



Predeparture Program Guide

SALTA, ARGENTINA

2017

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FSD VALUES

At the center of the internship experience are the core values, vision, and mission that make FSD the organization that it is. We ask that as an FSD participant, you understand and remember these tenets throughout your time abroad, in order to make your program a meaningful experience for both you and the communities in which you serve.

MISSION

FSD achieves community-driven goals through asset-based development and international exchange in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

VISION

FSD envisions a world where all people have the opportunity and capacity to direct economic, social, and environmental resources toward sustainable outcomes that improve lives and communities.

CORE VALUES

- **Start with Assets, Not Problems:** We take an asset-based approach to development work. We begin by listening to the priorities set by our community-based partners at our international program sites. We then identify and utilize existing assets and capacity to address those priorities.
- **Motivate Community Ownership:** We partner with leaders, organizations, and stakeholders committed to change, action, and social justice. We stress community ownership and participation before launching initiatives, especially in our volunteer programs.
- **Generate Enduring Results and Impact:** We ensure the outcomes of our support have long-lasting benefits for our partners. We think hard about how to participate appropriately and effectively in development, and on how to become redundant so that our initiatives outlast our involvement.
- **Focus On The Site Teams:** We are headquartered in California, but our International Site Teams direct our programs across Africa, Asia, and Latin America on the ground, 365 days a year. These teams build partnerships based on trust, respect, efficacy, and alignment with an asset-based approach.
- **Build Capacity:** We strengthen the skills, competencies, and abilities of the leaders of our community based partners and of our students and professional volunteers. We educate and train, facilitating the sharing of best practices across all of our stakeholders to support our partners' priorities.
- **Be A Bridge:** We relentlessly build a network of students, professionals, and passionate advocates for our community-based partners to access. We connect this network of assets and volunteers with the work of our partners through our international exchange and grantmaking programs.
- **Change Perspectives:** We share our experiences and learning about the complexities of development with friends, family, and colleagues. We promote cultural exchange and sensitivity, encouraging a reflective approach to navigating cross-cultural issues, confusions, and tensions.
- **Promote Reciprocity:** We operate on our founding principle that producing strong community outcomes must be the priority. We base all partnerships, strategies, and decisions on the Fair Trade Learning concept that we must be ethical and reciprocal in our planning, implementation, and outcomes.

LETTER FROM FSD

Congratulations again on your acceptance to the Foundation for Sustainable Development's program! For many of you this experience will spark a lifelong interest in development. For others, it will be a chance to gain insights into other cultures that can only be obtained through direct experience. For all of you it will be a chance to make a lasting impact on people and communities in your host country, and an opportunity that will make a lasting impression on your life.

Many challenges await you. It is likely that the most difficult obstacles you face will not be the ones that test your technical skills or knowledge. More often it will be the difficulty of gaining the cultural competencies necessary to do successful work in a community. It will be learning to see the problems facing a region from the eyes of a community member rather than through the eyes of an outsider. Remember that culture, community, and language should guide your work as much as your own knowledge.

During your program you will represent both yourself and FSD in your community. Many people in the region that you will work in have had very little experience with people from outside their country. As such they will develop opinions of you and the work of FSD through their interactions with you or what they hear about you. We ask that you take your visibility into consideration when you make decisions about your actions in your host country.

It is the intention of FSD to provide you with a broad support network to best position you for success, but at the end of the day, it is your effort that will most influence the success of your experience with FSD. You will need to take initiative and put yourself in situations that stretch your comfort levels. You will have to work within cultural contexts that can cause extreme frustration. Many other challenges await, but at the same time you face these challenges you also have an incredible set of opportunities. Go into the experience with the willingness to listen and learn. You will find that through this willingness you will increase your ability to give to your community.

This guide has been developed to help make clear what FSD expects of our interns and volunteers and what you can expect of us. We look at your internship or volunteer program as a partnership. It is our hope and belief that clear expectations are the foundation for a solid working relationship. Please read this guide thoroughly; it contains information that is crucial to the success of your experience and our partnership.

Above all, you should feel comfortable contacting us at the US based headquarters if you need any additional support or have any questions.

Good luck!

FSD STAFF ROLES

Program Director: FSD's program directors are local experts in the field of community development. Their experience and strong community ties make them a great resource to support you in your in-country project work. The program director develops and maintains FSD's relationships with our host organizations and is heavily involved in the process from the time you apply to FSD to the end of your term of service.

Program Coordinators: Your program coordinator(s) provides ongoing support to you, FSD's host families and our partner organizations. During the application process, they advise the program director and San Francisco staff about your placement. Once you're in the field, they serve as a bridge to the local culture and language and as lifeline when culture shock inevitably sets in. They are also available to advise you as you develop your program workplan.

Program Officer: FSD's program officers coordinate the work done at FSD sites in different regions of the world. They manage program logistics and design, corporate and university partnerships, and programmatic issues. Program officers are also your U.S. based emergency contact.

FSD Headquarters Contact Info

- Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. PST
- General Inquiries: info@fsd.org
- Office Phone: 415-283-4873
- Emergency Phone: 415-828-8414

SAFETY & SECURITY

The safety and security of our program participants and staff is our first priority. Our safety and security protocols meet international standards and have been developed over 20 years of operation, and from the practical experience of our staff. We have rigorous and conservative safety and security procedures, including triaged security measures for students (such as restricted travel, curfews, and buddy systems) should any emergent or potentially emergent event occur. Every site has an emergency evacuation plan (supported by our travel insurance partner) that identifies safe houses, on-call transportation, and provides a variety of options for moving participants out of unsafe areas via land and air routes.

For each site, we have identified physicians, health centers, and hospitals for routine and emergency care that meet standards of care for foreigners, including the locations of and contact for relevant embassies and consulates. These procedures are supported by duty officer training of our support staff in San Francisco who monitor an emergency call line 24/7. But the most critical components of our safety and security system are our local staff, who are also on call 24/7, and our network of community partners at each of our program sites. Our local staff have the best knowledge regarding the potential of local events to become critical, and they have a network of community members to turn to for safety information.

While working abroad, there is always a potential risk that emergencies may occur, and we have experience dealing with a variety of issues, from localized civil unrest and natural disasters to total evacuation of programs. The US office is in constant communication with our program sites through a variety of communications channels, including biweekly phone calls and reporting on each participant, and we also monitor international media for emerging events.

All of our program sites are in safe areas. However, similar to the US, certain common-sense safety measures must be taken. These will be reviewed extensively during orientation, when every participant receives a safety briefing. We emphasize that the most important ways to stay safe are to exercise good judgment, to have a strong network of local contacts, and to have an awareness of the potential for harm.

FSD will do its utmost to provide a safe environment and a responsive support system to you throughout your experience. To ensure a safe and successful experience for everyone involved, we depend upon our staff to serve as a barometer of the local political, social and economic climates, and to use that knowledge to maintain a safe and secure environment for FSD participants. We depend on our participants to act prudently and be receptive to instructions and suggestions regarding safety and security.



