



COUNTRY

OVERVIEW

& PACKING

GUIDELINES

Argentina: People, Environment, and Climate Change
in Patagonia and Antarctica

Fall 2024

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COUNTRY OVERVIEW

GENERAL INFORMATION

The first colonial landing in what we now call Argentina occurred around the beginning of the 16th century, during a voyage led by Juan Díaz de Solís, a Spanish sailor who was the first European to reach the shores of an estuary later named the Río de la Plata (River of Silver, or “River Plate” in British English).

In 1580, a small port named Buenos Aires was established by the colonial Spanish government in the southern territory of the Americas. Many years later, in 1776, this territory became the formal viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata.

In 1810, a week-long series of events called the May Revolution occurred, which ended on May 25 with the creation of the first local government: the First Assembly. Six years later, on July 9, 1816, a formal declaration of independence marked the end of Spanish rule. Argentina struggled to establish a nation-state and in 1853 finally adopted its constitution, many parts of which were based on the United States Constitution.

With immigration and investment from Europe, modern Argentina expanded greatly during a prolonged burst of economic growth. Between 1880 and 1930, Argentina was one of the world’s 10 richest countries in terms of per capita income. After a series of both radical and conservative governments, the people of Argentina elected Juan Perón as their president in 1946.

Perón initiated policies that focused on empowering the working class and building a strong welfare state. Massive income redistribution was sustained by many different sources, such as tax revenues, nationalization of industries, and the expansion of public services. Perón also strongly promoted union movements that enhanced his leadership.

After Perón was pushed into exile by the military in 1955, there were a series of military and civil governments throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

Perón returned to the presidency in 1973, holding the position for just one year before his death. He was replaced by his wife at the time, Isabel Perón. On March 24, 1976, Isabel was overthrown in a military coup that led to what was to be the bloodiest period in Argentina’s history. In the last Militar and Civic Dictatorship, as many as 30,000 people were abducted and killed without a trace by the military. Those 30,000 people are now referred to as “the disappeared.”

Argentina returned to democratic rule in 1983 and since then has been led by stable and democratic governments, although these governments have been weak in enhancing real political reform and social welfare. Argentina’s economy exhibited a cyclical boom-and-bust pattern, with the worst economic crisis occurring at the end of 2001, when the country collapsed economically and politically. Since 2003, the country has managed to recover rapidly. In an era when optimism coexists with social and economic tension, some unresolved social issues, such as poverty and inequality, stand out.

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 40 million), they live in the northern, northwestern, and southern regions of the country. The majority of Argentina’s population lives in the urban centers of the nation.

Argentina is brimming with cultural activities. This is evident in its many festivals, expositions, 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. Other popular sports include tennis, volleyball, basketball, field hockey, and rugby.

Finally, Argentina is a federal republic consisting of 23 provinces and the autonomous capital city of Buenos Aires in southern South America, as well as other areas claimed by Argentina, including an Antarctic sector and the Malvinas Islands and several other islands of the South Atlantic.

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

Located on the Tierra del Fuego archipelago, Ushuaia is surrounded by the Andes mountain range and Beagle Channel. Ushuaia, nicknamed the “End of the World,” maintains an ocean-moderated mild tundra climate. The coolest month (July) in the winter averages 34° and the warmest month in the summer (January) averages 49°. Snow is common during the winter months (June to September) and wind, rain, and cloudy weather is common throughout the year. Weather can be unpredictable at times, with some winters experiencing extended frost and snow cover and others might experience snowstorms followed by thaw. Likewise, snow showers may occasionally occur in the summer months. Homes and buildings are heated so students should expect to remove coats/layers when moving between indoors and outdoors.

Daytime temperatures during the excursion to the Antarctic Peninsula are expected to range between 20° and 40° F. Although it can be very sunny, expect rain, snow, fog and a high wind chill factor.

USHUAIA: AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURES (°F)				
JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
57/42	57/41	54/40	49/36	44/33
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	
46/33	50/36	53/38	55/40	



DIET

SIT Study Abroad provides experiential learning opportunities where students become embedded in their host community. As such, we strive to accommodate serious food allergies where possible but simply cannot ensure that all dietary restrictions or non-medically mandated diets can be accommodated.

