

A close-up photograph of a hand pouring water from a black thermos into a mate cup. The cup is filled with yerba mate. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a street and buildings.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO:  
*A survival guide to Córdoba, Argentina*

SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD

The CENTER for CROSS~CULTURAL STUDY



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*Learn the Language...*

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## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: A SURVIVAL GUIDE TO CÓRDOBA, ARGENTINA

As part of your cross-cultural experience, you will find that you will encounter different cultural attitudes and behaviors while you are abroad. This is a guide to help you better understand the cultural norms of where you will be studying, as well as to offer useful information about the city and country. The Córdoba Handbook, on the other hand, relates to Spanish Studies Abroad's policies and program-related information, and it is equally important to review that information as well. Think of this as an insider's guide to help you quickly and effectively acclimate to your new city and become a *Cordobés* in no time. ¡Buena suerte y buen viaje!

### COUNTRY PROFILE: ARGENTINA

At the end of your program, you will know more about Argentina than you ever could have expected. The following is information that will give you some idea about Argentine life before you go. Further up-to-date details on Argentina and other South American countries can be found on the website of the U.S. Department of State at <http://travel.state.gov>.

#### BRIEF HISTORY OF ARGENTINA

The history of Argentina is divided by historians into four main parts: the pre-Columbian time, or early history (up to the sixteenth century), the colonial period (roughly 1516 to 1810), the independence wars and the early post-colonial period of the nation (1810 to 1880) and the history of modern Argentina (from around 1880).

The beginning of prehistory in the present territory of Argentina began with the first human settlements on the southern tip of Patagonia around 13,000 years ago. The written history began with the arrival of Spanish chroniclers with the expedition of Juan Díaz de Solís in 1516 to Río de la Plata river, which marks the beginning of Spanish domination in this region. In 1776 the Spanish Crown established the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata, an umbrella of territories from which, with the Revolution of May 2010, began a process of gradual formation of several independent states, including one called the United Provinces of Río de la Plata. With the declaration of independence on July 9, 1816 and the military defeat of the Spanish Empire in 1824, a federal state was formed in 1853-1861, known today as the Republic of Argentina.

#### COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Argentina is a founding member of UNASUR, the Union of South American Nations, and MERCOSUR, a common economic and customs bloc of several neighboring countries on the continent. It is a



well-developed and stable democracy with a modern economy. Additional information on the country may be obtained online from the Argentine Ministry of Tourism website at [www.turismo.gov.ar](http://www.turismo.gov.ar).

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Argentina is located in the so-called “southern cone” region of South America, which includes the republics of Chile to the west and Uruguay to the east. It also shares borders with Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia to the north. The second-largest country on the continent (after Brazil), Argentina is home to both the highest and lowest geographic points in the Americas. The Western Hemisphere’s tallest mountain, *Cerro Aconcagua*, is found in Argentina’s Mendoza Province, within the Andes range along the border with Chile. Conversely, the continent’s lowest location, *Laguna del Carbón*, is found in the southern Argentine province of Santa Cruz.

The country’s geography includes a highly diverse array of landscapes and habitats. Its coastline along the South Atlantic Ocean stretches nearly 5,000 kilometers (3,100 miles) long. The Argentine Northwest is a desert-like area marked salt flats and impressive colorful mountain ranges. The north-central *Chaco* region is a semi-arid plain, while the northeastern *Litoral* area encompasses a lush tropical rainforest containing the famous waterfalls at *Iguazú*. The nation’s heartland is made up of the fertile plains of the *Pampas*, comparable to the prairies of North America. The mountainous *Cuyo* region of central-west Argentina is widely known for its world-class vineyards and excellent winter skiing while the extensive *Patagonia* in the south is famous for its remoteness and unique wildlife. Even further south, the province of Tierra del Fuego is a snowy mountainous sub-Antarctic island. Its capital, Ushuaia, bills itself as the southernmost city in the world.

**Federal Capital** Autonomous City of Buenos Aires

**National Population** 40.7 million

**Religions** Nominally Roman Catholic 92% (less than 20% practicing), Protestant 2%, Jewish 2%, other 4%

**Native Languages** Spanish, the national official language, spoken by nearly all Argentines; indigenous South American languages of Quechua and Aymara also spoken by some communities in the rural Argentine Northwest, while the Guaraní language is used by some in the tropical Northeast; various other languages spoken by ethnic and expatriate enclaves in some metropolitan areas.

### Principal Government Officials

- Cristina Fernández de Kirchner
  - President of the Argentine Nation
  - *Presidenta de la Nación Argentina*
- Amado Boudou
  - Vice President of the Argentine Nation and President of the Argentine Senate
  - *Vicepresidente de la Nación Argentina y Presidente del Senado Argentino*
- Eduardo Fellner
  - President of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies
  - *Presidente de la Cámara de Diputados de la Argentina*

### National Government & Legislature

Argentina is a democratic presidential republic whose government structure closely resembles that of the United States. The bicameral national legislature, the *Congreso de la Nación Argentina*, consists of a

257-seat Chamber of Deputies (*Cámara de Diputados*) and a 72-seat Senate (*Senado*). Three Senators are elected by voters to represent each of the 23 provinces of Argentina and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. Voters in the provinces and national capital also elect varying numbers of Deputies, with the number of representatives per region depending upon the population of each jurisdiction. Elections occur on fixed dates every two or four years for different political offices. Candidates to both chambers of the *Congreso* are elected through a system of proportional representation. The President and Vice President are chosen on a single ticket by direct popular vote. Voting is open to all Argentine citizens aged 18 or older.

### Political Parties

Given its proportional representation voting, Argentina has a multi-party political system. Many different national and regional political parties and electoral alliances hold seats in both chambers of the *Congreso*. Currently, the largest political blocs are the following:

- *Partido Justicialista–Frente para la Victoria (PJ-FPV)* – currently the largest party in the *Congreso*, the PJ-FPV follows a liberal social policy and a capitalist/social welfare third-way economic platform. The current President of Argentina, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, is also a member of this party.
- *Union Cívica Radical (UCR)* – the largest opposition party, the UCR also adheres to a socially liberal public policy but follows a more leftist economic position.
- *Coalición Cívica* – the nation’s major centrist political bloc.
- *Propuesta Republicana* – a coalition of center-right politicians representing more conservative platforms.
- There are also more than a dozen smaller political parties which represent unique platforms and/or specific regional interests. Most of these choose to caucus with one of the aforementioned larger parties.

### Local Government & Administration

The Argentine Republic is divided into 23 provinces and one federal district, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (the national capital). Each of these provinces and the federal capital elect their own provincial assemblies by proportional voting. Each of the provinces also elect a governor (*gobernador*) by direct popular vote while residents of the city of Buenos Aires select a mayor (*jefe de gobierno* is used in Buenos Aires, as opposed to *intendente* in other cities throughout the country). Provincial governments are responsible for a wide variety of regional issues including transportation, education, law enforcement, and public health. The provinces are further divided in administrative divisions called *departamentos* or *partidos*, which oversee some local issues such as regional roads and local permits. Individual cities and towns (*municipalidades*) may also elect their own municipal councils and mayors.

Argentina’s current national borders were established in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. One ongoing territorial disagreement concerns the Falkland Islands, an archipelago in the South Atlantic Ocean, just off Argentina’s southeastern shoreline. Since Great Britain colonized the islands in the 1840s, they have been internationally recognized as a British Overseas Territory. The Falklands’ roughly 3,000 inhabitants are British citizens and elect their own territorial assembly. However, Argentina has historically claimed the islands as part of its Tierra del Fuego province and continues to do so, referring to them by their Spanish language name, the *Islas Malvinas*. Monuments and place names referring to this claim can be seen in Córdoba and throughout Argentina.



## Educational System

Most of Argentina's student population attends public schools or universities. The remainder attends private schools or universities, many of which are operated by the Catholic Church or by independent educational boards. Free and compulsory public education begins with primary school (*escuela primaria*) for ages 6-14 and continues through secondary school (*escuela secundaria*) for ages 14-18. After graduation, students may choose to attend a professional vocational training school or pursue higher education at a public or private university.

Argentina hosts a network of highly autonomous but federally-funded public universities, most of which bear the designation *universidad nacional*. These institutions, including the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, are widely considered to be among the best universities in South America. Undergraduate university education in Argentina is free for Argentine citizens accepted to one of the country's public universities. Upon completion of an undergraduate program, students earn a *licenciatura* degree, comparable to a bachelor's degree in North America. Argentine universities also offer a wide variety of master's (*maestría*) and doctorate (*doctorado*) programs, through these programs charge tuition fees.

## People

The citizens of modern-day Argentina are overwhelmingly ethnic Europeans whose ancestors immigrated to the country from various European nations since the colonial period. Some of the largest ethnic backgrounds are Italian, Spanish, German, Russian, and other eastern or central European groups. There are also smaller but vibrant communities of Argentines with Arab, Jewish, British, and Irish backgrounds.