FSD RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure a safe and secure host community. Our host organizations and programs are run by FSD staff and trusted colleagues who live locally and often have years of experience with FSD. While the political climate varies by location and timing, we feel that partner organizations provide us with a good barometer of the climate in relation to the safety of foreign volunteers.
- Inform you about safety and security in your host community through materials like this predeparture guide. We equip you with the information and tools to be aware of the realities of your host community, to avoid situations that would put you at risk, and to manage these situations should they arise.
- Send you an electronic proof of insurance card.
- Direct you to a preferred medical facility in the case of an emergency.
- Support you logistically and emotionally through any medical or emergency situation.
- Contact your emergency contacts in the case of a major emergency.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Learn about the history and current events of your host country and community.
- Secure all recommended vaccinations.
- Secure legal and visa requirements for your stay.
- Follow the directions of your site team and host family.
- Register with the US State Department or equivalent.
- Avoid volatile or risky situations. Travel with someone you know, and avoid being out alone after dark.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Walk purposefully and act as though you know where you are going.
- Notify your site team of any incidents of harassment, illness, accident, or any other serious event as soon as possible.
- Review your insurance coverage to determine whether you want to purchase an enhanced package. FSD program insurance ensures that adequate support is available to you in the case of a major emergency. There is a US \$250 deductible for which you are responsible. The illnesses and medical issues you are more likely to encounter may require medical consultations and prescriptions. Beyond taking all necessary precautions to prevent illness and accidents, please plan financially for these types of expenses. Hospitals and clinics may require payment up-front for services; please bring cash and/or a credit card (Visa or Mastercard) for emergency medical expenses and seek reimbursement directly from the insurance provider. FSD is not responsible for medical fees.

HEALTH PREPARATIONS

As an FSD participant, it is your **full responsibility** to identify and take all necessary health precautions prior to, during, and following the program. Please start your health preparations early, as some vaccinations must be taken as far as eight weeks or more before departure. Providing detailed medical advice is beyond the expertise of FSD so it is very important to consult the resources below as well as medical professionals such as your doctor or local travel health clinic.

Topics to talk to your doctor or local health clinic about:

- The symptoms of the most common illnesses contracted by travelers, and the appropriate treatment
- Medicines and supplies for preventing and treating common illnesses and maladies (diarrhea dehydration, sunburn, food poisoning)
- Dengue fever and malaria
- Tetanus
- Rabies
- Food and water-borne diseases
- Nutrition (especially for those with dietary restrictions)

What happens if I get sick?

For serious illness that may occur during your program, there are public and private clinics and hospitals available in most areas. If you should become sick, please alert the FSD site team and your host family immediately and they will ensure that you receive appropriate medical care. Salta is home to several very good hospital facilities and well-trained, sensitive doctors are easily found.

HEALTH RESOURCES

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Recorded information about health risks and precautions for international travelers: 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747)

Traveler's Health for Argentina

wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/argentina

Malaria Hotline

404-332-4555



VISA INFORMATION

The recommendations provided here are subject to change at any time. As an FSD participant, it is your full responsibility to secure the appropriate visa and ensure the full legality of your stay in the host country during the program. You should consult the resources listed below and check with a Nicaraguan consulate or embassy for the most current information.

In 2016, the \$160 Reciprocity Fee for US Passport holders was revoked (<http://www.embassyofargentina.us/en/consular-section/reciprocity-fee-for-us-citizens.html>) but it could be reinstated at any time. Please see below for more information regarding the reciprocity fee.

U.S. citizens do not need a visa for visits of up to 90 days for tourism or business, but U.S. citizens coming to Argentina for tourism and business must pay a Reciprocity Fee of \$160. The reciprocity fee must be purchased online before travel and presented before boarding the plane in the U.S. It must also be presented when going through customs at EZE in Buenos Aires. To pay the reciprocity fee, make an account with “Provincia Pagos,” and they pay the reciprocity fee following the instructions. A confirmation of the transaction will be sent to your email account, where you can print your reciprocity fee voucher (with bar code). Keep multiple copies of this voucher with you as you travel in Argentina. To pay the Reciprocity Fee, go to <https://virtual.provinciapagos.com.ar/ArgentineTaxes/>. This grants you a 90-day stay in Argentina with multiple entries.

VISA RESOURCES

Embassy of Argentina

1600 New Hampshire Ave NW
Washington, DC 20009
Telephone: (202) 238-6400

www.embassyofargentina.us

International Entry

If you travel to Argentina through Bolivia or Chile, you will need to follow visa procedures to secure travel visas according to the Bolivian and Chilean embassies.



PACKING & LUGGAGE

RECOMMENDED PACKING LIST

Since Argentina is in the southern hemisphere, May through August are winter months and are quite cold, whereas November through March are hot. Make sure to pack for the season.

Clothes

- Several pairs cotton underwear and socks
- Light waterproof jacket & umbrella
- Warm jacket and sweater(s)
- Long-sleeved warmer shirts/tops (1/3)
- Short-sleeved tops/t-shirts (1/3)
- Pants/khakis for working in an office environment
- Shorts (1/2)
- Skirts, knee-length or longer for women (1/3)
- Light sports attire if you are interested in sports, running, hiking, etc
- Multiple shirts appropriate for work, leisure, travel
- At least one nice outfit for special occasions
- Sneakers, sandals, nice shoes, and house slippers
- Modest sleepwear
- Hat for sun protection/warm hat, gloves and scarves (season appropriate)

Health and Hygiene

- Any medications you use in their original containers and a copy of your prescriptions
- Personal hygiene products—soap, shampoo, toothpaste, tampons, floss, etc. (these can be purchased locally to save room in your luggage, but you should pack travel sizes to use until you can go to the store the first week)
- Strong insect repellent and Calamine lotion or other itch-relief cream (you will get bitten by insects at some point during your stay)
- Contact lens solution (expensive in-country)
- Feminine hygiene products (sanitary pads are available, tampons are not)

Practical Supplies

- Steel or plastic water bottle
- Travel alarm clock
- Towel (families may not have them. Hostels almost always offer towels)
- Medium-sized pack for day and weekend trips

- Flashlight/headlight
- Earplugs (notably if you have trouble sleeping with noise)
- Lock for luggage (can also be used at lockers in hostels if traveling)
- Spanish-English dictionary
- Reading materials
- Small gifts for your host family (optional)

Documents and Money

- Airline ticket
- Passport
- Proof of Reciprocity payment
- Vaccination booklet
- Insurance Card
- Visa or Mastercard
- Photocopies of all documents
- Cash (around \$100-\$200 initially)

LUGGAGE FAQ

What kind of luggage should I bring?

Don't overdo it—pack lightly so you can travel more easily and store your bag in small places. Think in terms of a backpack, duffel bag, or moderate-sized suitcase and a daypack. Bags with shoulder straps are preferable to suitcases because they're easier to carry. Check domestic airline luggage limit to avoid baggage fees.

What should I bring in my carry-on luggage?

We recommend that you carry all valuables (money, credit card, passport, identification, immunization booklet, insurance card, etc.) and a complete set of clothes in your carry-on luggage in case your checked bag is temporarily lost or delayed.

What documents should I bring?

You should bring your passport, a vaccination booklet (does not need to be official, but at the least write out a list of your shots and dates that you had them), your insurance card, and a list of FSD contacts in Argentina. Please bring two photocopies of each of these documents. During the program, store the originals and one copy in your suitcase and keep the other copy on your person at all times.

What are some items especially difficult to get in Argentina?

Exotic spices, spicy sauces, peanut butter, dark chocolate, American candy, tampons with applicators, and books in English are all things that will be particularly difficult to find during your stay.

