Argentina: Social Movements and Human Rights

Country Overview & Packing Guidelines

Spring 2027

Country Overview

GENERAL INFORMATION

Argentina, the second-largest country in South America, is a Federal Republic consisting of 23 Provinces and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (as well as other areas claimed by Argentina, including an Antarctic sector and the Malvinas Islands). The country is known for its diverse landscapes, from the Andes mountains to the Pampas plains and vibrant cities like Buenos Aires, Rosario and Córdoba. With a population of approximately 45 million, the country is predominantly urban, and Spanish is the official language.



Argentina has 48 indigenous population. However, the importance of the long history of immigration, with people coming from Spain, Italy, and other European countries has helped to build a narrative of Argentines as a predominantly white. Migration later came also from Syria and Lebanon, and more recently from Eastern Europe, Africa and neighboring Latin American countries. The population is predominantly Catholic, but Argentina has the largest Jewish population in Latin America. The country's rich cultural tapestry is reflected in its cultural activities, food, and festivals. many festivals, exhibitions, cinemas, theaters, and concerts that take place throughout the major cities. Fútbol (soccer) is the main sport in the country and is central to Argentine national identity.

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Politically, Argentina has a history marked by both democratic governance and periods of military dictatorship, particularly during State Terrorism (1976-1983), when human rights violations were rampant. Contemporary politics often involves discussions around social justice and human rights, making it a vital context for studying social movements. In Buenos Aires, it is part of the daily routine to witness massive demonstrations, festivals and congregations of several social movements, from environmental, youth, popular feminisms movements, to Universities, Public Health employees or retired people asking for a better distribution of wealth.

Economically, Argentina is characterized by a diverse array of industries, including agriculture (notably beef and soy), manufacturing, and services. However, the country has faced economic challenges, including inflation and debt crises, impacting daily life. Engaging with local communities and understanding these dynamics will provide valuable insights for students exploring social movements and human rights in Argentina.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

Argentina's climate is remarkably diverse, reflecting its vast geography that ranges from subtropical regions in the North to subpolar areas in the South. In central-eastern Argentina, where Buenos Aires is located, summers (December to March) are hot, with average temperatures reaching up to 35°C (95°F), while winters (June to September) can be cooler, particularly due to limited sunlight reaching sidewalks from tall buildings. Rainfall occurs in every season, with the northeast experiencing up to 1,500 mm (59 inches) annually. In contrast, the arid Patagonian region, which includes destinations like Bariloche, sees significantly lower precipitation and much colder temperatures—averaging around 10°C (50°F) in September and 16°C (60°F) in April. Students should be prepared for potential snowfall during excursions in these areas.

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

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

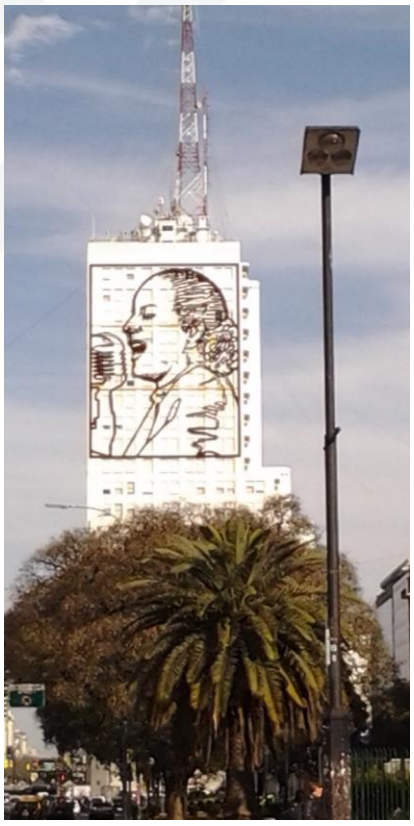
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
70/58	75/61	77/63	85/75

Altitude also plays a critical role in daily life and excursions, especially in the Andes, where elevations can exceed 6,000 meters (19,685 feet). For trips to Salta and Jujuy, where we will

ascend to 13,123 feet, students should be aware of symptoms of altitude sickness, such as headaches, nosebleeds, or shortness of breath. It is recommended to stay well-hydrated and eat lightly to help mitigate these symptoms. Additionally, nightly temperatures in the mountains can drop significantly, so being prepared for drastic temperature changes from morning to evening is essential. Sun exposure is another important consideration, particularly in summer, where UV radiation can be intense; wearing sunscreen and protective clothing is advised. Students should be prepared for varying climates throughout their stay.
It's also worth noting that in Argentina, indoor environments—whether homes, classrooms, or public spaces—are generally less climate-controlled than in the U.S. It's not common to have strong heating or air conditioning in every room, and many places may not have AC at all. Indoor temperatures tend to be more moderate, so packing layers is key to staying comfortable.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

In Argentina, local customs are deeply rooted in a culture that values social interaction and warmth. Greetings are typically friendly and informal, often beginning with one kiss on the cheek, even among acquaintances. A firm handshake is common in professional settings, but it's accompanied by a friendly smile and eye contact.
Argentinians often engage in small talk, especially during extended mealtimes or while sharing mate, discussing topics such as family, food, politics, and football, which reflects their sociable nature. Overall, embracing the local customs of warmth and sociability will enhance interactions and foster deeper connections during your stay in Argentina.



