSTOMS

In general, Argentines are open-minded and engaging people and this can make your cultural immersion easier. They can start a very personal conversation right after meeting you and they may expect that you open up in the same way. They usually address things and emotions –good or bad- in a very direct way. It is common for people to make jokes about themselves and to also tease one another.

LOCAL DIET



Participating in the local food culture is a central aspect of daily life in country. Special or restricted diets may not always be fully understood. By trying to replicate your diet at home you may miss out on an important part of your host culture.

If in a homestay:

The diet of Argentina is largely influenced by the Mediterranean region, both in food and schedule. Mealtimes in Argentina are generally similar to those in the United States, except dinners tend to be eaten much later in the evening (9–10 pm). The staple diet in Argentina is various types of meat, breads, pasta, sandwiches, etc. It is also a common custom to drink *mate*, an infusion of herbs in hot water drank through a

metal straw called a *bombilla*. The day begins with a light breakfast, which typically includes a cup of tea or coffee, croissants/bread, and marmalade. In Buenos Aires a lunch generally consists of an entrée (a type of meat, a starch option, and salad) and dessert.

Vegetarians can manage their diets in Buenos Aires.. The Argentine diet, as mentioned before, is largely centered on meat, so it will be necessary to be *very* clear to your hosts about your dietary preferences. Lastly, it is quite possible to keep kosher in Buenos Aires, but this may be difficult outside the city.



If in independent housing:

Around the residence, you'll find supermarkets, butchers, and grocery stores, as well as all the necessary cooking ingredients. You'll also find several shops selling take-out meals. The residence will have a kitchen, freezer and all the necessary implements to prepare meals.

Note: if you have special dietary needs, including allergies, please inform the office of Student Health, Safety & Wellbeing prior to the start of your program (studenthealth@sit.edu). We will advise you on realistic expectations about avoiding or incorporating certain foods within the program context.

MEAL PLANNING

Homestay: Homestay families generally provide breakfast and dinner during the week and on the weekend. The estimated cost for meals that are not provided is based on modest eating out and buying groceries to make your own meals when facilities are available for the meals that are not provided during program activities. If you plan on eating out regularly, you should budget more money.

Please remember to budget at least **$1,230 USD** for your meals not provided during the semester. For a breakdown of your program's estimated out-of-pocket expenses, please see the table in the Money section of this document.

Residential housing: Residential students are responsible for the majority of their meals and should plan accordingly. Meal planning becomes an exciting way to explore local markets, try new ingredients, and even cook with fellow students.

The estimated cost for meals not provided during the program is based on the cost of modestly eating out or buying groceries to prepare your own meals, when cooking facilities are available. If you plan on eating out regularly, you should budget more money. Exploring local food is one of the highlights of living abroad, so give yourself room to savor the experience.

Please remember to budget at least **$2,100** for your meals not provided during the semester. For a breakdown of your program's estimated out-of-pocket expenses, please see the table in the **Money** section of this document.

SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH

Maintaining good health is essential to having a successful study abroad experience.

SIT recommends you do research prior to departure about the health, safety, and security specifics of the country(ies) you plan to visit. Consult the U.S. Department of State website and search their Countries and Areas Archive for international travel information and current travel advisories for each country. Search the Center for Disease Control Traveler's Health page to see travel health notices and vaccine requirements and recommendations for any country(ies) you plan to visit.



SIT recommends doing research ahead of time to stay up to date on It will be critical that you educate yourself about the potential health and safety hazards that may exist in your areas of travel and make informed decisions about what preventative measures to take prior to departure. You should also reference the Health, Access, and Identity information on your program's webpage.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the Student Health, Safety, & Wellbeing Team. Students are thoroughly briefed on safety considerations during in-country orientation and are updated throughout the semester if and when circumstances change. For information regarding safety and security, emergency communications, SIT policies, health and personal property insurance, and general program tips, please read the Safety, Security, and Health document and Student Handbook on your program's predeparture page.

HOUSING

Homestay

As many SIT Study Abroad alumni will tell you, the homestay experience can be one of the most rewarding and most challenging aspects of the program. We hope you will come prepared for the experience and committed to moving beyond cultural immersion as you begin to question, distinguish, and analyze the host culture vis-à-vis your own culture and come to a deeper understanding of both.

Family structures vary in every culture. SIT Study Abroad values the diversity of homestay families, and your family may include a single mother of two small children or a large extended family with many people coming and going all the time. Additionally, please bear in mind that, in many countries, the idea of what constitutes a "home" may be different from what you expect. You will need to be prepared to adapt to a new life with a new diet, a new schedule, new people, and new priorities, and expectations.