CLOTHING FAQ

HOW ARE CLOTHES WASHED?

Host families will wash your clothes. Most host families will have washing machines, and clothes will be washed and line-dried. Please note that because clothes are washed and dried outside they will probably endure some wear and tear.

WHAT TYPE OF CLOTHES SHOULD I PACK?

Keep in mind that darker colors are easier to keep clean, and consider what kind of work you will be doing: for example, if you'll be working in a rural area, it is likely you'll need to wear sneakers for going out to the campo, whereas an urban school or organization will require nicer shoes. Lightweight clothes that will breathe in the heat are highly recommended.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

To avoid uncomfortable stereotypes and feel safe (this is especially important for women), dress somewhat conservatively; politically-oriented T-shirts, skimpy tanktops and mini-skirts are not appropriate for work.

AT WORK

Bring neat, presentable clothes for your work at the host organization. Jeans for men and women are common, but you may find them hot during the summer months. Nice outfits may also double for night-time occasions, since Argentines dress up for dancing and the numerous festivals that occur throughout the year.

For women, jeans, light cotton pants or skirts (knee-length or longer) and tops appropriate for an office-setting. For men, jeans, light cotton dress pants and dress shirts or polo shirts are appropriate. For both genders, comfortable, sturdy, closed-toe shoes are appropriate for work.

AT HOME

Sweats, shorts, and slippers, for both genders, may not be considered appropriate for work – they're usually worn at home or for informal activities such as sports or going to the corner store. Please bring a pair of modest pajamas to sleep in.



ELECTRONICS

ADAPTERS

If you do decide to bring your laptop or other American electronic devices you will need voltage converters which convert to 240V with a “C” or “I” plug. Converters can be bought in Argentina, however to be safe you may consider purchasing one before departure.

LAPTOPS

The advantage of bringing a laptop is the ability to work on documents at home without paying for internet/computer time. You can then save your work to a USB drive and email/print it at a ciber. If you do decide to bring your laptop, please take the necessary precautions! It should be in your carry-on bag to take on the plane and you should keep it at your host family’s home. Many interns do choose to bring their laptops to facilitate project work and communication with home, but taking a laptop entails the risk that it could be lost, stolen or damaged. FSD is not responsible for your possessions. Instead of a laptop (or in addition to one), it may be a good idea to invest in a cheap USB drive called memoria USB here. You can get low volume memoria for US\$10. These are an excellent way to cart around your documents: email, print or fax them from a ciber.

SHOULD I BRING MY SMART PHONE?

Smart phones are very common among Argentines, however Apple products are not. If you are noticed as a foreigner (from your accent or way of dressing) having a smart phone will probably call extra attention to you. Therefore, we recommend that while in crowded places or on public transportation that you keep your phone out of sight, or use other headphones instead of the white iPhone headphones in order to prevent theft.

If you do decide to bring your American electronic devices you will need a voltage converter that converts to 220V with a “C” and/or “I” plug. Converters can be bought in Argentina, however to be safe you may consider purchasing one before departure.

Note: The following are recommendations only; all electronics are brought at your own personal risk. As with your belongings in general, FSD staff takes precautions to ensure that they are transported safely to and from host family homes and families are required to provide a space where your valuables can be locked. Nonetheless, electronics that you will be carrying on your person for work or personal use are at risk of wear and tear (hot/humid/dusty conditions, etc) and potentially theft, although this has thus far not been an issue on any level for our site.

FOOD & WATER

Can I drink the tap/well water? Where can I get safe water?

Yes. Drinking tap water in Salta is perfectly fine. However, we recommend that you double check with your host family before drinking the tap water to ensure that there are no current issues with the piping and/or water source.

What is typical food?

Meat (all cuts) is one of the basic foods in the Argentine diet. A traditional meal is the asado (grilled meat) that is composed of different cuts of beef such as asado de tira (with bones), vacío, colita de cuadril and achuras. Asado is usually reserved for weekends and gatherings. Sausages such as chorizo, morcilla or salchichita are also common. Note that meat is a source of pride in Argentina. If you are not accustomed to eating meat regularly, you may wish to address this with your host family when you arrive to prevent an awkward situation later. Carne is considered to be beef only. If you do not eat meats, such as chicken, pork, rabbit, lamb, etc., please specify each meat individually to prevent confusion. Milanesa is a popular food item in Argentina and is commonly eaten for dinner. It consists of a thinly sliced meat, chicken, or fish fillet breaded and fried. Eaten either as an entree or as fast food in sandwich form.

Empanadas are a staple in Salta, a savory pastry filled with a variety of meats, vegetables, cheese or any combination of the three. They can be baked or deep fried. Salteñas, the famous regional variety contain hand cut beef, potatoes, egg, onions, green onions and cumin. Fideos (pasta) are also very common as many of the families in Argentina are descendants of Italian families. The most common is spaghetti. On weekends (when people have more time) more elaborate pastas such as lasagna, cannelloni, ravioli or ñoquis (gnocchi) may be prepared. Humitas consist of corn paste filled with cheese, generally goats cheese, wrapped in corn husk and steamed. As fresh corn is necessary to make the paste, this is food elaborated in family environments only in the fall, during the harvest season.

Tamales are ground corn flour filled with ground beef, again wrapped in corn husk and steamed. These tend to be made in the winter months, using the dried corn from last years harvest. Locro is Argentina's national dish, cooked on all major holidays, and probably the most debated recipe. It generally consists of various types of meats in a thick stew based in squash with beans, corn and other winter vegetables. Variations may include sausage, potatoes, carrots, rice etc. Definitely ask your host families about it, and learn about the origins of their recipe.

Guaschalocro is a vegetarian version. Dulce de leche is the most beloved sweet in Argentina and can be found in many ways from cakes and ice creams to the

famous alfajor.

Breakfast is traditionally a very light meal in Argentina, consisting of mate, tea or coffee and bread with jam or medialunas (croissant). Since Argentines are not used to large breakfasts, you may need to supplement it with yogurt or fruit.

What do most people drink?

In social settings: Mate, historically, was symbolic of friendship and camaraderie since drinking Yerba Mate is usually accompanied by conversation and is very often a shared experience. Yerba Mate is one of the most important infusions in the country. It is drunk throughout the day. It is made in a special receptacle called a mate, which can be made from a dried, hollowed out gourd or wood. Yerba is put into the mate and a bombilla (filtered straw) is used to drink it through. Water is heated but not boiled and then is poured into the mate covering the yerba. One person drinks the full contents in the mate in a sip or two and then it is filled again and passed to the next person in line. The rounds continue until the flavor of the yerba is weakened and needs replaced. To decline the mate being passed to you, it is customary to say, gracias, this tells the person passing the mate that you do not want to drink anymore. This is absolutely acceptable and will not offend anyone. Many people will drink a few rounds and then decline. Note: there is no alcohol in yerba mate.

With meals: With breakfast, most people drink hot tea, coffee, mate, or orange juice. With lunch and dinner, it is common for Argentines to drink sparkling water, called soda, or agua con gas.

How vegetarian-friendly is the local cuisine?

