



PROGRAM COUNTRY: ARGENTINA



STS – more than 50 years of experience in student exchange programs all over the world



Argentina – “the European country in South America”. Most of the people in Argentina are descendants from Italy, Spain and other European countries. Buenos Aires is undeniably the most European city in South America and considered by many its cultural capital. Furthermore, Argentina is a country rich in geographical varieties, from the northern subtropical regions to the southern glacial zones, going through the extense green plains in the center and the highest mountains of America. This is why the tourist slogan says; Come to Argentina and discover the five continents!

COUNTRY INFORMATION

The name Argentina, comes from the Latin term “argentum”, which means silver. The origin of this name goes back to the first voyages made by the Spanish conquerors to the Río de la Plata. The National Constitution adopted in 1853 included the name “República Argentina” (Argentine Republic) among the official names to designate the government and the country’s territory.

Located in South America, and thus, in the Southern Hemisphere, Argentina has an area of almost 3.8 million square kilometers. The country consists of grasslands and savannahs, vast plateaus, mountains and parts of the Antarctic. It borders to Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia and Chile and has a beautiful coastline by the Atlantic Ocean, which is 4,725 Km long.

Argentina’s main characteristic is the enormous contrast between the immense eastern plains and the impressive Andes mountain range to the west. This is the frontier with Chile and boasts the highest peak in the Western hemisphere: the 6,959 m high Aconcagua. Between the Paraná and Uruguay rivers, the Argentinian Mesopotamia is formed by low hills, where pools and marshlands evidence the ancient courses of these great rivers. In some places within the subtropical rain forest, there are fissures which provide such spectacular phenomena as the Iguazú Falls.

The Pampas, in the center of Argentina, is the largest and best-known area of plains. Agricultural and livestock activities are performed in this area, which includes the province of Buenos Aires, the northeast of La Pampa, the south of Córdoba and south of Santa Fe.

Towards the south, from the Andes to the sea, there appear the sterile and stony plateaus of Patagonia, swept by the wind during most of the year. The Atlantic coast, lined with high cliffs, forms massive indentations like the Peninsula Valdés, with its spectacular and unique colonies of sea animals.

Argentina’s current population is more than 36 million inhabitants, almost half of which live in the city and the province of Buenos Aires. Population density calculated on a national basis is 13 inhabitants per square kilometer. As a result of the massive European immigration, the white and Indian half-castes were slowly reduced, and at the present they amount only to 4.5 % of the population. The pure indigenous population – Mapuches, Collas, Tobas, Matacos and Chiriguano – amount to 0.5 % of the population.

Spanish is the official language of Argentina. In Buenos Aires, some “lunfardo” expressions – city slang – are used. There is complete religious freedom in Argentina, although the official religion is Roman Catholic.

SCHOOL LIFE

Education in Argentina is democratic and pluralist. Education is also free and secular, that means that religion is not a subject of the syllabus, except in religious schools. Most of the secondary schools, where the exchange students will study, are semipublic or private, which means there is a monthly fee to pay that is not included in the program fee. In most Argentinian schools it is compulsory to wear a uniform. Before coming to Argentina, the student will receive information on the characteristics of the school.

A typical school day in Argentina could look like this: The students get up very early in the morning, have breakfast (coffee, milk and toasts with butter), they begin school around 8–8.30 am. Most students either go to school by bus or bike, sometimes they are lucky and the host parents drive them there. Before starting school in the morning, there is a kind of ritual that is important for students to know of; “el saludo de la bandera”. This means that, once all students are in the principal hall remaining quiet and in order, two students hoist the Argentinian flag. In some schools, the national anthem is also sung. After hoisting the flag, the students head for their classrooms where classes are held according



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to the different subjects. In some schools, it is common to work with projects. A class generally lasts 45 minutes followed by a break. There are schools where classes are held from the morning until the afternoon, especially bilingual schools. In this case, the students have lunch at school. Otherwise they go home to have lunch. There is always time, either at lunch or at dinner, for the family to get together.

After having lunch the students usually do their own activities such as studying, resting or preparing themselves to perform some extra activity that take place out of the school environment. Some of the most common activities after school are; studying English, taking acting classes, going to the gym, basketball, football, volleyball, hockey, rugby or athletics. Of course dance is also popular, especially the tango!

HOST FAMILY LIFE

The typical Argentinian family consists of the father, mother and two or three children at least. Some other people that we should take into account that are not direct members of the family are the uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents etc. The students will have quite frequent contact with these extended family members, who will also be very eager to take good care of the student.

Family relationships show a warm attitude characterized by visible affection that the students have to know about beforehand, in order to avoid surprises! Affection is shown with kisses and hugs, which the student will experience from the moment of arrival in Argentina.

The host family will show the natural beauty of their area. They will also help the student to get immersed in the social customs, such as drink "mate", play football, eat barbecue, in other words, experience how an Argentinian lives. The host family will also be curious about the student's culture, so it is important that the student is prepared to answer a lot of questions.

PROGRAM EXTRAS

Directly upon arrival, the exchange students will gather as a group in the outskirts of Córdoba to attend a preparation course. The students will have Spanish classes for about four hours every day in order to improve their reading comprehension, writing abilities, listening and oral expression. The students will be divided in to different levels depending on their Spanish pre-knowledge. The students will also be introduced to Argentinian culture, such as food traditions etc. After these days of preparation, the students will go directly to the host families.

Travelling doesn't only mean touring around Argentina, but also to give the students the chance to learn about our country's history, flora and fauna, lifestyle and traditions. In order to achieve the goal of offering the students an interesting and positive experience, each trip has a different theme according to the destination and the activities planned, and it is coordinated by a specialized team with educational experience in different areas.

First experience, October: "Argentinian Patagonia – magical nature". We visit the home of the first inhabitants in South America, and we walk in the footsteps of dinosaurs, penguins, guanacos and sea wolves. Feel the indomitable Patagonic wind in your face and listen to the blended music of the Atlantic Ocean and the Southern whales, the second biggest whale in the world.

Second experience, February: "Northern Argentina – culture and history". This trip will take us, as in a time machine, to the root of the Argentinian culture, from precolumbian times. We'll visit places that bear witness to antique times, when people had different gods and a different relationship with the land.

Third experience, April: "Argentina's Andes – rough and adventurous". During five days we will live an intense adventure with activities as fascinating as rafting and abseiling. We will stay in rustic cottages in the area of the Atuel river gorge in Mendoza, right by the Andes, where you can see Aconcagua, the second highest peak in the world.

Fourth experience, June: "Buenos Aires – The capital of Tango". Buenos Aires is a vibrant metropolis that never rests and is always moving. This city has been the scenery of the most relevant events of Argentinian history. We will visit the Government house from which J. D. Perón and Evita used to talk to the people; Playa de Mayo, where the mothers of people who disappeared during the dictatorship do their weekly demonstrations; Colón theatre, one of the most renowned theatres all over the world, and the traditional neighborhoods of San Telmo and La Boca, among a lot of other interesting things. On this last trip, students will also have the chance to take an intensive Spanish course, and do an exam at the University of Buenos Aires in order to obtain an international certificate of their level of Spanish.



All information is subject to change.