Each program's homestay coordinator will be responsible for placing students in homestays. These placements are made first based on health concerns, including any allergies or dietary needs, to the extent possible. **Please note: in order to ensure the best fit for students and families, SIT may make final adjustments to homestay placements after student arrival in country. Therefore, SIT will not provide information about your homestay family before you depart for the program.**

We seek to foster increased cross-cultural understanding in students by immersing them in local culture through daily life in a new family and community. Students are expected to assume roles as family members, respecting and following host family norms around communications, visitors, and activities of daily living.

In this program, you will have one main homestay. Students live with Argentine host families that come from different social and cultural backgrounds and are situated in various neighborhoods around the city. These neighborhoods include Almagro, Caballito, Monserrat, San Telmo, Palermo, Barrio Norte, Colegiales. All homestay sites have good access to ISALUD. Some host families have students attending the university.

Independent Housing

Students will stay in shared apartments where they might be sharing rooms (up to two students). There will be cleaning and bed linen washing, kitchen for cooking meals, washing machine in unit, Wi-Fi and coworking area. During excursions, all students will be housed in shared guesthouses, field stations, lodges, or small hotels/hostels. Housing options during your Independent Study Project will be worked on together with the program's staff and must be approved by your academic director. Please note that ISP location may be limited due to public health or political concerns.

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

Students should expect to share a room with one or more students during orientation/launch and while on excursions. Other accommodations will include small hotels and hostels. They are generally safe, with security boxes available, but you will want to bring a lock to protect your belongings. During the INT or ISP portion of the program students will also be staying in homestays, unless their research takes them outside Buenos Aires. In that case, the student will have to make his/her own lodging arrangement with the program staff's assistance and approval.

TRANSPORTATION



Public transportation in Buenos Aires is very good. Participants are easily able to move throughout the city by public bus or subway. This mode of transportation is cheap and safe during the daytime. The use of taxis is also affordable and safe. Transportation on a daily basis will include public bus, subways, or walking. Specifics on public transportation in Buenos Aires are discussed in detail during your orientation upon arrival in-country. During excursions, the group will primarily use private vehicles.

COMMUNICATION

While you may want to be in regular communication with friends and family from home during the term abroad, please bear in mind that different time zones, unreliable phone lines, and changing program activities can complicate communication.

It's important to be clear with family and friends about your availability during the term. Many students recommend making an appointment to call home or to receive a call. You should also consider the impact of constant communication with friends and family at home on your cultural immersion.

Visit our Contact & Communication page for practices on program communication, emergency communication, and home institution communication.

PHONES AND INTERNET

Cell Phone Policy

As part of SIT's commitment to student safety and security, all students are required to have a working cell phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls, including a data plan so that your phone is operational when you are away from wi-fi. If needed, during orientation SIT staff can assist students in purchasing a local SIM card and acquiring minutes for calls and texting. Failure to maintain a working phone capable of making and receiving calls/texts will be considered a conduct violation and a breach of our student code.



If you need a local SIM card for your unlocked smartphone to obtain a local phone number, do not purchase an international plan for your US phone number unless you have a dual SIM smart phone. If you do not have an unlocked smartphone, one can be purchased locally for about $170. You can purchase calling plans, similar to a calling card, in order to regulate your cell phone expenses. Argentina's principal cell phone systems are CDMA and TDMA.

Students will have access to free wireless Internet at the program center (ISALUD) and may also use the program computer and printer from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM

MAILINGS

Unlike receiving a package here in the US, receiving a package at your program site is usually **expensive** and **problematic**. Customs agents must inspect all packages and you, as the recipient, are responsible for duty and storage fees. In addition, there are cases of items being lost in the mail or taking so long to reach the recipient that the recipient is nearly back in the US by the time the items are received. For these reasons, sending packages should be done only for emergency situations. Additionally, sending valuables is highly discouraged. Mailing prescription medication abroad is illegal.

For this program, **DHL, FedEx, UPS services are available in country**. Despite cheaper prices, reliance on the US Postal Service is not advised due to delays and unreliability. When given the option, it's always a good idea to send packages certified and with a tracking number that allows the sender to track the package.