Meat is a big part of Argentine culture and celebrations. However, families can always accommodate a vegetarian diet. Please be specific as to your preferences (i.e. whether you eat chicken but no red meat, or no animals, no dairy whatsoever) and let the FSD staff know beforehand so they can alert the family. It is also recommended that vegetarians bring vitamins to supplement their diet. While families can accommodate a vegan diet, vegans will find it difficult to eat out in restaurants.

What foods should I avoid?

To prevent diarrhea, during the first couple of weeks avoid milk and cheese that has not been pasteurized. Also, avoid meat from street vendors. When eating leftovers, reheat them thoroughly; the number one cause of food poisoning in the home is improperly reheated foods.

Can I eat fresh fruit from street stands, and trees?

Yes! In Argentina, eating fresh fruit (including the peel) is safe. This is in sharp contrast to many Latin American countries in which eating many fruits, especially the peels, can be unsafe. However, if you are going to eat fruit from trees, make sure the fruit is ripe and that it is not hot, otherwise, you may risk getting diarrhea.

How should I express my preferences, or turn down unsafe food that is offered?

In many places food is an important form of hospitality and it is cultural practice to offer food and drink as a welcoming, friendly gesture. Never put yourself at risk, but please be diplomatic in expressing your needs. Take care not to offend your hosts with negative comments or facial expressions. Your host family will be notified of what you can and cannot eat or drink, but you should also be sure to tell your family what you do and do not like to eat. You should feel comfortable politely asking your family for food to be less greasy or salty, to put salt on the side, to mention that you like fruits and vegetables, etc. When you express your food preferences, use it as an opportunity to share about your culture and foods that you eat at home.



COMMUNICATION

Staying in touch with your family and friends back home is important. You'll be eager to share your experiences and accomplishments while gaining reassurance and comfort by communicating with them. Here are some ways in which this will be possible during your stay in Nicaragua.

What is the best way for friends and family at home to reach me?

Email, Skype, and WhatsApp are definitely the cheapest and most convenient ways to be in touch with friends and family. However, you will most likely want to receive phone calls during your stay in Argentina and there are convenient ways to do this as well. FSD lends cell phones to interns for the length of their programs. These phones work with prepaid cards interns have to purchase for themselves. Phone communication is often interrupted by bad weather, local technicalities or overloaded circuits, and sometimes lines are cut in the middle of a call. Please ensure that your friends and families are aware of this and understand that it is best not to schedule international calls at exact times. In case of an emergency, your family can call FSD's US emergency number.

Are cell phones available?

All interns are given cell phones by the FSD site team. Cell phones that do not require a prepaid plan can be purchased in any city; you can purchase a card to recharge the phone at your convenience. Calls to and from cell phones can be expensive (\$0.80 pesos/minute, US \$0.27). For this reason, it is common to send text messages instead of making phone calls between cell phones.

Can friends and family call me?

This will depend on whether friends and family are calling a landline or cell phone.

- Landline: 011 + 54 + 387 (this is the Salta area code) + phone number
- Cell phone: 011 + 549 + 387 + cell phone number without the 15 in front

How do I call the US?

To call the US, dial 001, the area code, then the seven-digit number

How do I make a call within Argentina?

As in the US, making a call to anywhere within Argentina requires dialing the area code + phone number.

Is there access to internet and email?

There are tons of internet cafes (called cibers). Many are open late, and the cost

averages about one dollar per hour. Most cafes as well as the central plaza have wifi available.

Can I receive packages from the US?

To receive letters or postcards, please have them sent to your name and the address of your host family or the FSD Office. Allow time for delivery. Two weeks should be sufficient for standard letters, but it ultimately depends on how it was mailed. Quicker methods exist, although they can be cost prohibitive. Priority mail (FedEx) is generally more reliable. It costs about USD \$1 to send a standard letter to Argentina from the US while it costs USD \$1.50 to mail a standard letter from Argentina to the US. The internet is an inexpensive alternative to stay in touch with family and friends back home. Please check current mail prices to assure that your letter or package arrives. The postal system is very unreliable in Argentina and packages often disappear. We would not recommend sending or receiving packages for this reason. If you must receive a package, it may be preferable to send these items to the FSD office so that your host family will not be inconvenienced with unexpected charges, which can be incurred based on the type of items in the package. It cost around \$27 USD to send a 1 kilo package to the US. Be cautious of how much and what kind of items you send and receive because charges can be more than you may expect and must be paid in cash. Electronics, in particular, attract high charges (if they even arrive!). Often times the amount charged to send or receive a package is more than the value of the items in the package!! Talk to your program director or program coordinator - it may be a cheaper and easier option to purchase certain items locally rather than having them sent to you from abroad. Mail can be sent to this post office box at the following address:

Fundacion para el Desarrollo Sostenible
Caseros 2477
Salta, Argentina 4400

You can also receive mail packages via FedEx, DHL, or UPS. Make sure the sender sends you the tracking number. Once you confirm the package has arrived, you will need to go directly to the FedEx, DHL, or UPS office in Salta.

MONEY

How much cash should I bring with me?

Plan on having US \$100 in cash when you arrive, as well as an ATM card and an emergency credit card. We do not recommend exchanging money at the airport, as it has a very bad exchange rate. It is best to wait until arriving in Salta so that you can go to a bank or casa de cambio to receive a better exchange rate.

How much money should I plan on spending in country?

FSD covers all of your necessary expenses, including room and board, in-country transportation, trip expenses (if applicable), orientation and debriefing sessions. You may want additional money, however, for entertainment, snacks, books, gifts, newspapers, weekend excursions, additional transportation and health emergencies. You should budget for about US \$5-10/day and about \$50-100 for a weekend trip. Bring more if you plan to go out often or buy gifts. Never carry a large sum of cash or your passport on public transportation; if you must, please do so with caution. Bring only what you need for the day and use a nondescript bag to carry books or papers.

How can I get cash?

ATM machines: (locally known as cajeros) are recommended because they are available, secure, and get a good rate of exchange. ATM's are available in dozens of locations in Salta's city center as well as in most neighborhoods located on the outskirts. Money can only be withdrawn in ARS (Not USD). Your bank will most likely charge you a fee for drawing from a foreign bank. It is advisable to contact your bank regarding the use of their ATM card in Argentina to get all the necessary information. Note that ATM cards with six digit PIN numbers can be problematic.

Money can be changed at a casa de cambio or in a bank, although the bank is more secure. Traveler's checks are not recommended; they do not get a good exchange rate (cash is much better) and are not widely accepted. Money can be sent to you by yourself or your family through the website Xoom.Com. The money can then be picked up (in pesos) at a Xoom provider in Salta.

Monetary Unity & Exchange Rate

Monetary Unit

Argentine Peson

Exchange Rate

The current exchange rate is approximately 15.5 Argentine Peso to the US Dollar, but check it again before you leave.

Another option for cash in Argentina is to bring USD with you and exchange them for pesos on the unofficial market. While exchanging on the unofficial market offers a better rate, you must be aware of the risk of traveling internationally with USD as well as the risk of receiving fake bills. You should consult the FSD site team in Salta if you would like to use this approach.

Are credit cards accepted?

Credit cards are generally accepted in bigger and more expensive shops and restaurants. Bring Visa or MasterCard since they are the most widely accepted.

What is the local attitude towards bargaining?

Bargaining is not part of the culture in Argentina! Prices will be clearly marked at most markets and prices are set, although you may be able to receive a bargain if you buy multiple items from one stand.