Students are encouraged to participate in the local food culture as a central aspect of daily life. By trying to replicate your diet at home you may miss out on an important part of your host culture. Due to the unique living and learning community central to all SIT programs, we cannot separate food and eating communally (including with your host family) from the program experience. Please consider local diet seriously when selecting your program of choice. Your admissions counselor is a great resource in better understanding the local diet.

The diet of Argentina is largely influenced by the Mediterranean region, both in food and schedule. Meal times 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) and breakfasts are much lighter. The staple diet in Argentina includes various types of meat, bread, fresh vegetables, 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. Scrambled eggs and breakfast meats are not at all common in Argentina. Lunch generally consists of an entrée (a type of meat, a starch option, and salad).

Argentines rarely use beans in their meals. In rural communities, many families eat a type of stew called *puchero*, made up of different vegetables and meats. At 5 PM, many families have what is called a *merienda*, a light meal similar to the breakfast meal. Argentine cuisine is generally cooked with very little use of condiments, with pepper being the spiciest condiment used. A piece of advice is that if you like spicy food bring your favorite condiment.

The most important meal on weekdays is dinner, where the family gathers around the table. The families will expect that you arrive to eat with them; otherwise you will have to tell them in advance that you are changing plans. You should not expect that the family is going to prepare lunch for you. During the program in Ushuaia, you will be given a stipend in order to buy your lunch near the office or the university.

Vegetarians and gluten-free can manage their diets in Ushuaia, but it may require a bit more effort on their part and is subject to availability of goods in the market. Since gluten-free food is usually more expensive, you should be prepared to share some of these extra costs. It will be necessary to be very clear to your hosts about your dietary preferences. Even though many families will prepare vegetarian food for you, in some occasions not eating meat will leave you out of important gatherings, such as the *asados* (barbecues), an important part of Argentine

identity. A kosher diet will be more difficult to keep during the program. |

Note: if you have special dietary needs, including allergies, please inform our office prior to the start of your program. We will advise you on realistic expectations about avoiding or incorporating certain foods within the program context.

SAFETY, SECURITY, AND HEALTH

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

SIT recommends doing your own research to stay up to date on [CDC guidelines](#). 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. SIT encourages students to have an informed discussion with your doctor and/or a travel clinician about what vaccines and other prophylactic medication you should receive.

Consider your normal routines for maintaining your physical and mental health & wellbeing. How might your program impact your ability to continue these routines? With this in mind, SIT strongly recommends bringing a full semester's supply of prescription medication(s). Getting a prescription filled outside of one's home country is very difficult, if not impossible. Equally challenging is receiving medication from home by mail. Therefore, students should bring an entire semester's worth of medication with them. Students are also advised to bring several extra inhalers and/or Epi-pens if prescribed.

Students should speak with their health care provider and/or a travel clinician and consult [CDC guidelines](#) regarding required and recommended immunizations and country regulations. Students participating on programs that require the yellow fever vaccine, will receive a signed and stamped "yellow card" after getting vaccinated, known as the International

Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP, which can be printed here). It is important to bring this card with you when traveling to the program. SIT recommends that students insert this document into their passport so that it is easily accessible when requested by immigration officials. Even if yellow fever is not a requirement for your program, it is good practice to bring a copy of your immunization record with you, including your Covid 19 immunization card(s).

If you have any questions, please reach out to the [Student Health Office](#).

Ushuaia is generally safe but normal precautions should be taken. Students should be careful about not leaving valuable items alone (such as laptops, phones, and cameras) in public places.

Nightlife in Ushuaia is active but there are not a lot of discos or clubs to go dancing, for example. When returning home at night you should always travel in a minimum of pairs, if not small groups. It is **not acceptable** to return home after midnight during the week. Weekend behavior must depend upon and respect your host family norms.

Ushuaia culture tends to be open-minded toward individuals identifying as LGBTQ, and those individuals will generally not be putting themselves at risk by being open about their identity. However, such open-mindedness cannot be guaranteed in the entirety of the Argentine population and may be much less present outside the city. Please do not hesitate to discuss any questions about behavior or communication around sexual identity issues with your academic director.

There are high-quality medical and mental health facilities available in Argentina's urban areas. Facilities may be limited in more rural zones. The program has identified sources of medical care in all excursion destinations.