If it is necessary for someone to send you mail then posted letters and packages should be sent to the following address:

Student Name
c/o Mariano San Martin / ISALUD
Venezuela 847
C1095AAQ
Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA

Packages should be sent to the following address via ***DHL, FedEx, or UPS***:

Student Name
c/o Mariano San Martin / ISALUD
Venezuela 847
C1095AAQ
Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA



MONEY

We do not encourage you to bring Argentine pesos with you from the US. Bringing US dollars will allow you to guarantee a better exchange rate. The majority of stores in Buenos Aires also accept credit cards, the most common being Visa, MasterCard, and American Express. Most students access funds from their US bank accounts using their VISA or MasterCard debit cards. Any debit card that is linked to the PLUS or CIRRUS networks should also work at ATMs in country. Another possibility is to get money from Wester Union, which in general has a better exchange rate.

Check current exchange rates: http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/

If using a debit and/or credit card, you should contact your bank and/or credit card companies regarding your travel plans. If you don't inform these companies that you will be away, they will often assume the card has been lost or stolen and will put an immediate hold on the card. You should also check on costs of withdrawal, as these costs vary and can sometimes be very expensive. Renewing and receiving reissued credit and debit cards while on the program will

be an expensive and highly inconvenient process. Before you leave for your program, please check the expiration dates on your cards to ensure that they will not expire while you are abroad. It is also very important that you make photocopies of all your debit/credit card information and leave them with someone you trust in case your card(s) is/are lost or stolen.

We suggest that you budget between US $3,500 – $4,370 for out-of-pocket costs not covered by the Tuition and Housing Fees. To determine where you might fall in this range, please examine your spending habits during a typical semester at your home school and consider any exceptional expenditures you may have on the program. Please carefully consider your personal spending habits when creating your out-of-pocket expense budget. Some items to consider are meals not provided by the program, textbooks, Independent Study Project or Internship-related expenses not covered by the program, interpretation services, medical expenses, personal spending, and gifts. Use the average estimates below as a guide to help you plan for out-of-pocket expenses.

Please budget approximately **(homestay option)**:

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	$1,520
Meals not provided	$1,230
Books, printing, supplies:	$50
Up-front medical costs:	$500
Potential ISP travel expenses:	$200 (depends on the destination)
Estimated total:	$3,500

Please budget approximately **(homestay option)**:

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	$1,520
Meals not provided	$2,100
Books, printing, supplies:	$50

Up-front medical costs:	$500
Potential ISP travel expenses:	$200
Estimated total:	$4,370

Please note that up-front medical costs can vary widely. Though you are completely covered by SIT's travel insurance Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Solutions (BCBS), which you can read more about on our Participant Insurance page, you still may need to pay up-front for medical care and then file for reimbursement.

VISITORS AND FREE TIME

SIT strongly discourages and will not provide support for any visitors to students during the term, due to the rigorous nature of the program and the disruption that such visits cause in program flow and group dynamics. Students should be sure that relatives and friends are aware of this policy and that visits are scheduled for dates after the formal conclusion of the program. Students will not be excused from program components to attend to visitors. See the Attendance and Participation Policy.

If a visitor does come while a program is in progress, they must plan their own independent accommodations; SIT Study Abroad homestay families can accommodate only their assigned student and, due to cultural and contractual understandings with SIT, should not be asked to host students' guests.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

Please read our full Independent Travel policy for our definition, guidelines and how to access our independent travel notification form. Please note that independent travel is only allowed during program free time and students will not be excused from program activities to travel. SIT is not responsible for any costs of student independent travel including logistics, preparations, cancelation fees, change fees, and any other costs associated with independent travel. We highly recommend you wait to book any independent travel until AFTER arriving on program and receiving the final academic schedule from your program.

During the program, students follow an intense schedule of classes and field-based learning assignments, even during the ISP. Free time for pursuing an independent interest or hobby during the program will be limited. Your admissions counselor can advise you about particular interests you may have. For example, if you must keep in shape for your next athletic season, or if you play a musical instrument and want to know whether to bring it, we can help you to understand your schedule and any concerns or limitations that may exist.



CODE OF CONDUCT AND POLICIES

SIT maintains a Code of Conduct and clear institutional policies regarding student behavior through a commitment to mutual learning and respect for others. Visit the policy page for detailed policies around academic integrity, alcohol and drug use, anti-harassment and non-discrimination, attendance and participation, credit hours, equal education opportunities, grading, housing, independent travel, prohibited activities, religious holiday observance, sexual harassment and misconduct, and withdrawal among others.

Packing Guidelines

LUGGAGE

Please pack lightly and include only necessary items. You should be able to carry all your luggage significant distances on your own. Try to minimize both the number of bags and weight of your bag(s) since you will likely be acquiring more belongings while abroad. We recommend a small daypack, which will also be useful for short excursions when on the program.