Within recent decades, Argentina has seen a significant increase in immigration from other Latin American countries. Today, the largest incoming immigrant groups are from Paraguay, Bolivia, and Peru. Smaller immigrant communities also settle in the country from places like China, Southeast Asia, and Brazil. Most Argentines nominally belong to the Roman Catholic Church, though more than two-thirds of them report that they are non-practicing. Small congregations of many other faiths are found throughout the country, especially in the larger cities.

## Language

Spanish is Argentina's official language and is the native tongue of nearly all Argentines. Much like how the English language originated in England – a region of what is today Great Britain – the Spanish language originated in the early Middle Ages in Castile, a region of central Spain. For this reason, the language is frequently referred to by its alternative name, Castilian or *castellano*. To most Argentines, the word *español* refers to the people and government of Spain, while *castellano* is the term which describes their common language.

The rural northwestern area of Argentina is home to some people who speak the indigenous languages of Quechua and Aymara. In addition, the tropical northeastern region of the country contains some residents who speak the indigenous Guaraní language. Various languages from Europe, Asia, and other places are spoken by immigrant and expatriate communities in the country's cities.

The Spanish language in Argentina is marked by the use of the word *vos* for singular second-person familiar conjugation (see the 'Learn the Language...' section of this handbook). Another unique aspect is the pronunciation of the letters "y" and "ll" with a "shhh" sound. When traveling in the country, you will learn that there are a wide variety of different regional accents and colloquialisms, just like in your home country and in your native language.

## CÓRDOBA OVERVIEW

Córdoba today is recognized as a center for arts and learning in Argentina with its many universities, theatres, and museums. It's also known as "La Docta" (from doctorate), because of its rich academic past.

<b>Province:</b>	Córdoba
<b>Population:</b>	1,309,536 (2nd largest city in Argentina)
<b>Land Size:</b>	576 km <sup>2</sup> (222.4 sq mi)

### History

Founded by Spanish explorers in 1573, the city of Córdoba is located in the geographic heart of modern Argentina. Straddling the banks of the Río Suquía, it takes its name from the ancient Roman city of Córdoba in Andalusia, Spain, about 90 miles northeast of Seville. Jesuit missionaries arrived shortly after the city's founding and in 1613 established the *Colegio Máximo de Córdoba*, a small college designated to provide instruction in Roman Catholic theology and philosophy. The Vatican soon granted the college degree-issuing rights and throughout the next two centuries, its academic programs gradually expanded to encompass a variety of fields in the humanities and sciences.

At around the time of Córdoba's founding in the 16th century, Spanish colonists on the southeast Atlantic coast of South America also established the towns of Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and various other settlements along an estuary between present-day Argentina and Uruguay. Believing that they too, like the Spanish conquistadores in Mexico and Peru, would find treasures of gold and silver, they titled the estuary "Río de la Plata" – "river of silver." This name would later be extended to the surrounding region.



Córdoba gained prominence during the 18<sup>th</sup> century as an inland regional government center. Gradually, a new class of wealthy

land-owners and local politicians began to grow resentful of Madrid's tight control on affairs within Spanish America. Then in the early 1800's, as Spain's government plunged into chaos during the Napoleonic Wars, many Spanish colonies in the Western Hemisphere were suddenly forced to govern themselves. In what became known as the May Revolution, a group of prominent colonial leaders met in May 1810 in Buenos Aires and established the Río de la Plata's first home-rule government. A fierce sense of nationalism swept across the region and remained strong even after Spain attempted to reassert its sovereignty several years later.

Various clashes between royalist and pro-independence forces culminated in 1816, when representatives from the territory's major communities, including Córdoba, met in the northern city of Tucumán and declared the formal independence of the "United Provinces of the Río de la Plata." Córdoba's local college was renamed *Universidad Nacional de Córdoba*. Soon after, the young nation also acquired a new name, "Argentina," referring to the silver (*argentum*) which early explorers had hoped to find there. Although large quantities of precious metals were never found in the region, Argentina's extensive interior became a profitable haven for wide-spread agricultural production.



During the late 1800's and into the mid-20th century, industrial expansion and the construction of a national railway network fueled Córdoba's growth as a chief production and distribution center. Significant waves of European immigration – especially from Germany, Spain, and Italy – also arrived in Córdoba and the population boomed, transforming it into the second-largest city in Argentina. Today, the Córdoba metropolitan area is home to over 1.5 million inhabitants. It is also the capital of Córdoba Province, one of the 23 provinces of Argentina. The numerous rivers and lakes of the *Sierra Chica* mountain range lie immediately west of the city.

### Economy

The biggest sectors are car manufacturing (Renault, Volkswagen, Fiat), railway construction (Materfer) and aircraft construction (Fábrica Militar de Aviones). Furthermore, there are textile, heavy and chemical industries and some agro-businesses.

### People

The residents of Córdoba are known as *Cordobeses*. The most common ethnic groups are Italian and Spanish. Waves of immigrants from European countries arrived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The main contributors were Spain, Italy, France, Eastern European nations such as Croatia, Poland, Hungary, Russia, Romania, Ukraine and the Balkans (especially Greece, Serbia and Montenegro), Switzerland, Germany, the United Kingdom and Ireland, Armenia and Scandinavia (especially Sweden). By the 1910s, 43 percent of the city population was non-native Argentine after immigration rates peaked.

### Language

*Cordobeses* speak Spanish with a very distinct accent, and they hold a lot of pride in this fact. To see a video of the *Cordobés* accent explained by our former Resident Director in Córdoba, visit the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycBFkrRtA8w>. Also, check out the 'Learn the Language...' section of this guide for grammatical notes and a more detailed explanation of Argentine Spanish in general.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The following section includes some additional information and hints to help further prepare you for your time abroad and lessen any confusion you may have on simple tasks such as making calls, handling money, and knowing what to expect from the weather. Reading these tips could save you that extra headache or frustrating moment.

### MAKING PHONE CALLS

Most students find that the easiest and cheapest way to call home is through Skype ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)). However, if your family needs to know how to call your landline or cell phone number in Argentina, and if you need to be able to reach them from a regular phone, here is some calling advice below.

Argentina's country code is:	<b>54</b>
Córdoba's area code is:	<b>351</b>

### Landlines

Argentine landline phone numbers total ten digits: a two, three, or four digit area code and a six, seven, or eight-digit phone number. The area code + the phone number should always equal 10 digits.

How to dial from the US/Canada:

Exit Code	Country Code	Area Code	Phone Number
011	54	351	xxx-xxxx

From within Córdoba, you should just be able to dial the phone number from house to house without entering the area code or anything before it. If you are somewhere else in Argentina, you will need to first need to dial the area code for Córdoba.

### Mobile Numbers

Argentine mobile phone numbers all have an area code + 9 + the phone number when you are dialing from outside of the country. If the phone number begins with 15, then you must drop that when making a call from the US or Canada. Ex. Argentine Number 15-867-2321. You would dial (011-54-351-9-867-2321).

How to dial from the US/Canada:

Exit Code	Country Code	Area Code	9	Phone Number
011	54	351	9	xxx-xxxx

How to dial within Córdoba:

15	Phone Number
15	xxx-xxxx

\*If Dialing from the US/Canada: You must enter 011 before the phone number

\*If Dialing to the US/Canada from Argentina: You must enter 001 before the phone number

### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFO

Although emergency situations are fairly uncommon during a study abroad term, it is always advisable to keep emergency contact information readily available in the event that something does happen. Below are emergency numbers to use within Córdoba and contact information for the U.S. embassy in Argentina.

**NOTE: For emergency contact information for the U.S. and Argentine Spanish Studies Abroad offices, please refer to the Spanish Studies Handbook.**

### Emergency Numbers within Córdoba

Just as we use 911 for emergencies in the U.S., Argentina also uses a 3-digit number for emergencies. Please note, however, that Córdoba has three distinct contact numbers for emergencies, the police department and the fire department.

Emergency: 107  
Police: 100  
Fire: 101

## United States Diplomatic Representation in Argentina

**Chief of Mission:** Ambassador Vilma Martinez  
**Embassy Location:** Avenida Colombia 4300,  
Buenos Aires C1425GMN  
Capital Federal, Argentina  
**Telephone:** [54] (11) 5777-4533  
**FAX:** [54] (11) 5777-4240

## HOW TO HANDLE MONEY IN CÓRDOBA

The currency of Argentina is the Argentine *peso*, which is divided into 100 *centavos* and commonly represented using the dollar sign (\$). Prices are written with a comma, instead of a decimal like we use in the U.S. For example, instead of \$4.50, you will see \$4,50. The best way to handle money in Argentina is to use your ATM/debit card or credit card first, and then traveler's checks as a back-up option. We also suggest that you exchange approximately \$150-200USD into Argentine pesos prior to your departure from the U.S. Below you will find more detailed information about various methods of handling money in Córdoba.