TRANSPORTATION

How far is the orientation site from the airport?

Aeropuerto Internacional de Salta (SLA) is about 10 kms from the city center. It takes about 30 minutes to get from the airport to the city center.

If I cannot meet the group for the scheduled pickup how do I get to the orientation site?

Please contact your site team to coordinate your arrival. There are both shuttles as well as taxi options available from the airport but it is important to contact your site team so they can give you directions and tips.

What time should I book my return flight?

Afternoon/evening flights are recommended so you will have plenty of time to get from Salta to the Buenos Aires airport.

Are there any other tips for arrival?

Please make sure to keep your site team's phone numbers on you at all times so if you are delayed or have any questions you can easily contact them.

There are two airports in Buenos Aires and you will most likely have to do an inter-airport transfer from Ezezia to Jorge Newbury. Check your itinerary to ensure that you are at the correct airport for your connecting flight. To connect from Ezezia, walk outside of the baggage collection area and find a bus called Tienda Leon or Arbus. Purchase a ticket for the airport transfer (around 180 Argentine pesos).

Note that there are two terminals at the Buenos Aires airport. Most flights coming from the United States arrive at Terminal A. If you arrive at Terminal B, just go outside and walk to the right, then turn right again at the corner you will see a walk that goes to sliding doors -that's terminal A. It's a very short distance - about 5 minutes.

IN-COUNTRY TRANSPORTATION

What are the most common modes of transport and are they expensive?

Buses: The local bus system within Salta is called colectivos and can be used to get around on a daily basis. If you use this form of transportation, make sure you carry coins with you since buses do not accept paper money. The site team will provide you with a rechargeable bus card. You can buy credit for personal use. It is easy to get robbed on a bus so be vigilant about your possessions.

Taxis: Taxis are everywhere and you can easily flag them down on the street. Most taxi rides cost a few pesos unless you are going long distances.

Remis: Remis are authorized cars that work like taxis, with the difference that you have to contact them by telephone to order one; you can not just flag them down on the street. Ask your family for the number of their preferred taxi service or remis.

Is it safe to go out at night?

It is generally safe to be in the city center at night, and Argentine culture is very nocturnal. With that said, make sure to not walk around after dark in unknown and/or dark areas, especially if you are alone. Consult with your host family about safety information specific to your neighborhood. Plan ahead and be cautious. If traveling within Salta, it is always best to use a taxi or remis service at night. If you plan to go out at night, never go alone. Hanging out in the plazas is very unsafe after dark and it is always best to avoid crossing plazas at night. However, Salta's city center, where most of the restaurants and bars are located, is generally safe at all hours. Even while hanging out in the city center, you want to make sure you are with a friend or someone from your host family when it is dark out. Consult with your host family as to safety information specific to where you plan on going during nighttime hours. Plan ahead and be cautious!



HOMESTAY IN SALTA

Many of FSD's host families consist of single mothers or older couples whose children have left home to live independently. Some homestays are available with younger couples in their twenties or thirties. Though the number of household members tends to be small, family is very important in Argentina and large family gatherings are common. Host families closer to the center of Salta tend to have smaller homes than those on the outskirts of the city. Families located farther from the center normally have larger yards and more green spaces. Household pets are common regardless of the location, though families on the outskirts of the city tend to have more cats and dogs. Families regularly eat dinner and stay awake until a later hour than that to which you may be accustomed. You will become accustomed to a fair amount of night sound. Ear plugs can help.

One of the most rewarding, challenging, and meaningful experiences during your time in Argentina is likely to be the time you spend living with your host family. Host families offer the rare opportunity to truly integrate oneself into the local culture and build meaningful relationships that will last long past your stay. Here are a few tips in preparation for your homestay.

What are Argentinian homes like?

Many Argentine families consist of parents and grown children. It is normal for children to live at home through their thirties. In Argentina, FSD works with many host families that are single moms or older married couples whose children have moved out of the home. In this way, our host families are available to accommodate interns because they have an extra bedroom on hand. All of our host families absolutely adore hosting interns and always incorporate them into their daily lives and social activities. Past FSD Argentina interns have often commented that living with their host family was one of the most memorable and positive experiences from their stay in Argentina.

What are the living accommodations like?

Living accommodations are basic by U.S. standards. Houses tend to be smaller. Most have cable tv, but not internet. All homes have electricity, gas, and hot water. However, in the winter, houses can be chilly as they do not have centralized heating systems and gas is very expensive. During the hot and humid summer months, families generally use fans as air conditioning is very rare. Also, the plumbing in Argentina is not as sophisticated as what you may be accustomed to in the U.S. During the summer months (December, January and February) it is common to find lots of mosquitoes, flies and cockroaches indoors. Your family can help

prevent these unfortunate visitors, so let them know if you see something! Keeping the house clean and storing food in its place will make a big difference. You can also buy sprays to help keep these insects away from your bedroom.

Do I need to help out with chores?

We ask families to treat you as another member of the family, which means you will pick up after yourself, keep your area neat, and help out with the cooking and cleaning as appropriate. If you are not a tidy person, you will have to make an effort to keep your room clean and tidy. Your family may come in to look for something they are storing in your room or to change a light bulb and it's unpleasant for them to see the room (that is part of their house) made a mess.

Is it safe to bring and store valuables at my host family's house?

There is no need to bring many valuables. We require that you keep items of value locked in your luggage at all times. This is extremely important because friends and relatives are often in and out of the house. However, there have been incidents when a student thought something was stolen only to find that s/he had misplaced it. This kind of "scandal" is hard on the host family who take great care to protect you and your things. If something unusual of this nature does happen, please speak with your host mother and/or the FSD Site Team immediately.

How much time should I spend with my host family? What should we talk about?

One of the most rewarding, challenging, and meaningful experiences during your time in Argentina is likely to be the time you spend living with your host family. You will learn a great deal about Argentina through the people who live there, so cultivate a habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing.

Ask questions and share your perspective. Be sensitive to the feelings of others and embrace the different viewpoints, lifestyles, experiences and company your family provides. Host families are eager to get to know you and learn about your American life so be ready to talk about your interests, culture, family and plans. We encourage you to share pictures and stories from your life at home.

How should I tell my family that I'd like less food, or different kinds of food?

Don't be shy about asking your family for particular foods or the amount of food you want to eat. You should tell your family what you do and do not like to eat. Vegetarian food is always available. Offer to cook once a week so you can show your family what kind of food you would like to eat. You can also go shopping with your host mom, but if she doesn't ask if there's something you want, feel free to do the shopping once for yourself for your "cravings," and then your family may buy those items for you next time.

How often should I check in with my family?

You are entrusted in the family's care and just like your own family, and they will

worry about you if you don't check in. Please advise your family in advance if you do not plan to be home for a meal. Likewise, be sure to notify your family in advance of any weekend excursions you take other than those in the scheduled program.

Can I have visitors come over to the house?

Please advise your family before you invite anyone to the house, especially someone of the opposite sex. Overnight guests are NOT appropriate and are unacceptable during the program. Protect your family's safety and privacy. Do not give out their home number. Remember: Even though you will be treated as part of the family, you are still a guest in their home and must be respectful of their rules.

Will I receive my own set of keys?

You should receive your own keys to the house so that you are free to come and go as needed.