If carrying prescription medications, you should carry a letter from your doctor to prevent any concerns at customs or in transit. (Please see the “General Health Tips” section in the Safety, Security, and Health pre-departure document.)

Please check the current requirements of the Transportation Security Administration (http://www.tsa.gov) as well as those of the airline on which you are flying for domestic and international baggage restrictions.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES

While informal dress is acceptable and common in most settings, it is essential to keep a neat, clean appearance. Jeans with holes, sloppy T-shirts, and tank tops are discouraged. People in offices and health institutions are apt to be much more open and responsive if the visitor shows respect by dressing accordingly. It is not necessary to be fashionable, just neat and clean. It is very important to have at least one set of clothes for formal occasions.



It is a good idea to bring clothes for all seasons. You will need warm clothes for both the spring and the fall semester. Dressing in layers is the most sensible solution to the varied seasonal and geographic climates that you will encounter. Pack a fleece sweater, warm pants, and boots for Buenos Aires, as well as some summer clothing for a few of the excursions. Convertible pants (with zippers that can make long pants into short pants) are very practical. For the excursions, bring clothes that are easy to wash, no iron needed, and lightweight. Some comfortable trekking shoes may be useful.

COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

It is strongly recommended that you bring a laptop computer. If you bring a laptop, the computer will be your personal property and responsibility. It is recommended that you insure your computer, smartphone, or other valuables for full coverage in the event of loss or theft(SIT insurance does not cover personal property).

Please see the following website for information about electricity, voltage and electrical adapters. http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/.

GIFTS

As you might imagine, it is best to be prepared with a gift to offer your homestay family in gratitude for their hospitality and as a means to share a part of your culture with them. We suggest one or two gifts that the whole family can enjoy. You may also wish to consider gifts for people outside your homestay family. Try to choose gifts that represent you or the part of the country and/or community you live in. Think about what your city, state, or local artisans produce. Draw upon your personal interests or hobbies for ideas. Pack a couple of small gifts for children, such as small games, bubbles, or a Frisbee. Even if your homestay family does not have small children, chances are that you will engage with children in your homestay community. Once you are on the program and learn more about the local culture, you will discover other ways to thank your family. Remember to bring pictures of your friends and family to share.

Former students have recommended calendars, picture books, postcards, music, or souvenirs from your college bookstore as gifts.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

Buenos Aires is a well-developed cosmopolitan city that has all the amenities of any large city in the United States. Therefore, it will be quite easy to find the majority of familiar products. However, please note that in order to stick to a favored brand, you might pay elevated prices due to import taxes.

ALUMNI CONTACTS

If you have further questions, please contact your admissions counselor and/or ask an alumni contact: https://studyabroad.sit.edu/admissions-aid/application-process/contact-a-former-student/.

Don’t miss the Packing List on the next page!

Packing List

These packing guidelines are based on suggestions from past students and your academic director.

GENERAL

- 6 – 7 shirts
- 2 - 3 pairs of shorts
- 2 - 4 pairs casual pants/skirts
- 2 - 5 pairs of jeans/dresses
- 1 business casual/dressy outfit (for important meetings or family events)
- Supply of cold-weather clothes (Good coat, multiple scarves, light gloves, wool socks)
- 2 - 4 sweaters or warm tops
- 2-week supply of underwear
- Socks
- Pajamas
- 1 pair walking shoes
- 1 pair sneakers
- 1 pair sandals
- Swimsuit
- Raincoat / jacket
- Flipflops
- Hat

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- 2 photocopies of your passport, stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa *(if applicable)*
- Copy of electronic ticket
- 3 passport-sized photos to obtain visas for excursions *(non-US passport holders only*)

HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- Sunscreen (at least SPF 15)
- Sunglasses
- Adequate supply of any medications you use regularly, including birth control

- Small first aid kit with Band-Aids, hydrogen peroxide, moist towelettes, and over-the-counter drugs for minor pain, diarrhea, anti-itching, and motion sickness, as approved by your doctor.
- Extra eyeglasses or contacts (saline solution is available but expensive)
- Tampons
- Any relevant vaccine records/documents

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- An open, unlocked smart phone (see Phones section for more details)
- Spanish/English dictionary
- Flashlight/headlamp
- Homestay family gifts
- Fold-up umbrella
- Durable water bottle
- Students are encouraged to bring a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector

OPTIONAL

- Travel guide if you plan to do post-program travel (Lonely Planet is recommended)
- Camera and film
- Voltage and plug adaptors
- College or university ID
- Waterless anti-bacterial hand soap
- Ziploc storage bags
- Dryer sheets (to keep your luggage smelling fresh)