### Credit Cards\*

Visa and MasterCard, primarily, are widely accepted in Argentina. You can use them for purchases at most larger stores and at nicer restaurants, but be aware that many small restaurants, shops, and bars will accept cash only. (It is also common for shopkeepers to offer a discount if you pay in cash, even though they do accept credit cards.) It's not necessarily a good idea to depend on cash advances from your credit card for spending money. If your card is lost or stolen, the issuing company can usually replace it fairly quickly even if you are out of the country.

### ATM/Debit Card\*

If you have an **ATM/debit card**, it can be used just the way you would use your credit card. This is the most common and easiest way to use money in Argentina. It can also be used at Argentine ATMs all over the city to withdraw funds in local currency. Any card that is on the Plus or Cirrus network will work at Argentine ATMs; check the back of your card to be sure that you see those symbols listed. Please note that your PIN must be **four digits long**; if it is not, you will have to change it before you go.

**\*Note on Credit and ATM/Debit Cards** – Some banks block international transactions for security purposes, so make sure you inform your bank that you will be abroad and for how long. You should also inquire at your bank about any additional charges you might encounter when using your ATM card abroad. There are additional fees, which might make you want to rethink how frequently you will withdraw money while in Argentina. Also be aware that you may not be able to see your balance on the Argentine ATM. Make sure you can either check your balance online or have someone check it for you at home. If your card is lost, stolen, or demagnetized, your bank may not have a quick and efficient way of replacing it while you are out of the country. That is why it is best to have a back-up, such as traveler's checks, to tide you over.

You shouldn't carry large amounts of money with you unless you are going directly to a bank, cell phone store, etc. In Latin America, people will often advise you never to take your wallet out on the street. Choose ATMs that are in a safe area, such as those in shopping malls, and not those on busy market streets. If you need to receive money while you're in Argentina, by far the easiest method is for someone at home to simply deposit money into your bank account for you to withdraw at an ATM in Argentina. Aside from that,

however, you can have money wired to you through Western Union, which operates offices at most Argentine post offices (*Correo Argentino* branches), and through MoneyGram.

If you lose your debit/credit card while you are in Argentina, ask your family at home to have the new card sent to your permanent home address first. Once they have received it, they should mail it to you in Córdoba via an express mail service (DHL or FedEx) so that you will have the replacement card in about 5 business days.

### **Traveler's Checks**

Traveler's checks are good for to keep in hand in case you lose your credit card or debit card. You can cash them at banks for local currency, although not at very many other places. Pretty much everywhere will charge you a commission, and the bank is probably where that commission is most likely to be fair. (American Express has agreements with some banks in Argentina to charge reduced commissions when cashing their traveler's checks, see their web site for more information). The good thing is that if your traveler's checks are stolen, they will be replaced by the issuing company. Read the instructions provided with your traveler's checks very carefully for more about this. Again, this is a good back-up to have on hand, in case your ATM card suddenly doesn't work or you have an emergency.

### **Tipping**

In regards to tipping in Argentina, there are no fixed percentages, but typically Argentines tip about 10% at a restaurant. Tip should not ever be pre-included on the bill, so just keep that in mind. Also, it is not common for restaurants to split checks up like they do in North America. If you plan on eating with a large group, you will either have to pay with one card or all use cash. If you get something small like a cup of coffee at a café, it is common to tip whatever your leftover change is. Tips are not standard for taxi drivers, but you can always round up to the next peso amount if you feel obliged.

## **WEATHER IN CÓRDOBA**

The important thing to remember is that, since Argentina is in the Southern Hemisphere, the seasons are the exact opposite of those we experience in the Northern Hemisphere. In other words, when it's winter in North America, it is summer in Argentina. Córdoba's climate is temperate, with distinct dry and rainy seasons.

### **Fall (March, April and May)**

As in North America, the fall season marks the beginning of the Argentine academic year. Temperatures will be comfortably warm during the day, with average highs of above 25°C (see the Metric Conversion Chart at the back of this handbook) in March and cooling off gradually in April and May. March is the last month of the rainy season, and by May rain will have all but ended. Average low temperatures range from 15°C in March to 9°C in May, when you will need a light jacket or sweater in the evenings.

### **Winter (June, July and August)**

While snowfall is unusual in Córdoba itself, the nearby Sierra Chica Mountains will get some snow. Temperatures occasionally fall below freezing (0°C), but average high temperatures are in the mid-to-upper teens (Celsius). Rainfall is minimal, averaging only 1cm a month. A warm jacket will be important, as well as heavy pajamas and slippers at home since most houses will not have central heating. Energy costs are usually higher in Argentina than what you might be used to in your home city, so your home may not be kept as warm as you might expect. Therefore, you'll need to wear warm clothes indoors as well.

### Spring (September, October and November)

As the weather begins to warm up, the humidity and rainfall will increase too. High temperatures will reach the mid to upper 20s (Celsius), and you will begin to use only a light jacket again. By November the lows will be to the mid teens, but you will probably want to make sure you have a raincoat or an umbrella for the frequent rain showers.

### Summer (December, January and February)

As the school year ends, hot and humid summer weather sets in. Most Argentines take vacations during January, the hottest month of the year, and many businesses even shut down for part of the month. There are almost daily thundershowers and average low temperatures are in the mid teens (Celsius).

## BEING A NORTH AMERICAN ABROAD

Before you travel abroad to a new and unknown place, it is helpful to be aware of the different stereotypes and predispositions that Argentines may have about you as a North American. North Americans (referred to as *Yanquis* in Argentina), and other foreigners in general, may have a bad reputation in parts of the world. They can be perceived as demanding, noisy, not speaking the local language, and expecting everyone else to speak theirs—and that doesn't even begin to cover whether people in other nations agree with your home government's policies and actions. It is important to recognize that these stereotypes exist, but it is also your job to represent your country in a positive light and try to demonstrate that not every North American fits the above stereotypes. Below are some helpful tips to think about before you go abroad so that you can come across as knowledgeable and culturally aware.

- 1) Educate yourself about Argentina and its culture – This guide is a resource to assist you with learning background information and the cultural norms of the country, but you can also read books and go online to find out additional information before you go.
- 2) Read basic factual and historical information on your host country – Also, be prepared for questions that Argentines may ask you about the United States or Canada such as basic history, politics, and current events.
- 3) Learn about current events in Argentina – It is also helpful to be aware of what is currently going on in the country in regards to the economy, politics, news, etc.

### CULTURE SHOCK

Culture shock is a natural and common feeling that many students may experience when they study abroad. Basically, it is a feeling of being overwhelmed and confused by how unfamiliar your new surroundings seem. Although it might feel unconquerable when you experience it, you'll get through it as everyone does. Culture shock is generally broken down into a number of stages:

1. *Honeymoon Phase*: You arrive in Argentina and you think, "This is great! Everything is new and exciting and I love it here!" You're going on tours of the city, you're meeting new people, getting to understand the language more easily; everything is going really well and you're so glad you decided to study abroad.
2. *Hostile Phase*: After the excitement starts to wear off of being in Córdoba, you may start to feel negative and frustrated with adjusting to the culture. You might feel like it takes forever to get

anything done, you can't talk to your parents as much as you like, you're tired of all the new foods, locations, daily routines, and having to speak Spanish all the time. You might even start to wonder why you ever decided to study abroad in the first place.

3. *Understanding/Sense of Humor Phase:* After a while, you accept the cultural differences that surround you, and things start to feel okay again. As you get to be more familiar with the Argentine culture and lifestyle, you start to appreciate it more and become more confident in your surroundings. You are able to laugh at the misunderstandings that once made you so angry.
4. *Integration Phase:* You become accustomed to the good and bad aspects of Argentine culture and you incorporate them into your own life. Argentine lifestyle becomes part of your lifestyle; you like *asado*, you love drinking *mate* with your friends, you feel comfortable and happy in Córdoba. This phase will last for the rest of your time abroad.
5. *Re-entry Shock:* When you go home again, you will experience another type of culture shock. You find that things at home have changed and that you have changed too. You don't know any of the songs on the radio or the phrases people are using. You may feel frustrated by others' lack of knowledge about issues that affect the country you've grown to love. You will miss your daily life in Argentina and worry that you're talking too much about your experiences abroad.
6. *Re-Integration Phase:* You will get comfortable at home again soon; you'll be happy to see your family and friends, and you'll always remember your time in Córdoba. You'll be able to express to people what was so meaningful about your experience and will be able to take the lessons you've learned abroad with you as you go on in life. You'll find that you are a changed person, more mature, more experienced, and with great memories of Argentina.

If you feel like your culture shock is overwhelming you to the point where you need to talk to somebody about it, please speak directly with the Resident Director. Our Córdoba staff is very supportive and always available to help you get through any difficulties you may experience while you're abroad.