How do people spend their free time?

Families in Salta may chat with friends until bedtime or watch their telenovelas. Young people often head to plazas or to downtown to meet up with friends. Sports are also a large part of Argentinian culture, especially soccer. People of all ages often engage in athletic activities, in the past interns have trained for and participated in footraces and soccer leagues. Please keep in mind that it can be dangerous to run after dark, and in the winter it gets quite cold and dark early in Salta.

Can I go out at night?

Yes. If you do make plans to go out at night, please advise your family of your transportation, who will be accompanying you, your return time, and arrangements for getting home and into the house. Exercise good judgment: as anywhere, it is best to go out with family members, coworkers or friends that you meet. Simply being an American makes you more of a target for theft, harassment, etc.

How should I handle requests for money?

FSD program fees subsidize all of your room and board expenses so there is no need for you to discuss money with your family. They should not ask you to borrow money and if this happens, tell them it is against your program rules to lend money. If anyone asks you for money, gently remind them that it is against the rules, and let your Site Team know about the incident.

What types of gifts are appropriate to bring for my host family?

We suggest that you bring small and modest gifts for your host family as a token of goodwill and gratitude for their hospitality. Ideas: souvenirs of your hometown or state, chocolates/candies. It is possible to purchase small gifts in Argentina too, but regional gifts are special. Use your imagination!

REFLECTION ON SALTA

By Jennifer Drapisch

Over the past 6 months I have worked with Centro de Entrenamiento para la Producción (CEP). They are an NGO established to assist small and medium sized businesses (PYMES) through technological development and business training. The Argentine government recently created subsidies and tax credits aimed at increasing the competitiveness of Argentine PYMES. CEP acts as a window for these programs by assisting in paperwork and requirement fulfillment. They also manage the government sponsored training programs, by designing course content and allocating in-house instructors. Another side project at CEP involves supporting two new inventions to market, including a novel suspension system for cars or machinery, recently patented in the Europe and U.S., as well as, a new energy efficient windmill, still in the design and prototype construction stage.

My greatest accomplishment with this organization was built around a personal idea utilizing their resources to create a consulting and training project within the marginalized areas of the local community. It allowed me to directly work with and help at least 20 individuals while truly left a legacy in Argentina! For about 2 months I networked, sympathized and analyzed a mountain of information with a large number of people all over the city from social movements and cooperatives to entrepreneurial assistance groups. Through this research, I was able to write and win a grant proposal for a consulting project working with a few local comedors in Buenos Aires province leading workshops in social entrepreneurship for cooperatives. The project was a pilot program aimed specifically at social cooperatives in local comedors.

These cooperatives formed out of a need for resources in the comedors as well as a desire by local women for respectable work close to home. One of the participating cooperatives was still in the organization stage buying start-up materials for their bakery through a grant received by another FSD intern and were in need of a how-to business plan. The other participating cooperative is a sewing group which began a little over one year ago. They were dependent on NGO support and lacked organization, management and sales volume. Through the information gathered in the needs assessment as well as assistance from CEP and other NGO specialist organizations, five strategic workshops were designed in team building, accounting, marketing, costs and operations.

Most of these “entrepreneurs” had low levels of formal education and a few were illiterate, making the design and substance challenging. To my great surprise, after utilizing a few comic strips, pictures, diagrams and role play examples, the

women participated comfortably and discussed a lot of interesting ideas and opportunities.

The final workshop was a small discussion group, bringing together the two cooperatives with another well known cooperative group in the local area. During this workshop they not only shared experiences of best practices, challenges faced and advice, but they networked together and will now sell to one another. As a special guest, two men from La Obra de Padre Cajade shared their experiences. The Obra is a well known and very large social entrepreneurial group in the province. All of the cooperative groups chatted back and forth sharing stories and asking interesting questions about the others work. It was the perfect networking session as I really think they learned from each other. At the end of the workshop, they even coordinated to work with and buy from each other! The sewing cooperative and bakery found a new client in Padre Cajade. As a supplement to the classes, I created a 50 page manual in Spanish and using many pictures and examples. The manual goes into a bit more in depth on all of the subjects covered in the workshops and includes a section on common mistakes and general advice. I assembled an appendix providing extra entrepreneurial and community resources as well as a section of fair trade national and international organizations. The manuals were distributed to each of the participating women and to the representatives of the Obra. Copies were also given to various NGOs with hopes of further distributing to those in need of the information.

During the final discussion, my co-workers from the other departments of CEP began discussing the project. My direct boss proudly told them of all my hard work and showed them a copy of the comprehensive manual. Through this connection, all areas of CEP jointly expressed interest that future FSD interns will continue the workshops to reach more cooperatives as part of a community outreach program for the NGO!

In the end and all of my hard work, multiple marathon miles of walking and hours of planning and writing paid off. The manual is my pride and joy and will help many people even after I am gone. By giving personal attention to each cooperative and working directly to help shape their individual business models, I was able to teach them practical skills increasing their organizational desires, personal work ethic and a more dynamic understanding of their companies and themselves. They in turn, taught me a great deal about bravery, flexibility and tenacity.

Amid both success and challenge, I became incredibly humbled and found a sense of irony in the ultimate simplicity of it all. Some of the women could not read or write and most never finished primary school, but all shared their experiences and learned from one another. This manner of collaboration and education has laid the groundwork for a network of social commerce services. These lasting memories are a true sense of pride and fulfillment that can only come by teaching and learning from others.

CULTURAL PRACTICES

For the most part, you will gain insight into Argentinian culture through your own experiences, but here are a few common questions that are likely to arise:

How important is punctuality in Argentinian culture?

Argentines tend to have a very relaxed attitude toward time. Throughout your internship, you will undoubtedly encounter time scheduling differences and a slower pace than what you may be accustomed to. Meetings can slip, go over, run late or perhaps never even happen. You should expect that your Argentine contacts will be at least 10 to 15 minutes late for any appointment, even to a business meeting. Tardiness of 30 to 45 minutes is not unusual. This is considered normal in Argentina and does not signify any lack of respect for the relationship.

How do people in Argentina feel about privacy?

Argentines interact when speaking with gestures and by touching each other. They do not require as much distance between them as people from the U.S. do and if one steps away, it is considered offensive. You may find that your host mother makes frequent inquiries into your personal life, and this is typical of Argentine culture as mothers tend for their children by being involved in their lives.

How do people in Argentina greet and say goodbye to each other?

Argentines kiss each other once on the right cheek every time they meet, girls and guys alike. It doesn't matter if you already know the person or if you are being introduced for the first time. If you are meeting for the first time, it is common to give a kiss on the right cheek while saying your first name out loud. The only circumstances we don't kiss are during very formal meetings, such as a job interview or at a high level meeting. Hand gestures derived from Italy are extremely common in Argentina. For example, a rude, though not vulgar gesture is with the arm slightly extended to the front, palm up, fingers fairly flat but relaxed, and the palm moves rapidly up and down a short distance. Many people use this gesture to say, "what?!" Another common gesture is placing your fingertips at your chin with your palm faced downwards and then moving your hand outwards away from your chin. This means, "I don't know!" or "I don't care." Also, you will notice that while out to eat at restaurants, the server will never mention the bill or bring it to the table until you request it. Therefore, a common gesture in restaurants is to raise your arm into the air, and then with your thumb and forefinger, pretend to be signing a bill. This will signal to your server that you are ready for the check. In Argentina this is expected both in very nice restaurants and cheaper ones. Nobody will take offense.

How are children treated in Argentina? Is it common for children to be reprimanded physically at home or at school?

In the classroom, it is extremely rare for Argentine children to be reprimanded physically. However, in marginalized, low-income neighborhoods, children are sometimes abused and/or neglected at home. Yet, this is more of a socioeconomic factor rather than being a cultural factor specific to Argentina. Throughout all of Argentina, you will see children beg for money on the streets. These kids will often approach you and ask for monedas. Sometimes they are selling items such as flowers, candies, or small cards with some type of greeting or message written on them. Often times, these kids must make a certain amount of money before their mother allows them to return. Argentines have varied reactions to the children who work on the street. Some people ignore these kids, some will offer their leftover food, and some will reach into their pockets and give a couple of coins.

How do Argentines view household animals/pets?

Many Argentines have pets, especially dogs. Some people have cats, but dogs are definitely more common. Most Argentines let their dogs roam free on the streets during the day and sometimes at night. Therefore, you will see many dogs roaming the streets. Sometimes these dogs have homes to go to where they have a human and are fed. Sadly, many of these dogs are homeless and must fend for themselves. This is a widespread problem in Argentina. Contributing to this dilemma is that the vast majority of people do not get their pets spayed and neutered.

How do people in Argentina socialize and how important is it?

Argentines love to socialize and they do it all the time!! Socializing is an important part of Argentine culture, and is often done over some mate. On any given day, you will find the plazas of Salta full of people, young and old, drinking their mate and socializing for hours on end. However, socializing is certainly not limited to plazas. You will find Argentines socializing at home, all around town and even at work. In fact, socializing at work is very important in Argentina. At work, the focus is often on relationships first and production second.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

An important part of ensuring you have a positive experience in Argentina is to manage your expectations from the very beginning. Remember that you are arriving to learn and be a small step in the overall sustainable development process. It is normal to feel lost and perhaps even without purpose at the beginning. Our suggestion is to follow the 3 Ps:

BE PROACTIVE

- Good relationships lead to good projects, not the other way around. Take the initiative to begin to form relationships in your organization and with other people that you meet.
- Your supervisor will often not give you specific tasks. You may feel you are without direction. Take a moment and think of something you can be doing or working on. Think of possible obstacles and solutions in advance. Accept that you may have more free time than you are used to; relax and do something for you.

BE PERSISTENT

- You may need to ask for things you need more than once. You are your own best advocate. Even if it takes a few tries, don't give up on asking for what it is you need.
- Things may not work out on the first try (or second, or third, etc). Analyze what did and did not work and try again.

BE POLITE

- No matter how frustrated or confused you are, always be polite. Remember that you are not at home and that rash reactions can often offend. Learn a few stress management techniques and see which works best for you. Learn the difference between being firm and being rude.

Development is often a painfully slow process. Take the time before you arrive to mentally prepare yourself for a different pace of life and work. Keep in mind you may need to change your definitions of productivity and success. Even small accomplishments and projects require significant amounts of time. Be prepared to be frustrated at times; adjustment and adaptation can be difficult, especially at first. If you ready yourself for these realities before you arrive, the process will be easier once here.



RACE, SEXUALITY, & GENDER

How you interact with others (and they with you) will initially have a lot to do with preconceptions. You'll feel more comfortable once the inevitable "getting to know you" period is over, but keep some cultural norms in mind:

RACE AND ETHNICITY

In Argentina, you may not encounter the same level and/or kind of awareness and sensitivity surrounding race relations and conceptualizations of heritage, as you may be accustomed to finding in the U.S. If you have features associated with an Asian heritage, kids and adults may shout out, call or greet you as "Chino/a" or "Japones/a." If you have dark skin or features associated with an African heritage, people may refer to you as "Negro/a," or "Moreno/a." If you have fair skin and are recognized as being from the United States, people may refer to you as "Yankee." If you have features associated with a Middle Eastern heritage, you may be referred to as "Arabe". If you have features associated with an Indian or South Asian heritage, you may be referred to as "Hindu." In most cases, these names are not necessarily derogatory terms; many people use them simply because your skin color or features are unusual or intriguing within that context. In some cases, it may be valuable to engage the people you meet in a conversation about the specificity of your heritage.

SEXUALITY

Sexual orientation or preference is not a topic that is openly discussed in Argentina. Please realize that any affiliation or experiences you have at home (especially in the LGBT community) may not be regarded with the same understanding or sensitivity in Argentina. Please do your best to take this into consideration when discussing such issues with your host family or other members of the community. Buenos Aires was the first city in Latin America to grant same-sex marriage, which is still a controversial issue, especially in less open, modern provinces and cities.

GENDER

If you are a woman, expect to get some unwanted attention. Men will often whistle and sometimes try to talk to you in the street. Use your common sense. The best thing to do is ignore them. Do not give out your phone number to people you don't know. You can explain that you are living in someone else's house and are not allowed to receive calls or visitors.

DISCRIMINATION

The previous three sections are not written to validate or excuse discriminatory behavior. Not only is there a lack of awareness regarding diversity of race, gender, and sexuality, you may also find a lack of awareness in regard to religions, ethnicities, and nationalities. This lack of understanding/awareness does not always translate into discrimination.

However, if at any time you feel discriminated against at your host family, host organization, or during your interactions within the community, please inform the FSD site team immediately so we can help. We will work with you to ensure that you are able to enjoy your time with FSD to the fullest without worrying about discrimination.



LANGUAGE GUIDE

LOCAL LANGUAGE VARIATIONS:

Three major factors differentiate Argentine Spanish from the Spanish spoken in other Latin American countries: pronunciation, the use of “vos” and Argentine vocabulary and slang. It will take you a week or so to wrap your brain around the way Argentines speak and this is normal. Don’t lose confidence if you have to ask people to repeat things or to slow down. You will get an ear for the rhythm of the language before you know it!

Practice

Speaking a language is the best way to learn, so don’t be afraid to practice your Spanish with as many people as possible. Your best resource in learning the local language will be your host family and co-workers at your host organization. Depending on your language ability, this may be extremely frustrating at times. Relax and remember that the key to learning (or improving your skills in) a language is the ability to laugh at yourself.

Pronunciation

The pronunciation of the letters ll and y differs from classic Spanish. The nearest approximation is the sh sound that is similar to the following words which are followed by a phonetic description:

- pollo = po-sho
- ayer = ash-air
- joya = ho-sha
- allá = ah-sha
- vaya = vah-sha
- castellano = caste-sha-no
- yo me llamo = sho me shah-moh
- ya = sha

Use of “vos”

Argentines use “vos” instead of “tu” when speaking directly to a friend or within other casual relationships. Vos has its own verb conjugation, which is different from the tú but only in the simple present tense and with positive commands. The good news is that there are very few irregulars! By listening to the way your family and co-workers speak, you will pick up this different verb form fairly quickly and easily. In northern Argentina it is more common and acceptable to use “tu” instead of “vos.”

Vos for the present tense:

Use the infinitive form of the verb, drop the r, add s and shift the accent to the last syllable.