HOMESTAYS

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.**

You will be staying in one homestay in Ushuaia for the entire semester. Some are closer to

lecture locations, while some are farther away. The families are generally middle class.]

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

[Other accommodations include shared cabins on a polar vessel, hotels, or small hotels. During the ISP and internship portion of the program, students will also be staying in homestays, unless their research takes them outside Ushuaia. 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 Ushuaia is very good. Participants are able to move throughout the city by public bus. This mode of transportation is cheap and safe during the daytime but sometimes may be unpredictable. Using taxis is also affordable, safe and recommended. Transportation on a daily basis will include either public bus, walking, biking or sharing a taxi with some colleagues. Specifics on public transportation in Ushuaia are discussed in detail during your orientation upon arrival in-country. During excursions, the group will primarily be using private vehicles.

The program uses mini buses for long distance trips to educational sites such as Tierra del Fuego National Park and Rio Grande. They are very comfortable buses and have very good service (but no toilet). Within each site we usually rent a van for the group.

The program will also use boats for Beagle Channel excursions and a polar vessel for the 10-day expedition to Antarctica.]

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.

PHONES AND E-MAIL

[As soon as students arrive in Ushuaia, students are provided with an opportunity to call home or send an email. SIT will have information about safe arrival, so family members may also call the US office to confirm participants' arrival.]

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 wifi. If needed, during orientation SIT Study Abroad staff can assist students in purchasing a local SIM card, and how to acquire 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. SIT Please take into account that if you need to use a local SIM card **YOU WILL NEED TO USE A CELLPHONE THAT HAVE SPACE TO USE A PHYSICAL SIMCARD**. As in Argentina we still are not able to provide electronic simcards for foreign people with a local number. If you do not have an unlocked smartphone, one can be purchased locally for about \$200. 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.

You will not be able to use most US-purchased calling cards in Argentina, and in any case calling cards in Argentina are less expensive than those from the US. There are a multitude of calling agencies where you can make cheaper phone calls to the US. Email and Internet access is readily available throughout the major cities

and is often quite inexpensive. During excursions connectivity will be poor and often impossible.

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 Ushuaia is 2901.

The program office in Ushuaia has Wi-Fi access.

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, technology items, and medicine is highly discouraged.

For this program, **DHL and FedEx 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.

Posted letters should be sent to the following address:

Student Name
SIT/Maria Gowland
Juan Manuel de Rosas 392
Ushuaia, CP 9410
Argentina

MONEY

In addition to tuition, SIT Study Abroad program fees cover room and board throughout the program. When room and/or board are not taken with the group, students will be given a stipend

to cover related expenses. SIT will cover daily commuting costs, if any, and excursions that are part of the normal program itinerary. During the ISP period, students will receive a stipend for basic room and board only, based on the cost of living at the program base. **Any domestic travel, interpretation services, or supplies necessary for the ISP or internship are the students' responsibility.** Please plan accordingly.

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 because you might get a more convenient exchange than paying with credit card. Many stores 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. Students will not be able to get US dollars from ATMs (only ARS).

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.

Following are suggestions for spending money during the program, including estimates for textbooks, ISP-related expenses, medical expenses, personal spending, and gifts. Figures

are based on recent student evaluations, though individual spending habits vary widely and **these costs are averages.**

A suggested total amount of money to budget ranges from **US\$1800 to \$2600.** 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, including travel costs for your planned ISP or a specific personal expense.

The official currency of Argentina is the Argentine *peso*, which is divided into 100 *centavos*. Students can check country currency and current exchange rates at: <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>



Please budget approximately:

Personal spending (from past student suggestions):	US\$1000
Books, printing, supplies:	US\$100
Up-front medical costs:	US\$300
Bottled water:	US\$50
Typical Internet Café usage:	US\$50
Cell phone costs:	US\$150
COVID-19 Test(s) (may be required for entry; subject to change and costs may vary)	\$100-250
Potential ISP/internship travel expenses:	US\$400
Estimated total:	US\$2,050

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 section of the [Student Handbook](#).

Please note that any visitors during the course of the program 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.

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. Please note that you will not have a long break during the program, such as Thanksgiving or Spring Break.