LOCAL DIET

Participating in the local food culture is a central aspect of daily life in the country. Special or restricted diets may not always be fully understood by your host family, although they may have previously hosted a student with similar dietary restrictions. By

trying to replicate your diet at home you may miss out on an important part of your host culture.

Participating in Argentina's vibrant food culture is essential to experiencing daily life, as meals are often communal and reflective of the country's social fabric. While Buenos Aires is very cosmopolitan (a great destination for foodies and a friendly city for vegan, celiac, kosher diets, etc.), during our travels the staff will help you to make sure you can meet your dietary needs.



The day begins with a light breakfast, which typically includes a cup of tea or coffee, croissants/bread, and marmalade. Scrambled eggs and breakfast meats are not common in Argentina. Around 5 PM, many families have what is called a *merienda*, a light meal like breakfast. Merienda is a great excuse to find new cafes (great part of our urban culture), chill out, spend some time with your friends and host family and to hold you over until dinner! Argentinians typically enjoy lunch around 1-3 PM and dinner later in the evening, often after 9 PM, with asado (barbecue) being a popular tradition that brings family and friends together during weekends.

The staple diet features various types of meat, breads, pasta, sandwiches, charcuterie, and high-carbohydrate vegetables. A typical meal in Buenos Aires might include rice with vegetables or breaded meat (milanesa) with mashed potatoes, salad and fruit as dessert. In rural communities, families often enjoy a stew called *puchero*, made with assorted vegetables and meats. While vegetarian options are available, and those keeping kosher can usually manage their diets in Buenos Aires, accommodating special diets can be more challenging in rural areas. During excursions, staff consider dietary restrictions for group 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 (studentwellbeing@sit.edu). We will advise you on realistic expectations about avoiding or incorporating certain foods within the program context.

MEAL PLANNING

Homestay families generally provide breakfast and dinner during the week and weekends. On weekends, it's possible to switch dinner for lunch, but this should be agreed upon in advance with your host family. 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.

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



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: 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 communication, visitors, and activities of daily living. On this program, you will be staying in

one homestay in Buenos Aires for approximately seven weeks. Buenos Aires is a bustling metropolis with excellent public transportation options, making it easy to explore the city. Homestays vary in location; some are closer to the Learning Center (CEDES), while others are near the Spanish Center or other city attractions. Most families are generally middle class, providing a comfortable environment for students. You will not need to share a room, but you may share a bathroom.

It's important to set appropriate expectations regarding accommodation. Homestays offer Wi-Fi, but sometimes it doesn't work equally fast in every room of the house. The climate can be very hot, and there is no central heating or air conditioning in our buildings in Buenos Aires. We typically have air conditioning/fans, and heaters in the apartments. Additionally, you might also experience power outages or water supply interruptions during your stay. Being adaptable and open to these experiences will enhance your immersion in Argentine culture.

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

Students should expect to share a room with other students during orientation/closing and while on excursions. In some hostels students will be able to cook and share handmade meals. Small hotels and hostels are generally safe, but you may want to bring a lock to protect your belongings. During the ISP portion of the program, students will also be staying in homestays, unless their research takes them outside Buenos Aires to conduct fieldwork. In that case, the student will have to make his/her own lodging arrangements with the program staff's assistance and approval.

TRANSPORTATION



Public transportation in Buenos Aires is excellent, allowing participants to navigate the city easily via public buses or the subway. These modes of transport are both affordable and safe during the daytime. Taxis are also a reliable option for getting around. Daily transportation will typically involve a combination of public buses, the subway, and walking. Detailed information about using public transportation in Buenos Aires will be provided during your orientation upon arrival. For long-distance trips to educational sites such

as Salta and Bariloche, the program utilizes airplanes. Once at each site, we usually rent a small bus to accommodate the group, ensuring convenient travel for all excursions

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, 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.

As soon as students arrive in Buenos Aires, they will be able to call home via Wi-Fi. SIT will have information about safe arrival, so family members may also call the US office to confirm participants' arrival. If you do not have an unlocked smartphone, one can be purchased locally for about $200. You can purchase calling plans, like a calling card, to regulate your cell phone expenses.

To call someone on a land line in Argentina from outside of Argentina, callers will need to dial their country's international access code, then Argentina's country code (54), then the city's area code, and finally the number itself. The area code for Buenos Aires is 11. The program office in Buenos Aires has Wi-Fi access and two computers for students' use The SIT program center provides internet access during posted hours.