Examples:

- Tener = tenés
- Ser= sos (irregular!)
- Estar= estás (this is one of the few verbs that remains the same as tú)
- Ir= vas (another verb that remains the same as tú)
- Hacer= hacés
- Poder=podés
- Querer= querés
- Saber=sabés

Dictionaries and Phrasebooks

These can be expensive and difficult to find once you are in-country, so you might want to purchase one before you leave. Oxford and Collins produce good pocket dictionaries. We highly recommend purchasing a dictionary or grammar book that includes Argentine Spanish specifically due to the use of vos and the unique vocabulary and pronunciation used here. Getting a jump start on these things will help you assimilate more quickly and help you feel more confident when you arrive.

Online

<http://www.google.com.ar> is the Argentina edition of Google.

<http://babel.uoregon.edu/yamada/guides/spanish.html> is a great online Spanish language learning center

<http://www.wordreference.com> is another great online reference for Spanish vocabulary, phrases and verb conjugations

Tutoring

If you are interested in tutoring upon arrival, let your Site Team know. They will help you to set up sessions with a tutor, at your own expense. Sessions usually cost between \$10-15 USD/ hour.

FILM GUIDE

The following is a list of films that will provide insight into the culture as well as current political and economic climate in Argentina.

La Toma (The Take) (2000)

In suburban Buenos Aires, thirty unemployed auto-parts workers walk into their idle factory, roll out sleeping mats and refuse to leave. All they want is to re-start the silent machines. But this simple act has the power to turn the globalization debate on its head. Armed only with slingshots and an abiding faith in shop-floor democracy, the workers face off against the bosses, bankers and a whole system that sees their beloved factories as nothing more than scrap metal for sale.

Memoria del Saqueo (Social Genocide) (2004)

This film recently won Best Documentary in the Los Angeles Latin Film Festival. It is another insightful documentary into the social upheaval that occurred in Argentina during the economic crisis of 2001 and the years following this disaster.

La Historia Oficial (The Official Story) (1985)

Alicia Marnet de Ibañez is happily married to her husband Roberto. They have an adopted daughter named Gaby. Alicia is blissfully ignorant about what happened in the military coup until one of her history students asks her if she only believes what the history books say. She embarks on a mission to find if her daughter is the daughter of one of the women who disappeared during the coup.

El Secreto de sus Ojos (The Secret in Their Eyes) (2009)

A retired legal counselor writes a novel hoping to find closure for one of his past unresolved homicide cases and for his reciprocated love with his superior - both of which still haunt him decades later. This is a fantastic movie about a crime, a life-time love, and a man trying to solve both. 2009 Oscar winner – Best Foreign Language Film

Nueve Reinas (Nine Queens) (2000)

The film tells the story of two con artists who meet by chance and decide to cooperate in a scam involving a stamp collector and a sheet of counterfeit rare stamps. The film was nominated for 28 awards and won 21 of them.

Hijo de la Novia (Son of the Bride) (2001)

At age 42, Rafael Belvedere is having a crisis. He lives in the shadow of his father, he feels guilty about rarely visiting his aging mother, his ex-wife says he doesn't spend enough time with their daughter and he has yet to make a commitment to his girlfriend. At his lowest point, a minor heart attack reunites him with Juan Carlos, a childhood friend, who helps Rafael to reconstruct his past and look at the present in new ways.

Plata quemada (Burnt Money) (2000)

Nene & Angel and their accomplice Cuervo participate in a botched bank robbery in 1965 Buenos Aires, then hide out from the police in Uruguay while the gang breaks down.

Cama adentro (Live-In Maid) (2004)

A wealthy woman and her live-in housekeeper must adjust their entrenched routine and relationship when Buenos Aires is plunged into economic crisis.

Historias minimas (Intimate Stories) (2002)

Three people and a baby set off on separate journeys, along the same road; their disparate dreams and stories intertwine amidst the breathtaking deserted Patagonic route.

RECOMMENDED READING

Imagining Argentina, by Lawrence Thornton

Lawrence Thornton's gripping first novel is a story of hope and the occult in Argentina during the reign of terror of the generals beginning in 1977. The generals' right wing coup introduced to the world the noun form of the verb "to disappear." Now we are all familiar with the terrifying noun "the disappeared." Unlike the verb it doesn't mean simply to have suddenly gone away, but implies the much more sinister notion of having been taken away, suspected, often on the slimmest suggestion, of political resistance, and subjected to extra-legal torture, death and secret disposal.

A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture, by Marguerite Feitlowitz

During that period of military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983, thousands of Argentines were arrested, imprisoned, and declared missing or desaparecidos ("the disappeared"). Feitlowitz approaches the subject in a unique and fascinating way by examining how language was used and changed because of what people experienced.

Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, by Marguerite Guzman Bouvard

Revolutionizing Motherhood examines one of the most astonishing human rights movements of recent years. During the Argentine junta's Dirty War against subversives, as tens of thousands were abducted, tortured, and disappeared, a group of women forged the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and changed Argentine politics forever

The Other Argentina: The Interior and National Development, by Larry Sawers

Larry Sawers links the country's economic failure to the backwardness of the interior, which comprises 70 percent of the area of the country and in which nearly one-third of the population [resides](#). The interior's poverty, according to Sawers, is caused by the scarcity of agricultural resources and by serious inequalities in the distribution of those resources.

Long After Midnight at the Niño Bien: A Yanqui's Missteps in Argentina, by Brian Winter

When Winter, a 22-year-old college graduate from Texas, suddenly found himself in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2000 with no job and about \$2,000 of savings, he never thought the importance of the tango, a century-old dance, would reshape his life as a man and as a writer of this insightful, comic memoir. He falls under the influence of the regulars of Niño Bien, a ramshackle milonga, a club where the tango is danced amid laughter, flirting and the raucous music of the bandoneón and the guitar.

The Little School, by Alicia Partnoy

One of Argentina's 30,000 "disappeared," Alicia Partnoy was abducted from her home by secret police and taken to a concentration camp where she was tortured, and where most of the other prisoners were killed. Smuggled out and published anonymously, The Little School is Partnoy's memoir of her disappearance and imprisonment.

The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics, by Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciela Montaldo

An extensive collection of documents, the book is divided into ten major sections, representing topics and issues such as the independence movement, populism under Perón, and state violence following Perón's death in 1974. A brief but useful introduction sets the stage for the documents in each section, and each one is preceded by an explanatory note.

Argentina - Culture Smart!: A Quick Guide to Customs and Etiquette, by Robert Hamwee

Culture Smart! Argentina provides essential information on attitudes, beliefs and behaviour in Argentina, ensuring that you arrive at your destination aware of basic manners, common courtesies, and sensitive issues.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

Argentina's leading conservative newspaper.

www.lanacion.com

The largest newspaper in Argentina, Clarin is also La Nacion's main competitor with a centrist view and generally opposes the Kirchner government.

www.clarin.com

A newspaper founded by investigative journalists.

www.pagina12.com

This website offers a list of newspapers from all over Argentina separated by city or region.

<http://www.kidon.com/media-link/ar.php>

Zona Latina offers links to newspapers from Latin America. It includes resources in English as well as Spanish and a variety of other languages.

<http://www.zonalatina.com/Zlpapers.htm#ARGENTINA>

The online version of the local newspaper in Salta.

<http://www.eltribuno.info/salta/>