Further details regarding the current independent travel protocols can be found here: <https://studyabroad.sit.edu/admitted-students/policies/independent-travel/>

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 advise you to bring an internal-frame backpack, which will be easier for you when we travel around the country.

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 shirts, etc., are discouraged. People in offices and development agencies 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.

You will need warm and winter clothes for both the spring and fall semester. It is a good idea to bring clothes for all seasons. It would be good to have a fleece, warm pants, and boots as well as lighter layers. Convertible pants (with a zipper that can change the length) are very practical. For the excursions, bring clothes that are easy to wash, no iron needed, and lightweight. Some comfortable trekking shoes are highly recommended.



Plan to dress in layers—as it gets warmer or colder, you can simply eliminate or add layers. A waterproof outer layer with a hood over wool sweater or heavy fleece pullover and a light base layer is commonly worn by locals. We will be walking in urban areas and hiking in the wilderness, so be sure you have comfortable, waterproof footwear, as well as a rain jacket. You will also need warm headgear, a scarf, and gloves.

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. SIT is not responsible for any duty tax you may have to pay when you enter the country, theft, or loss.

During the program you will need to upload your homework to the web so a laptop will be very useful during the ISP/internship period. Host families have Internet access at home. In addition, the program office in Ushuaia has Wi-Fi access, so a laptop with this capability can prove quite useful.

We do not recommend bringing your computer or other electronics on excursions. You can leave your computer at the office if you do not wish to carry it around. If you have a warrantee

or repair plan, be sure to bring that information with you in case of any technical problems. Be aware that Antarctic conditions can be very harsh on camera equipment. It is recommended to bring a waterproof day pack or 'dry bag' to protect your camera against salt spray, snow or rain.

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 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.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT OBTAIN IN COUNTRY

Ushuaia is a well-developed city that has many of the amenities like any small city in the United States. However, please note that in order to stick to a favorite brand, you might pay elevated prices due to import taxes.

We recommend you either bring or buy locally (in Argentina) any cosmetics, food, clothes, or electronic devices, that you will need during the program.

If you are taking any prescription medicine, please bring enough for the duration of the program. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain your prescription medicine in Ushuaia.

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. |

CLOTHING

- 1 nicer outfit for special occasion
- 3-4 pairs of pants
- 6-7 shirts (one fairly dressy)
- 3-4 sweaters or fleeces
- Underwear (2-week supply)
- Thermal underwear and base layers (wool and synthetic materials are recommended)
- Warm socks (2-week supply; wool is recommended)
- Warm pajamas
- Cold-weather, waterproof, hooded, coat/parka (quality down is recommended)
- Rain jacket and pants
- Warm hat, scarf/face protection, and waterproof gloves
- Appropriate clothes for outdoor activities and hiking

SHOES

- 1 pair comfortable rubber-soled walking shoes
- 1 pair waterproof cold weather shoes or boots
- 1 pair nice shoes
- House slippers/indoor shoes/shower shoes

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- 2 photocopies of your passport stored separately from your actual passport
- Photocopy of visa (*if applicable*)
- Digital copy of your passport
- College or university ID or other picture ID

HEALTH/TOILETRIES

- Sunscreen & lip protection (at least SPF 30)
- Sunglasses
- Basic toiletry items
- Hat
- Adequate supply of any medications you use regularly, including birth control. ***Please bring all the medications you will need during the program with you**, as your prescription or dosage will be difficult to obtain locally and will be withheld in customs if sent by mail once you are in Argentina.
- Small first aid kit with Band-Aids, hydrogen peroxide, moist towelettes, and over-the-counter drugs for minor pain, diarrhea, anti-itching, and motion/sea sickness, as approved by your doctor, extra eye glasses or contacts.

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- An open, unlocked smart phone (see Phones section for more details)
- Flashlight/headlamp
- Waterproof day pack/ backpack
- "Dry bags" or sturdy ziplock bags
- Homestay family gifts
- Spanish/English dictionary
- Durable water bottle
- Lock for luggage
- Back up memory cards/external hard drive
- Field Notebook

OPTIONAL

- Travel guide (if doing post-program travel)
- Camera
- Binoculars (strongly recommended)
- Headlamp
- Voltage and plug adaptors
- Waterless anti-bacterial hand soap/cleansing towelettes |