## **GENDER RELATIONS: MACHISMO**

*Machismo*, loosely defined as, "...an exaggerated masculinity," by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is a strong cultural influence in Latin American countries. Although Argentina is considered one of the most progressive and advanced countries when it comes to women's rights and gender equality, if you are a woman, you may still receive cat calls from Argentine men and be exposed to *machista* comments and attitudes while studying abroad.

Things to remember when it comes to *machismo*:

- It's inevitable. Some expressions are worse than others, all are annoying, and you're going to hear them.
- If you get whistled at or called out to on the street, keep walking and don't respond. If the person is persistent, say "Déjeme en paz/Dejame en paz" or something similar.
- Forget your manners: you don't have to smile and respond to strange men yelling at you on the street.
- It is part of the culture, so men don't necessarily think that what they're doing is offensive.
- If any form of *machismo* turns into physical contact or if you experience any other uncomfortable incident, talk with the Resident Director and always feel free to call the Resident Director's emergency number.



## **GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender) STUDENTS ABROAD**

Argentina is often considered to be one of the most GLBT-friendly nations in Latin America. Laws have been enacted to protect the rights of GLBT individuals and, in 2010 Argentina became the first country in South America to legalize same-sex marriage. Furthermore, Argentina's larger urban areas are home to cosmopolitan atmospheres in which many people hold progressive views towards GLBT issues. You will find that GLBT communities and social scenes are present in several of the country's major cities, including Córdoba and also in Rosario, La Plata, and Buenos Aires.

Still, it is important to note that GLBT acceptance is a relatively new concept in Argentine society, particularly for the older generations and for those living in more rural areas. If you identify as gay or lesbian and you intend to share this fact with others while studying abroad, be prepared to answer occasional frank questions from your Argentine peers. Argentines are very direct and so these types of questions are simply their way of expressing interest and meeting their curiosity. Also be aware that throughout Latin America, acceptance of the GLBT community is usually less common outside the main metropolitan areas.

When talking with others about your sexuality, it is up to you to decide whom to tell and when to tell them. Be aware that the Resident Director and Spanish Studies staff in both Córdoba and the U.S. is always available to answer your questions and concerns, so you can feel comfortable speaking with them about this subject. Diversity is respected on all Spanish Studies programs. Whether or not you identify as GLBT, recognize that there may be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender students on your Spanish Studies program or in your classes at the UNC. It is important to be respectful and to approach this reality with an open mind. The following link offers extensive resource information to help students better understand the benefits and challenges of studying, traveling, and living in a new culture as a GLBT student.

Please visit this website for even more resources for the GLBT community and study abroad:  
[www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm](http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm)

## **RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY**

A great majority of Argentines formally belong to the Roman Catholic Church, though a sizeable portion are non-practicing Catholics. While the Argentine constitution recognizes the historical importance of Catholicism in the country, Argentina does not have an official state religion. Catholic traditions in the country often have more to do with history and culture than with serious religious beliefs, so traditional religious values usually do not play as large a role in urban Argentine society as they may elsewhere.

Several minority religious groups – such as the Jewish or Protestant communities along with certain other faiths – also have a small presence in some of Argentina's major cities, including Córdoba. Students of faith should recognize that Argentines might ask frank and unexpected questions about your religion and your individual religious practices out of curiosity. These questions are not meant to be offensive; it is just the Argentine way of expressing interest in a topic.

If you are observing religious traditions different from Roman Catholicism, it is important to explain to your host family and Argentine friends what the tradition means to you. It is also important to keep an open mind about people's reactions to your religious beliefs; it is possible that they've never met someone of your religious persuasion before. If you are respectful of other people's spirituality, they will be respectful of yours.

## RACE AND ETHNICITY IN ARGENTINA

Argentina is unique among Latin American nations because of the large-scale European immigration to the country in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A significant majority of people in Argentina will describe their ancestry as a mixture of Western and Eastern European, and they take pride in their European heritage. There also exist communities of Argentines with indigenous, Asian, or African ancestry, though their presence in Córdoba is very small.

You may expect to hear frank questions about your heritage, especially if you are a student of color. Generally, Argentines will ask these questions out of curiosity – it is possible that they have rarely met people with your background. Crossing cultural boundaries always involves some degree of social discomfort at some point or another. As a foreign student studying abroad, you may feel a sense of "otherness," which can be compounded by the issues of your race and ethnicity. If you are asked uncomfortable questions about these topics, answer the questions respectfully and calmly. Dialogues about ethnic and racial diversity are important to your personal growth while abroad. The Resident Director is a great resource to go to if you are having concerns related to this or any other topic that might come up while you are abroad.

## SAFETY

As a visitor in another country, it is always a good idea to try to blend in as much as possible in order to protect yourself and not stand out as a tourist. Córdoba is a safe city, but just like any other large city; you need to always be alert and aware of your surroundings. A lot of people may perceive North Americans to be affluent, so along with that comes being a target of petty theft. To avoid being labeled as a tourist or possible target, you should follow some basic guidelines below:

1. Don't speak English loudly in the streets. This can easily attract pickpockets and scam artists, and could get you in even more trouble late at night—especially if you are in a less safe area of a city.
2. Don't walk by yourself at night. Just as in any large city, nighttime is when many thieves will try to target tourists who are heading back to their hotels. Either walk with a friend or take a taxi any time you are out late. There are also "remises" (hired car service, although the cars are very similar to taxis). Any restaurant or club will call one for you.
3. Don't wear clothes that will instantly identify you as a tourist (short shorts, flip flops, baseball caps).
4. Don't invite thieves by wearing expensive jewelry or by carrying cameras, cell phones, or electronic music players. In Latin America it is common wisdom not to take out your wallet on the street. Also, if you are at a restaurant, never put your purse on the back of your chair or on the floor where it can be easily snatched up. Try to keep it in your lap or somewhere where you can keep a close eye on it.
5. Don't leave your belongings unattended —no wallets placed on bars, no purses left at your table, no jackets left on the backs of chairs, and don't leave anything on the ground next to you.
6. Be extra cautious while using public transport (subway, bus, train) and hold on close to your belongings. Backpacks and purses are easy targets, so make sure to have your zippers somewhere where you can see them.

Students unaccustomed to city life will learn to be more cautious when walking the streets of Córdoba. Argentina is a safe country, but while living in Córdoba, you should still follow the same safety precautions you would in any big city in North America, and basic common sense should rule your actions. Although petty theft is the most common type of crime in the city, this does not mean that you are immune from any other type of dangerous situation. If any emergency situation does arise, please contact the Resident Director immediately.

## TRAVEL THE LAND...

You may be used to having a car, but obviously while abroad you will not have one, and although many people in Argentina do have cars, they tend to use intercity buses as well. There is currently not a subway system in Córdoba.

### GETTING AROUND THE CITY

You will most likely walk or take a short bus ride to school from your homestay. The public transportation runs quite frequently and makes it easy to get around the city. Local city buses in Argentina are known as *colectivos*. A ride on a city bus costs 3.20 pesos (about 70¢ US) and you pay with a magnetic card. You can purchase a reusable card for 5 pesos at newsstands and convenience stores called *kioscos*. There is usually one located near just about every major bus stop.

Taxis (yellow cars) and *remises* (light green cars) are another option you will have in the city. Both are inexpensive and provide you with a safe means of transportation, especially if you go out later in the evenings. The difference between taxis and *remises* is that you have to call a *remis* company if you need a car. Taxis, on the other hand, can be hailed on the street in most commercial areas of the city. For late-night rides, it is always advisable to call a *remis* company. They get your phone number and the company keeps track of which specific car you will be riding in.

### GETTING AROUND ARGENTINA

The best way to visit other cities in Argentina is either the by bus or by plane, although a plane ride is significantly more expensive.

**By Bus-** When you organize your own travels you will find that most Argentine students travel by bus. Long-distance buses in Argentina are often referred to as *ómnibus* or *micros* (as opposed to local city buses, which are called *colectivos*). To access local bus schedules, visit [www.miautobus.com](http://www.miautobus.com). The main bus station in Córdoba, the *Terminal de Ómnibus de Córdoba*, is located in the city's downtown core. From there, buses leave for all parts of the country and many international destinations.

There are different classes of bus accommodations, including *clase turista* or *clase común* (regular bus seats, the least expensive option), *semi-cama* or *servicio ejecutivo* (more spacious, partially reclining chairs), and *coche cama* or *clase pullman* (a luxury seat which reclines into a bed). Long-distance buses often travel overnight and fares are generally inexpensive. Depending on the type of accommodation you buy, your bus trip might include a meal service. Bus tickets are most commonly obtained in person at station ticket counters or at a travel agency office. It is usually necessary to have some form of photo identification, such as your International Student Identity Card (ISIC), when purchasing tickets. You may find that some companies will only accept a valid passport.

You can visit the Córdoba bus terminal website at [www.terminalcordoba.com](http://www.terminalcordoba.com) for information about the available services. From the homepage, click "Ingresar" and then select the icon shaped like a magnifying glass. On the next page, you can enter your desired destination city and see a list of the companies that can get you there. For trips to the city of Buenos Aires, the recommended companies are "El Práctico", "Betel Ejecutivo", "Mercobus – Plus Ultra", and "El Turista". The principal bus and train station in Buenos Aires is called *Terminal Retiro*. All prices listed online are in Argentine pesos.

**By Train-** For students who enjoy train travel, there is some railway service available from Córdoba to the cities of Rosario, Buenos Aires, and other points to the south. Traveling by train is somewhat slower than

taking a bus and the services are less frequent. However, the cost is very inexpensive and the same types of accommodations noted above for buses are also offered on the trains. Some trains may also offer two-person private cabins (*camarotes*) with meals included. Due to high demand, it is usually necessary to book your train tickets at least two weeks in advance – sometimes earlier for travel around major holidays. The main Córdoba rail station is downtown, next to the bus terminal, and the following is an independent website which lists most train schedules for Argentina:

[www.sateliteferroviario.com.ar/horarios/](http://www.sateliteferroviario.com.ar/horarios/). Information is also available at:

[http://www.ferrocentralsa.com.ar/tren\\_sierra\\_historia.htm](http://www.ferrocentralsa.com.ar/tren_sierra_historia.htm).

**By Air-** You may want to travel by air to some destinations. The airport is located on the north side of Córdoba, a 30-minute taxi ride from UNC. Air travel is more expensive than traveling by bus or train, but sometimes you can find reasonable fares with one of Argentina's several discount airlines or with the assistance of local travel agencies. OSDE, the company that provides the program health insurance, also operates travel agencies that you may use as an affiliate of their insurance plan.

## GETTING AROUND SOUTH AMERICA

If you are planning to do any travel into neighboring countries outside of Argentina, be sure to carry your Argentine Visa with you, as you may need it for exiting and entering the country. In fact, it is recommended that you keep your visa in your passport, so that both documents are together at all times.

For travel in South America, bus is the most common method of transportation. As noted earlier, buses in South America are often comfortable and inexpensive, and allow you to see the countryside. One bus company that allows you to purchase tickets online is Plataforma 10 (<http://www.plataforma10.com>). Of course, air travel will save you the most time, since South America is such a long and expansive continent. The Córdoba–Pajas Blancas Airport (code: COR) is served by many airlines offering domestic and international routes. Air carriers serving Córdoba include Aerolíneas Argentinas ([www.aerolineas.com.ar](http://www.aerolineas.com.ar)), LAN ([www.lan.com](http://www.lan.com)), Sol ([www.sol.com.ar](http://www.sol.com.ar)), and the Brazilian carrier Gol ([www.voegol.com.br](http://www.voegol.com.br)), among others.

## FUN PLACES TO VISIT

### In the City

*Art Deco* – A venue where you will find music concerts and themed *fiestas* (Fiesta Bubamara!, Fiesta de Salsa, etc.)

*Cineclub Municipal Hugo del Carril* – An independent theater where you will find various theatrical performances, independent and foreign films, black and white films, and the classics. A great place to go if you want to get away from the mainstream, blockbuster-type movies!

*Captain Blue XL* – Another venue where you will find music concerts and themed *fiestas* (Fiesta Bubamara!, Fiesta de Salsa, etc.)

*Jesuit Crypt* – Underground temples dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century where live musical and theatrical performances are now held.

*Manzana Jesuítica* – Historical block of colonial buildings built by the Jesuits in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was declared a world heritage site by UNESCO in 2000.

*Mercado Norte* – This is the largest market in Córdoba—here you will find fruits, vegetables, cuts of meats and fish, *chorizo*, various dried meats, and more! This market tends to provide a larger variety than other smaller markets throughout the city, offering less common items, such as cilantro and chili peppers.

*Espacio de la Memoria* – This site was once a clandestine detention center, but now serves as a place of remembrance of the last dictatorship in Argentina. Here you will find a library of prohibited books, scrapbooks donated by friends and family members of the “disappeared,” and information about the dictatorship and disappearances.

*Palacio Ferreyra* – This regal looking mansion from 1916 holds the *Museo Superior de Bellas Artes Evita*, which houses original works of art between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

*Paseo de las Artes* – A vendor’s fair which takes place every weekend and a great place to find handmade crafts, jewelry, and antiques. Be sure to try the *pan relleno* (a long, thin bread that is filled with various ingredients, such as tomato, cheese, basil and/or onions)!

*Paseo del Buen Pastor* – A cultural center/performance space that once was a women’s prison. It is now an art gallery with a couple hip café bars. Live music performances are hosted here as well. (See photo on right)

*Parque Sarmiento* – Located in Nueva Córdoba, this is the most popular park in the city and includes a zoo, flower park, and artificial lake.

*Patio Olmos* – Upscale shopping mall with a movie theater inside.

*Plaza San Martin* – A plaza in the center of the city that is surrounded by historical buildings. It is a common place for people to congregate and there are benches all around the plaza.

*Teatro del Libertador* – The biggest and most traditional theater in the city in Italian opera-house style, featuring opera and classical music, but also more modern pieces.

*Tsunami Tango* – This is a great place to go if you like to dance! There is a small cover charge that includes a slice of pizza (if you go early) and an hour-long dance lesson. The style of dance varies—one week you may learn tango, the next week salsa and another week cha-cha. After the dance lesson, dancers of all skill levels mingle to practice many styles of Latin dance, i.e. tango, salsa, merengue, cha-cha, bachata, cumbia, etc.

### Outside the City

*Carlos Paz or Cuesta Blanca* – Good sunbathing and swimming spots that are only about an hour outside of the city. (<http://www.carlospazturismo.com.ar/>).

*La Cumbrecita* – Small picturesque town with an Alpine feel where you can hike and rent cabins. ([www.lacumbrecita.gov.ar](http://www.lacumbrecita.gov.ar))

*Valle de Traslasierra* – Located in the central mountain region of Argentina, and only 3 hours from Cordoba, this place is full of adventure activities and extreme sports. ([www.valledetraslasierra.com.ar](http://www.valledetraslasierra.com.ar))

*Villa General Belgrano* – If you are in Argentina in October, this town of German origin celebrates the well-known Oktoberfest in which you can drink beer and indulge in Viennese pastries. If you are in Argentina in July, you can find the Alpine Chocolate Festival in Villa General Belgrano.



## LIVE THE LIFE...

You will probably find that your daily life in Córdoba is not too different from your daily life in North America. You will spend most of your time studying, hanging out with friends, and participating in extracurricular activities that interest you. Although the lives of college students in Argentina and North America are fairly similar, here are some differences that you should be aware of.

### MEETING ARGENTINE FRIENDS

People from Córdoba are very friendly and open, and generally eager to meet new people. *Cordobeses* are known to be very fun loving, social, and they have a good sense of humor. However, you will need to make an effort to introduce yourself to them. You will be studying on the UNC campus, and will have many opportunities to meet Argentine students your own age: through the Speaking Partners program (a conversation exchange with an Argentine), attending University functions, or just by going out to the places on campus and in the city where Argentine students hang out. Be sure to take advantage of the activities offered by Spanish Studies or Universidad Nacional de Córdoba which will help you to become a part of Argentine university life.

There may or may not be people your age in your homestay. Make an effort to get to know everyone in the family, including friends and relatives who may visit. Definitely take advantage of the Speaking Partners Program, and try to meet with that person on a regular basis. Chances are you'll get along and he or she will introduce you to friends.

### DRESS CODE

In general, you may find that most Argentine people tend to dress up a little more than what you might be used to at home. You will see some young men wearing t-shirts or soccer jerseys, but you'll also see a lot of people in nice pants and leather shoes or boots. People do also wear nice fitting jeans. Although most Argentines don't wear running shoes, fashion sneakers are becoming more common, and you will notice that a lot of young people wear Converse or Pumas. The kinds of shoes you wear to the gym are not the type of shoes you will see out, though. Most people get very dressed up when going out at night, and you will probably want to as well. In fact, some *boliches* will not permit people to enter if they are wearing sneakers.

Córdoba is a university city; the dress code is fairly casual, in comparison to other Argentine cities. You probably won't see a lot of running shoes or flip flops, but fashion sneakers, flats, boots, and leather shoes are common. Jeans are perfectly acceptable, but try to avoid ripped or overly baggy styles. Although students tend to dress fairly casual, nice, fitted clothing is what most people wear, and that is a sure way to blend in as best you can. Since there is a lot of European influence in Argentina, they tend to be pretty fashion-conscious and follow trends from Europe. Of course, as with everywhere in the world, you'll find some people who dress a little differently, maybe more "punk" or more sporty. The main thing that you may want to avoid is dressing like a slob or like you just rolled out of bed by wearing pajamas or wrinkled clothes.

### UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CÓRDOBA (UNC) CAMPUS

La Universidad Nacional de Córdoba was founded by the Jesuits in 1613 and is the oldest university in Argentina. It is a very prestigious university and the main campus is located in the historic district of downtown Córdoba. There are 110,000 students that attend the university and over 90 undergraduate programs currently being offered. Most of the classes are located on the main campus, but it is possible that you may have to go to a building across town if you take an integrated course. You may notice that



the buildings are not as well kept as American campuses, and there is a lot of graffiti on the buildings that is mostly of a political nature. There is a nice amount of green space though, and it is not uncommon to find students congregating on the grass while drinking mate and chatting.

All courses are held on the UNC campus, but Spanish language and content classes are taught through PECLA (*Programa de Español y Cultura Latinoamericana*) which is a division within *Prosecretaría de Relaciones Internacionales* at UNC. The courses have a similar feel to language courses in North America with a smaller student/instructor ratio and an interactive atmosphere. These courses are offered to all non-native Spanish speakers, so you will find many students in your classes who are not from North America. If you take integrated courses with Argentine students, they tend to be more informal than in North America and it is not uncommon for students to come in late or to openly disagree with a professor. The teaching style is typically going to be a lecture format where the professor is in front of the class and the students are taking notes; however, students can be more argumentative and vocal in class than what North Americans are used to and class discussions can become very animated. Since most students work full-time, it is very common for classes to be held at night, and the age range of students is broader than in a typical North American classroom. Taking integrated courses with Argentine students is a great way for you to make local friends and to really get a feel for what university life is like for a typical Argentine student.

## HOUSING

Living in a homestay is one of the best ways to truly get a glimpse into the daily life of a *cordobés* family. It's also a great opportunity for you to practice your Spanish. Oftentimes, "host families" may not be the traditional family students expect. Your family could be a widow or single woman, an older couple whose children are grown, two sisters living together, or it could be a married couple with children your age and younger. Many of these families will take in students as a form of extra income. Regardless of their reasons for becoming hosts, they are all friendly, kind people who have been interviewed and whose houses have been inspected before Spanish Studies will agree to have them provide a home for our students.

Families in Córdoba commonly live in single-family detached homes, although they are often smaller than a typical house in North America. Other host families may reside in multi-story city apartment buildings. In either situation, it is possible that you will live in a space that is smaller than what you are used to. Every homestay is either walking-distance or a short bus ride from your classes.

Most families in Córdoba will be laid-back, but remember to always be respectful and to inform them if you plan on being late to a meal or missing a meal, and what time you expect to be home at night. Even though they are not your biological family, they still feel responsible for you and are concerned for your well-being. Energy costs are high in Argentina, so you may notice your host family turning off the lights if you leave them on and they may ask you to take a shorter shower. Be respectful of these differences and do as your host family does—be conservative with water, heat, and electricity. In your home you will have a bed, bed linens, towels, blankets, and a place to hang or store your clothes. Argentine homes do not usually have central heating or air conditioning, which might come as a surprise to you in the months when you want it most. Plan to dress for the season and see how your host family deals with the different temperatures.

## MEALTIME & FOOD

Your host family will provide three meals per day – *desayuno*, *almuerzo* y *cena*. Please note that *merienda* is not included in the program costs. In a typical day, here is what you can expect from Argentine meals:

### Desayuno

Breakfast is not a major meal in Argentina. You get up in the morning and have coffee, tea, *mate* or hot chocolate with a small amount of food – probably just toast with jam or *dulce de leche* (a sweet spread made from caramelized condensed milk), or a *medialuna* (croissant). It is very uncommon to eat eggs for breakfast in Argentina. Pancakes or waffles are virtually unheard of (although bringing along a little pancake mix and maple syrup can make you very popular with your host family!).

Coffee (*café*) is served many ways: *sólo* (black, more like espresso), *cortado* (just a hint of milk), or *con leche* (half milk, half coffee; like a latte). A traditional Argentine hot chocolate, called a *submarino*, is not quite like what you may be used to; it's made by melting a small block of chocolate into a cup of hot milk.

### Almuerzo

Lunch is the biggest and most important meal of the day and people often get together with their families at noon. It is generally eaten between 1:00 and 3:00pm and includes pasta, meat, chicken or fish along with vegetables or a side salad. Dessert is usually fresh fruit (*ensalada de fruta*), cake (*torta*), or pastries (*masitas*).

### Merienda

*Merienda* is a light snack that is generally eaten between 4:00 and 7:00pm. It is very similar to *desayuno* – typically a hot drink, such as coffee, tea, *mate* or hot chocolate, and a *medialuna* (croissant) or *criollos* (small, slightly salty bread). Not everyone consumes *merienda*, but it serves to hold you over until *cena*.

### Cena

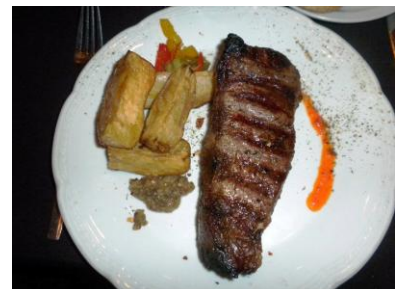
Dinner is, for many people, not as large of a meal as *almuerzo*. The same sorts of foods are served, but might be leftovers or sandwiches. However, for some families it may be a more important meal since they can all get together in the evening. It is generally served between 9:00 and 11:00pm (especially late in the summer, since it gets dark at around 10:00pm). Some families eat an earlier dinner in the winter (but not earlier than 8:00pm).

### What You Might Expect From Argentine Food

Argentines thoroughly enjoy food and their country is particularly well-known for its delicious beef. Portions in Argentina tend to be large and many foods are fried and seasoned with salt. Unlike some of the other Latin American foods you may know from Mexico or Central America, cuisine from Argentina is generally not spicy. If you like spicier food, you may want to consider bringing a bottle of hot sauce from home, as it is rare and expensive in Argentina. Seasonal fruits and vegetables are available, but these are not usually the center of an Argentine meal. You will also find a significant Italian influence on Argentine cuisine, thanks to the many immigrants from Italy who arrived during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. All types of pasta are frequently served, and fresh pasta is available from neighborhood stores.

There are a number of foods that will become a part of your daily life in Córdoba. Below is a description of some of the most important foods, but you will discover others, once you arrive. Do not worry: it will be a pleasant surprise. Some of the foods you may have while in Argentina include:

**Carne** – You've probably heard that Argentines love beef, and it's certainly true! In Córdoba, many private homes will have a *quincho*, an outdoor barbeque area, where the family will prepare a variety of cuts of beef as part of an *asado*. This is equivalent to having a BBQ or



grilling in North America. The *asado*, whether it is prepared at home, as part of a country outing, or eaten at a fancy restaurant, is how Argentines celebrate important occasions in life – and getting together with family and friends is one of those occasions! Argentines eat many parts of the cow that you may not be accustomed to such as kidneys, intestines, and sweat glands. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone and try some of these delicacies.

**Choripan** – This is the ultimate Argentine street snack. It is a sandwich that you typically buy from a street vendor. It consists of chorizo (Argentine sausage) on a piece of French bread, and it usually comes accompanied with a variety of condiments or salsas, most typically *chimichurri* sauce. ¡*Qué rico!*

**Empanadas** – In Argentina, *empanadas* provide a delicious snack anytime. Argentine *empanadas* are baked dough turnovers filled with ground beef, ham and cheese, chicken, spinach, or all sorts of other things. Available at restaurants, kiosks, delis, etc., *empanadas* may also be served in the home for a lighter meal like *cena*. They have empanadas that are vegetarian-friendly, so this could be a good option for those of you who don't eat meat.

**Lomitos**- This is the Argentine version of a steak sandwich and it consists of a thin slice of steak placed between 2 pieces of bread and filled with lettuce, tomato, cheese, mayonnaise, and possibly topped with a fried egg. You can also add ham as well. This is good to eat at anytime of the day, or if you are on the go. Instead of beef, *lomitos* can also be made with chicken or pork, but you need to state your preference when you order or buy one.

**Milanesa** – This consists of a thin slice of beef or chicken that is breaded and pan-fried. Each slice is dipped into beaten eggs, seasoned with salt, and other condiments according to the cook's taste. *Milanesa* can be served as a main dish or in a sandwich. Think of this as a fried steak or a fried chicken filet.

**Locro** – This is a thick, hearty stew made of corn, meat (usually *chorizo* or beef), beans or lentils, potatoes and vegetables (carrots, squash, etc.). Although you can find *locro* in most restaurants, ideally you will try a homemade version, as many families have a distinct recipe. *Locro* is best served during the colder, winter months of July and August. (See photo on right)



**Yerba Mate** – This tea-like beverage is an infusion made from the leaves of an herb native to the tropical *Litoral* region of Northeast Argentina. *Mate* is part of offering hospitality in the home (coffee is the socializing drink when you're meeting someone in public), though you will often see groups of friends sharing *mate* in a park. It is served in a *mate* (the container – typically a dried, hollowed-out gourd, or a wooden cup with a metal shell on the outside – has the same name as the drink), and passed around for everyone to sip from the same *bombilla* (metal straw). This hot drink – prepared with hot, but not boiling, water – is an acquired taste, and is somewhat bitter. It's sometimes served with sugar or flavoring from herbs or lemon. During the warmer summer months, you may also see Argentines enjoying *mate* with a cold juice, such as *limonada*, instead of hot water; when *mate* is prepared in such a way, it is referred to as *tereré*. This is a great activity to partake in with your new Argentine friends. They will have you talking and drinking *mate* for hours!



### Special Dietary Needs: Vegetarians and Vegans

There are relatively few vegetarians in Argentina. As you can see from the description of the importance of beef, Argentine culture is not particularly vegetarian-friendly. It is certainly possible, however, to be a vegetarian in Argentina. In addition to the variety of salads served at most restaurants, the country offers various delicious breads and cheeses along with many great pasta and vegetable dishes. Pizza is a very common food as well. As a vegetarian, you should be careful in restaurants and make sure that the meals you order do not contain meat. Many vegetarians will opt to eat fish while in Argentina; this will likely give you a wider range of food options. A handful of vegetarian restaurants and cafes may also be found around Córdoba and in other major Argentine cities. Be sure to ask the Resident Director if you have any questions.

Vegans will be hard pressed to eat very well in Córdoba. Food may be cooked in butter (although vegetable cooking oil is more common), and meat may be used to flavor some bean and vegetable meals. If you plan to change your diet and begin eating fish, meat, or even dairy, you should start incorporating these foods into your diet before you leave so that you will not become sick at the start of your program.

You must let Spanish Studies know about any dietary restrictions or food allergies. You can do that by including this information on your housing and health forms, emailing [info@spanishstudies.org](mailto:info@spanishstudies.org), or calling (413) 256-0011.

**\*Note: Some dietary accommodations may require an additional fee. See the student handbook for additional information.**

### SHOPPING

You will be able to purchase just about anything you need in Córdoba. Shopping in Argentina is very specialized; you buy medicines at the pharmacy, and only the pharmacy. You buy shampoo or feminine hygiene products at the grocery store. If you need your watch fixed, you go to the watch store; if you need an alarm clock, you go to the electronics store, etc. These types of stores are generally open from 9am to 5pm, Monday through Saturday. Some will also open on Sundays, and pharmacies may have even longer hours. There are also several large shopping malls in the city where you can buy clothes, shoes, and accessories. These malls are very similar to malls in North America.

Here are a few helpful hints on where to look for what you need:

I need to get...	Go to...
School supplies (notebooks, folders, pens...)	<i>Una librería</i>
Books	<i>Una librería</i>
Stamps	<i>El correo</i>
Cold medicine, hygiene products, condoms	<i>Una farmacia</i>
Adapter plug, electronic devices	<i>Una ferretería</i>
Food	<i>El supermercado, el almacén (o la despensa)</i>
Convenience stores (phone cards, drinks, snacks, gum, bus tokens)	<i>kioscos</i>

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

*Cordobéses* are social animals, and they enjoy spending time with friends and family whether it's enjoying a cup of coffee at a *café*, lounging on a blanket and drinking *mate* at the park, or kicking around a soccer ball. Live music is abundant in the city, and as the nightlife section mentions below, there are various events going on throughout the city every day. On the weekends, it is not uncommon for people to escape to the *Sierras Chicas* (a short bus ride from the city) to rent a mountain cabin or participate in outdoor sports such as: hiking, windsurfing, mountain biking, fishing, or horseback riding.

## NIGHT LIFE

Spanish Studies wants you to have fun while studying abroad and understands that your social life will serve as a major influence on your education abroad. However, regardless of your social life, you are expected to meet all of your academic responsibilities, which may be very different from the academic responsibilities of your Argentine peers. It is important that you don't let hanging out with friends interfere with your school work or academic performance.

With that being said, Argentines enjoy going out and being social, and there are a variety of nighttime activities to engage in. Student nightlife is primarily concentrated in the Nueva Córdoba neighborhood, just south of downtown and near the UNC campus. Students meet friends to listen to music or dance at *pubs* (where there are usually tables along with a small dance floor) or *boliches* (discos or clubs where dancing is the main activity). Most *boliches* do not fill up until around 2:00am, and it is not uncommon for students to stay out until very early hours in the morning such as 5:00 or 6:00am. There are also *fiestas*, another option for dancing, which generally take place at a venue and begin earlier (between 10:00pm and 12:00am), yet last as long as *boliches* (5:00 or 6:00am). Although *boliches* and *fiestas* have a similar atmosphere, there are three main distinctions between the two: *fiestas* happen at random (usually once or twice a month), whereas *boliches* are open every weekend; *fiestas* generally have a live band, whereas *boliches* have DJs; and *fiestas* have a theme, such as *salsa* or *música balcánica*,\* whereas *boliches* play more popular dance music. Since you will be living with a host family, please remember to be respectful of your family's rules and to not cause any disruptions if you are coming home after your family is asleep.

Since Córdoba is such an important cultural center, there are various musical, theatrical, and artistic performances happening everyday across the city. In addition, you will encounter many movie theatres which show major Argentine and international motion pictures as well as *cine clubs* showing independent films. Your professors and the Spanish Studies staff will provide you with more information on cultural activities throughout your time in Córdoba. You can also pick up current information on cultural events in the "*Espectáculos*" section of the daily Córdoba newspaper, *La Voz del Interior*: <http://vos.lavoz.com.ar/>

\*Look for posters/advertisements for "*Calle Vapor*," as this is the most common group to play at a *fiesta de salsa*. Also, keep your eyes open for "*Fiesta Bubamara!*," as this is where you will find *música balcánica*.

## LEARN THE LANGUAGE...

### DIALECT

The Spanish you hear in Córdoba may seem different at first, since the accent and some vocabulary are probably distinct from what you have learned in previous Spanish classes. The Intensive Language & Culture class is designed to help you become more comfortable with the local variation of the language, and since you'll be using it in your home and with all the Argentines you'll be meeting, it won't be long until you start to sound like a *cordobés* yourself!

One feature of Argentine Spanish you will notice immediately is the word “vos,” the singular second-person familiar form of address that is used instead of *tú*. There are some different verb conjugations with *vos*. Everyone will understand you if you use the *tú* forms you already know (and most of them are the same for *vos*), but you will gradually find the *vos* forms becoming a part of your way of speaking. This variation of Spanish spoken in Argentina, and also neighboring Uruguay and Paraguay, is commonly referred to as the “voseo.”

Wherever you would use the word *tú*, you can simply replace it with *vos*. The indirect object pronoun *ti* is also replaced by *vos*, so *para ti* (“for you”) becomes *para vos*, etc. When you conjugate verbs in Argentina, the *voseo* applies only to the Present Indicative Tense and the Affirmative Imperative (Command) Tense, and only when speaking or writing in the singular second-person familiar form. Virtually all other conjugations in all other tenses remain unchanged.

In the Present Indicative Tense, *vos* forms can be made simply by dropping the “R” off the infinitive verb, adding the letter “S”, and then adding an accent to the last vowel. If there would be a stem-change for the verb, you usually do not need to add it here. Therefore, phrases like *¿qué quieres tú?* (“What do you want?”) become *¿qué querés vos?*, etc. All other conjugation forms in the Present tense remain the same as what you have previously learned, including stem-changes.

When giving affirmative commands using the *voseo*, simply drop the letter “R” off the infinitive verb and add an accent to the last vowel. Commands like **ten** *un buen día* (“have a good day”) or **dime** *el cuento* (“tell me the story”) then become **tené** *un buen día* and **decíme** *el cuento*, respectively.

Here is a chart of some of the Present Indicative and Imperative forms so you can familiarize yourself before you arrive.

Tense	-AR VERBS	-ER VERBS	-IR VERBS
Present	-ás	-és	-ís
Indicative	Hablar: [Vos] <i>hablás siempre</i> . Llegar: [Vos] <i>llegás tarde</i> .	Comer: [Vos] <i>comés mucho</i> . Tener: [Vos] <i>tenés un libro</i> .	Vivir: [Vos] <i>vivís cerca</i> . Venir: [Vos] <i>venís a la universidad</i> .
Imperative	-á (affirmative only) <i>Mandá esta carta</i> . <i>No mandes esta carta</i> .	-é (affirmative only) <i>Leé este libro</i> . <i>No leas este libro</i> .	-í (affirmative only) <i>Competí hoy</i> . <i>No compitas hoy</i> .



## HELPFUL VOCABULARY

### Food Related

**alfajores** – classic Argentine cookies: *dulce de leche* sandwiched between two cake-like cookies  
**bife de chorizo** – sirloin strip steak, very expensive but delicious! Typical argentine meat cut  
**chimichurri** – steak marinade made from parsley, garlic and chili powder. There are several types of chimichurri and it depends on people's taste and preference.  
**churrasco** – steak (jugoso-rare, a punto- medium, bien cocido-well done)  
**confitería** – pastry shop (may also sell pizza & finger foods)  
**facturas** – pastries  
**fiambre** – cold cuts  
**fideos** – noodles, pasta  
**heladera** – *refrigerador*  
**medialunas** – croissants  
**(el) mozo/(la) moza** – waiter/waitress  
**palta** – avocado  
**pancho** – hot dog  
**sandwiches de miga** – finger or tea sandwiches  
**tallarines** – spaghetti  
**tarta** – pie (sweet or salty)  
**torta** – cake  
**tuco** – spaghetti sauce

### Other Helpful Vocabulary

**a full** – to be at the maximum capacity (Estoy a full con mis estudios.)  
**(el) auto** – car  
**bárbaro** – great  
**(la) birome** – pen  
**(una) birra / (un) porrón** – a beer  
**bizarro(a)** – bizarre, weird  
**(el) boliche** – bar, nightclub  
**boludo** – a stupid person (also a term of endearment to friends, “¡Che, boludo!”)  
**bombón** – attractive man or woman (also a small piece of chocolate)  
**el bondi / el colectivo** – bus  
**(la) cana** – the police / **el cana** – the police officer  
**(el) carrito / el changuito** – food cart  
**cebar (mate)** – to serve mate  
**chabón / guaso/tipo** – guy/man  
**chamuyero** – sweet talker  
**chau** – goodbye  
**che** – buddy  
**dar bola** – to pay attention to  
**embole** – something very boring  
**(el) faso / pucho** – cigarette  
**genial / buenísimo / copado** – awesome  
**guita** – money, cash  
**joda** – joke, or to go out (Estamos de joda estos días.)  
**(el) laburo** – work  
**malla** – swimsuit

**manejar** – to drive  
**(el) micro / bondi / colectivo** – bus  
**(la) mina** – woman  
**morfar** – to eat  
**morfi** – food  
**pedo** – (al pedo - bored / en pedo - drunk / de pedo –barely / ni en pedo- no way!)  
**(el) pibe / (el) pendejo** – boy  
**pila** – battery, energy (Ponéte las pilas.)  
**(la) pileta** – sink, or swimming pool  
**(la) pollera** – skirt  
**¡Qué bajón!** – what a bummer / **un bajón** – a disappointment  
**quilombo** – mess or disaster  
**re** – very ( Ella es re linda.)  
**trucho** – fake, phony  
**vago** – lazy  
**yanqui** – yankee, a North American  
**zafar** – to get away with something

**¡Che, Boludo! – A Gringo’s Guide to Understanding the Argentines** by James Bracken is a great book to purchase as a more extensive guide to the **lunfardo** of Argentina. *Lunfardo* is the particular language and slang that evolved in the streets of Buenos Aires during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is still spoken today. This book is a dictionary of Argentine *lunfardo* and it also includes hand gestures that are commonly used in Argentina as well. Although these words originated in Buenos Aires, many of them are used throughout Córdoba and would be helpful for you to know to more quickly integrate into the Argentine culture and to understand what exactly it is that your Argentine friends are talking about.

## SUGGESTED READING/VIEWING/LISTENING

To get an idea of what life might be like in Argentina, it is good to do a little research. The following are some recommended books, movies, music, and news sources. Most of these titles are available online at sites like Amazon.com or Netflix. You should also ask your Spanish professor or any friends who might be familiar with Argentina if they have any other suggestions for you.

### Reference Books

- Emmanuel Paris-Bouvret & Anna Pérez-Gironés, [En una palabra, Córdoba, Argentina.](#)
- James Bracken, [¡Che, Boludo! – A Gringo’s Guide to Understanding the Argentines](#)
- Moon Handbooks: [Argentina.](#)
- Margarita Gorrissen, Barron’s [Foreign Language Guides: Mastering Spanish Grammar](#)
- Christopher & Theodore Kendris, [Barron’s Foreign Language Guides: 501 Spanish Verbs Conjugated](#)

### Books

- Ernesto Guevara, [Diarios de motocicleta](#) or [The Motorcycle Diaries: A Journey in South America](#)
- Patrick Symmes, [Chasing Che: A Motorcycle Journey in Search of the Guevara Legend.](#)
- V.S. Naipaul, [The Return of Eva Perón.](#)
- Jorge Luis Borges, [Laberintos](#), [Ficciones](#), [El Aleph.](#)

- Ernesto Sábato, El túnel.
- Julio Cortázar, Bestiario, Final del juego.
- Manuel Puig, El beso de la mujer araña.
- Tomás Eloy Martínez, Santa Evita.
- Alfonsina Storni, Antología poética.
- Whereabouts Press: Argentina: A Traveler's Literary Companion
- Mario Benedetti, La tregua
- Eduardo Galeano, El libro de los abrazos

## Movies

- *Kamchatka* (2002), Directed by Marcelo Piñeyro
- *The Official Story* (1985), Directed by Luis Puenzo
- *Esperando la carroza* (1985), Directed by Alejandro Doria
- *Nine Queens* (2001), Directed by Fabián Bielinsky
- *El hijo de la novia* (2002), Directed by Juan José Campanella
- *A Place in the World* (1992), Directed by Adolfo Aristarain
- *El día que me amen* (2003), Directed by Daniel Barone
- *The Motorcycle Diaries* (2004), Directed by Walter Salles
- *Family Law* (2006), Directed by Daniel Burman
- *Bombón: El perro* (2004), Directed by Carlos Sorin
- *Buenos Aires 100km* (2004), Directed by Pablo José Meza
- *The Secret in Their Eyes* (2009), Directed by Juan José Campanella
- *Carancho* (2010), Directed by Pablo Trapero
- *Patagonia* (2010), Directed by Marc Evans
- *Un cuento chino* (2011), Directed by Sebastián Borensztein
- *Viudas* (2011), Directed by Marcos Carnevale

## Music

- Carlos Gardel, *Época de oro*, 1999.
- Astor Piazzolla, *Grandes éxitos*, 1989.
- Sandro, *Mi vida, mi música*, 2003.
- Charly García, *Influencia*, 2002
- Fito Páez, *Lucha Rock*, 2004.
- Fabulosos Cadillacs, *Fabulosos calavera*, 1997.
- Andrés Calamaro, *Honestidad brutal*, 1999.
- Mercedes Sosa, *Gracias a la vida*, 1994.
- León Gieco, *Bandidos rurales*, 2002.
- Les Luthiers, *Sonamos pese a todo*, 2003.
- Kameleba, *Sueño que va*, 2007
- Nompalidece, *Nonpalidesenchufado*, 2008
- La Mona Jiménez, *Grandes éxitos*, 1998

## News Sources

- *La Mañana de Córdoba* – [www.lmcordoba.com.ar](http://www.lmcordoba.com.ar) – regional newspaper based in Córdoba, focus on issues in north-central Argentina

- *La Voz del Interior* – [www.lavoz.com.ar](http://www.lavoz.com.ar) – regional newspaper based in Córdoba, focus on issues in north-central Argentina
- *Página 12* – [www.pagina12.com.ar](http://www.pagina12.com.ar) – nationally distributed newspaper, based in Buenos Aires
- *Tiempo Argentino* – [www.tiempoargentino.com.ar](http://www.tiempoargentino.com.ar) – national news, distributed in Buenos Aires
- *Clarín* – [www.clarin.com](http://www.clarin.com) – nationally distributed Argentine newspaper based in Buenos Aires
- *La Nación* – [www.lanacion.com.ar](http://www.lanacion.com.ar) – nationally distributed paper based in Buenos Aires, among Argentina's oldest periodicals

## CONVERSION CHARTS

### MEASUREMENTS

Length		Volume		Weight	
English	Metric	English	Metric	English	Metric
1 in.	2.54 cm	1 fl oz.	30 ml	1 oz.	28 g
1 ft.	30 cm	1 pt.	0.47 l	1 lb.	0.45 kg
1 yd.	0.9 m	1 qt.	0.95 l		
1 mi.	1.6 km	1 gal.	4.5 l		
0.4 in	1 cm	0.03 fl oz.	1 ml	0.035 oz.	1 g
3.3 ft.	1 m	2.1 pt.	1 l	2.2 lb	1 kg
1.1 yd	1 m	1.06 qt.	1 l		
0.6 mi.	1 km	0.26 gal	1 l		

### TEMPERATURE