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, and 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
[School for International Training – Argentina
CEDES (Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad)
Sánchez de Bustamante 27 (C1173AAA)
Ciudad de Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA]

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

Student Name
[School for International Training – Argentina
CEDES (Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad)
Sánchez de Bustamante 27 (C1173AAA)
Ciudad de Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA]

MONEY

We do not encourage you to bring Argentine pesos with you from the US. It is quite easy to find money exchange offices throughout the airport and cities. Some students also prefer to bring more US dollars in cash. Many 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 the country. Consider that ATMs charge relatively high fees for taking out money ($6-10 USD). Some students open an account in Western Union and extract cash directly from there.



Bear in mind that Argentina has different exchange rates if you use debit/credit card or cash.

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$3,900 to $4,000 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:

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	1,000 USD
Meals not provided	1,230 USD
Books, printing, supplies:	100 USD
Up-front medical costs:	500 USD
Local transportation	400 USD
Bottled water:	50 USD
Potential ISP travel expenses:	500 USD
Cell phone cost	100 USD
Typical Internet café usage:	50 USD
Laundry:	40 USD
Estimated total:	3,970 USD

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.

For the week-long excursions, it is best to bring a smaller suitcase or medium-sized duffle bag. In the past, students also bought internal-frame backpacks. 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**. It is not necessary to be fashionable, just neat, and clean.

Dressing in layers is the most sensible solution to the varied seasonal and geographic climates you will encounter. There will be two, 1-week excursions to the north and south of the country, where it can reach highs of 90°F/32°C and lows of 35°F/2°C.

You will need warm winter clothes for both the spring and fall semester, since you will be there either for the end of summer and beginning of cold weather or the end of winter and the beginning of warm weather. **It is a good idea to bring clothes for all seasons**. It would be good to have a fleece, warm pants, and boots for Buenos Aires as well as some summer clothing for a few of the excursions. For the excursions, bring clothes that are easy to wash, no iron needed, and lightweight. Some comfortable trekking shoes may also be useful.

COMPUTERS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

It is 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/.

If you plan to bring electrical equipment you will need to bring a voltage adaptor (110v to 220v) as well as a plug converter (European style two-prong outlets.)

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 way 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 most familiar products. **However, please note that to stick to a favorite brand, you might pay elevated prices due to import taxes.**

Also consider that the first days of the program will be spent at a hotel with limited possibility of buying any necessary items. Make sure you bring basic toiletry items for those days. Shoe sizes in Argentina vary between 10 to 14, but sizes greater than this may be difficult to find. The brands of clothes are smaller than in the US. In some cases, an XL can be a 9 or 11 in the US.

We recommend you either bring or buy locally (in Argentina) any cosmetics, food, clothes that you will need during the program. **If you are taking any prescription medicine, please bring enough for the duration of the program.** If you have any preference for US brand over-the-counter medicine (such as ibuprofen), please also bring with you. If any of the above is mailed to you from the US it may be withheld by customs, and it is very expensive and difficult to get them once they are retained.

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

- 1 nice outfit suitable for a social event
- Lightweight clothes including pants, long-sleeved shirts, light T-shirts
- Underwear and socks (2 weeks supply)
- Warm pajamas or nightgown
- Slippers or flip flops (for use inside house. Flip flops not recommended for use outdoors because of the cobble stone sidewalks and roads.)
- 1 pair comfortable sneakers
- 1 pair sandals
- 1 pair nice shoes
- Rain gear (waterproof jacket, poncho, or umbrella)
- 2–4 pairs pants or jeans
- 1 skirt and/or dress
- 5–6 mixed long and short-sleeved t-shirts
- 2–3 blouses or button-down shirts
- Sweater
- Sufficient supply of cold-weather clothes
- Jacket or fleece
- Scarf
- Bathing suit
- Workout clothes/ casual pants such as leggings or joggers
- Shorts
- Optional: one pair of cold weather shoes or boots.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Digital copy of your passport
- College or university ID or other picture ID (most restaurants and stores require you to provide a photo ID when using a debit or credit card)

HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- Adequate supply of any medications you use regularly including birth control
- Small first aid kit (most supplies can be bought here)
- Extra eyeglasses and/or contact lenses
- Sunscreen (at least SPF 50)
- Sunglasses
- Wide-brimmed hat or baseball cap (for sun protection)
- Waterless anti-bacterial hand soap/cleansing towelettes)
- Repellents
- Basic toiletry items
- Any relevant vaccine records/documents

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- Medium-sized day pack (to pack clothes for 3–4 days for excursions)
- Small, quick-drying towel
- Reusable water bottle
- Small luggage lock
- Laptop computer *(please insure it)*
- Homestay family gift
- Voltage and plug adapters
- Students are encouraged to bring a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector

