INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

UNIVERSIDAD
AUSTRAL

Austral Handbook

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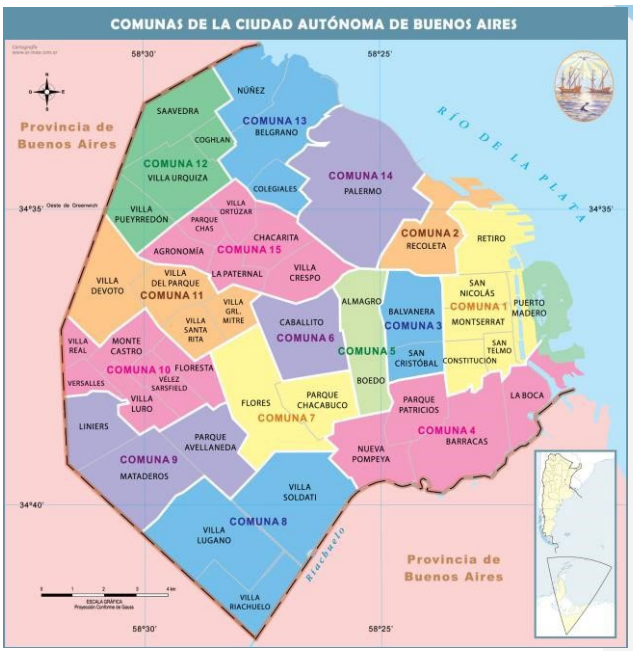
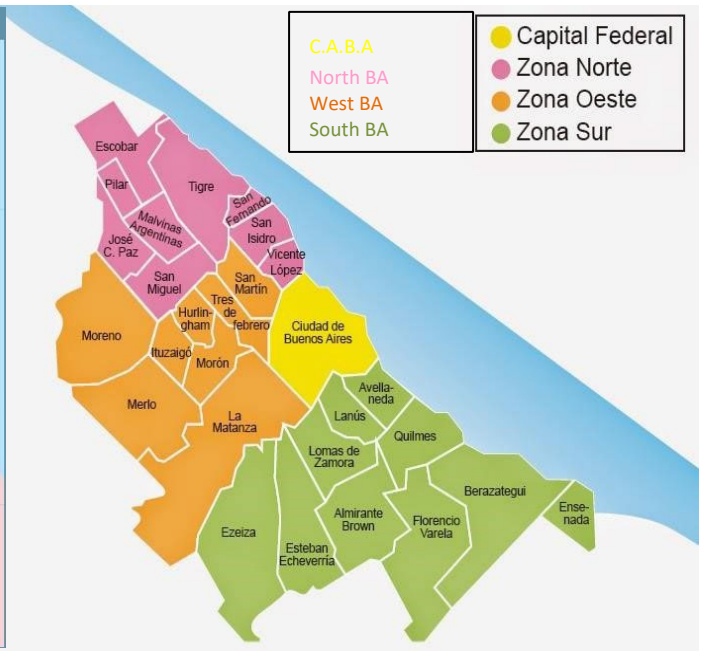
General Information

1. Buenos Aires

When locals say “Buenos Aires,” they refer to the city—Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (CABA)—or its surrounding area, Gran Buenos Aires (GBA). “Capital Federal” or “Capital” are other names for the city. In the images below, you see the neighborhoods of this megacity.





There are many small companies that offer guided tours around the city. We recommend that you connect via Instagram, which is widely used in Argentina.

Here is the link to the official website of the Buenos Aires government Tourism department: https://turismo.buenosaires.gob.ar/es

Turismo | BA Buenos Aires Ciudad

2. Rosario

Argentina calls Rosario “the Cradle of the Flag” because on this site, over the Paraná River cliffs, our national flag was raised for the first time.

The city began with a heterogeneous population gathering around a humble chapel during the second half of the XVIII century. In the mid-nineteenth century, the river harbor became a nexus between Buenos Aires and all inland provinces, turning Rosario into a trade city. Today, Rosario is an urban success with a well-balanced combination of residential areas, industrial areas, and many recreational opportunities. For more information, you can see:

This website provides links to different apps that provide handy information, for example, http://app.rosario.tur.ar/es/

https://www.rosarioconnection.com/

3. Climate

The climate in Buenos Aires has hot summers and mild winters. Temperatures average 35°C (94°F) in January to 10°C (50°F) in July.

The Rosario area has a Pampean, humid subtropical climate and is well known for its changeable weather conditions. The city's average temperatures are 23.7 °C (74.7 °F) maximum and 11.8 °C (53.2 °F) minimum. The annual rainfall is 1,038 mm (40.9 in).

4. Communication

- **Language**

Argentines speak “castellano rioplatense”. The main differences with the Spanish are the use of "vos" to say "you" instead of "tu" and the "y" and "ll", pronounced as "sh" (as in shout).

There are different accents within Argentina’s 23 provinces. Most people in Buenos Aires understand English; they are accustomed to tourists and are usually very open. Argentina’s main port, “Puerto,” is in Buenos Aires. So “´porteños” are the people from Buenos Aires. The term is also used negatively to stress that they come across as boastful and cocky, in contrast to the people from other provinces, “del Interior”, who are calmer and humbler. Even though they tend to behave like people from any other major metropolitan city, “porteños” are very friendly and helpful. To learn more about the city´s “porteño” accent, you can see this app: Porteño Spanish.

- **Making calls**

In Buenos Aires, all telephone numbers have eight digits. Argentina’s country code is +54, the area code is 011, and Cell phones have the prefix 15.

- **Calls in Argentina**

- Cell phone to cell phone: 011-xx-xxxx
- Landline to cell phone: 15-xx-xxxx
- Cell phone to a landline: xx- xxxx
- Landline to landline: xxxx- xxxx
- From outside BA to BA: 011-xx-xxxx (cell or landline)

- **Calling from Abroad**

- To a local cell phone: +54-9-11-xx-xxxx
  To a local landline: +54-11-xx-xxxx

- **Cell Phones**

To have a local cell phone line, you can buy the phone or a SIM card, if it's not blocked. The local cell phone companies are:

movistar.com.ar personal.com.ar claro.com.ar tuenti.com.ar/

Usually, calls to a cell phone of the same company are free. Therefore, if travelling with a friend, you may want to have the same cell phone company. We recommend getting a pre-paid card or buying credit virtually, "recarga virtual," at kiosks and "Locutorios." You just need to tell the vendor your cell phone number, company, and how much credit you want. Remember to ask for the receipt.

- **Post Mail**

Try to avoid getting things shipped from abroad. Customs restrictions and fees may apply. You might have to pick up the package at the Customs Office downtown, where there are long queues, or at Ezeiza Airport. It can be time-consuming.

5. Currency

- Argentine currency: "Peso Argentino"-ARS.
- The Banco Nación publishes the official exchange rate at its website: www.bna.com.ar. You can exchange foreign currency at any bank from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
- There are AR$10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1000-peso bills. Due to inflation, more peso bills may emerge.Please confirm before traveling.
- There are 0.25, 0.50, 1.00, 2.00, 5.00 and 10.00 -peso coins.
- Some stores accept US Dollars, but it is customary to pay in Pesos Argentinos. Be careful with fake bills.
- Always carry some cash with you. Credit cards are not always accepted, or if so, only if the payment spent exceeds a certain minimum. When paying with a credit card, the exchange rate of your currency might not be convenient for you.

- ATMs: look for Banelco or Link. Your home PIN should work, and you can generally find a menu in English. Bear in mind that international and local fees may apply. Therefore, it is cheaper to withdraw larger amounts fewer times.

- If withdrawing money from an ATM is too expensive, you can also get cash transfer from your home country by: TransferWise, WorldRemit or Azimo: https://www.monito.com/ The most widely used is Western Union.
- Some restaurants and stores take US Dollars and occasionally Euros. The exchange rate at these places varies.
- Counterfeit bills of high denominations- 500 or 1000 pesos- are the most common ones, but be careful with smaller denomination bills, too. Avoid using high denomination bills in taxis at night or anywhere where you cannot keep track of the bill.

6. Business hours

Shops are usually open from 9AM to 9PM on weekdays and 9AM to 1PM on Saturdays.
Shopping malls are open every day from 10AM to 10PM, and banks are open from 10AM to 3PM on weekdays. In other parts of the country, shops are open from 8AM to 12PM and from 4/5PM to 8/9PM.

7. Electricity

Argentina uses 220V AC at 50 Hz. Read the label and manual on your device BEFORE plugging it in; the Argentine 220V will destroy any other device if you do not use a converter. You can buy adapters in Argentina.

8. Argentine meals

Argentines usually have four meals a day:

- Breakfast – “Desayuno”: traditionally coffee or tea with toast or croissants
- Lunch-“Almuerzo”: around 1:00-3:00 PM
- Tea -“te” or “merienda”: around 5:00 PM, same as breakfast
- Dinner- “comida” or “cena”: no earlier than 8:30/9:00 PM. Restaurants do not open before 8:00 PM for dinner.

- **Fresh food**

The best place to get fresh fruit is the “Verdulería”, the traditional fruit and vegetable stores you will see spread around town. You will find fresh eggs and poultry in places called “Granja” or “Pollería” and meat in a “Carnicería” (Butcher’s).

- **Delivery Apps**

9. Local Culture Tips

- **Peatón**

Buenos Aires is big, crowded, cosmopolitan, and a bit hectic, like all big cities. Traffic is messy, and drivers do not always respect traffic regulations, nor the pedestrian- "peatón." Be careful when crossing streets with no stoplights and when getting on and off the buses. When in doubt, wait: the driver is king!

- **Physical Contact**

Both men and women kiss once on the right cheek when saying hello and goodbye. Shaking hands is the formal way to greet someone you do not know. COVID-19 has changed this a bit, so people are not greeting each other with kisses every time but use fist bumps instead.

- **Piropos**

If someone throws a flattering phrase at you on the street, ignore it and keep walking. You will not be followed or harassed. These phrases are called "piropos," and they are usually quite poetic but may also be inappropriate.

- **Mate**

This is a loose tea-like beverage from a specific type of Argentine bush, "yerba mate". It is prepared by steeping dried leaves of yerba mate in hot water and is served with a metal straw, "bombilla", from a shared hollow calabash gourd. Drinking "mate" is a very common custom in Argentina. Uruguay and the South of Brazil. Argentines drink "mate" at work, during class, at home with friends, while studying, during an afternoon snack and sometimes at a café. In Uruguay, it is even more common to see people drinking "mate" while walking on the street. When sharing "mate" with a group, say "gracias" only when you do not want anymore. Drinking "mate" is a common reason to stop what they are doing, relax a little, and enjoy conversation with friends and co-workers.

10. Safety

Buenos Aires is like any big city. It is safe overall, but you should not expose yourself to undue risks or dangers.

- Make two photocopies of your important documents and keep a digital one. This includes your passport, visa, driver's license, etc. Whenever possible, leave one set of copies at home

with the originals and carry the second set with you. Do have a valid ID on you at all times. Remember that you will need the originals when purchasing a plane ticket, getting your visa, etc.

- Always have a little cash. Always have some on you for emergencies, including small bills, since getting change can be hard.

- Beware of pickpocketers: Some touristy spots in town are places where pickpocketing may occur. Be alert if someone “accidentally” bumps into you, or distracts you in any way (asking for directions, dropping keys, calling out for help, etc.). Try not to use your cellphone while in the street, and keep your bag in front of you in public transport.

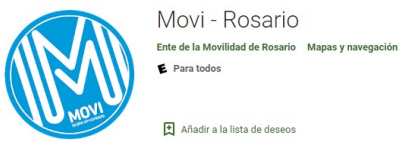
- Avoid large crowds in protests. Roadblocks as a way of protest, “piquetes” with “Piqueteros” burning tires, beating drums, or just holding signs in the middle of the street may be picturesque at the beginning, but may get violent. Keep a low profile and leave if the situation escalates or if you feel uncomfortable.

- Never lose sight of your belongings. Always keep your bag as close as possible. At restaurants and cafés, do not hang your bag over your chair, even if you are sitting indoors. If you are at a bar or a discotheque, keep it on you at all times. During long bus trips, keep bags at your feet.

- Do not walk alone at night. Keep the radio taxi/cabify apps on your cellphone. If you are in a dangerous zone by mistake, go into a shop and call a cab to leave.

11. Getting around in Rosario

- **The MOVI card**



This rechargeable card is the only payment method allowed in public transport. You can purchase the MOVI card at specific kiosks or dedicated stands around the city. If you transfer from one bus to another or go to a place and return within 1 hour (weekdays) or 2 hours (weekends), the second trip is free.

With a MOVI card, you can travel by bus or trolleybus, rent bicycles, or even pay for taxi rides (ask the driver first; not all taxis are prepared to receive this form of payment).

12. Austral Rosario Campus

Rosario Site is conveniently located near the city's downtown area. You can reach most services within a 15 minutes walk radius.

Most visiting students do not need to use any type of public transport to reach the Site from their accommodation

13. Getting around in Buenos Aires

- **The SUBE card**

This rechargeable card is the only payment method allowed in public transport. You can purchase the SUBE in kiosks or at the Post Office or get it free by registering for the Buenos Aires Welcome kit you pick up at the airport. You charge it in kiosks, Subte, and train stations. We recommend that you register your SUBE card online to check your credit and in case you lose it.
If you use different means of public transport within 2 hours, you get 50% off the second trip and 75% off the third. You can combine up to five visits, always within 2h.

- **Metro: "Subte"**

The Subte (metro/underground/tube) is the fastest way to travel in the city.
For information, log into: https://www.metrovias.com.ar/

- **Bus: "Colectivo"**

There are over 100 bus lines. Each has a number and a color combination to identify them. The bus fare depends on the distance. When you get on, you must tell the bus driver the fare or the destination (street intersections or street name and round number). Most lines run 24/7, but during the weekend and at night, the frequency decreases. To get off, you must go to the middle or rear door and press the button to request the stop. Do it the block before your stop comes.

- **Trains: "Tren"**

The Retiro Station has four lines that take you to the North of Buenos Aires: Belgrano Norte, Mitre, Sarmiento, and San Martin.
You will not use the train to get around the city. However, to visit the Tigre/Delta, the Mitre line is your best option: https://www.trenmitre.com.ar/horarios/. You would take the San Martin line to President Derqui station to go to Pilar by train. At the Derqui station, you can take the 520 bus to the Campus, or a "remise."
https://www.trensanmartin.com.ar/horarios/ . We do not recommend this option for the moment.

- **Taxis**

Taxis in BA are painted black and yellow, and you stop them by outstretching your hand. A red sign will appear on the windscreen if the cab is available. Radio taxis are safer because a company monitors their trips. You can call them so they can pick you up anywhere in town. Taxis are cheaper than in other parts of the world. When you say where you are going, specify the part of town, for a street's name may be identical at different ends of this megacity.

- **BA Ecobicis**

There are city bikes available in Buenos Aires. Foreigners can register using their passports. They are orange and sponsored by Banco Itaú. You can register online and use them for free during weekdays or for a small amount of money on weekends and holidays. Riders in Argentina are a little bit wild, so take care! You can find all the information about it here: https://www.baecobici.com.ar/es/inicio.

➢ Apps to get around:

BA Cómo llego and Moovit. These apps offer detailed routes by bus, train, subway, car, and even on foot, as well as any combination of them.

Cabify. Fully regulated (legal) as the drivers are registered as "remises," car owners who work as private drivers.

Cheaper than Cabify, an interesting option depending on the part of town you're in.

As has been the case in other cities around the world, Uber's arrival in Argentina was complicated because of its legality (or lack thereof). If you decide to take one in the city, it will not hurt to sit up front with the driver, especially when coming or going from the airport or popular areas like Palermo.

BA Taxi. We recommend you check reviews before you try this one.

14. Commuting to Austral Pilar Campus

- **Austral Shuttle**

The University offers a shuttle service from three neighborhoods in Buenos Aires directly to the Pilar Campus of the University. You will be able to make a reservation once you have your Austral email here:

- **Expreso Pilar**

This private shuttle has several stops in Buenos Aires and the Austral Campus in Pilar. Make sure to make a reservation before you go to the stop: Expreso Pilar.

- **Transport to KM 50 of Panamericana Highway: Public bus: "#57"**

This public bus has two services leaving from Plaza Italia (Av. Sarmiento and circulating pathway-Av. Santa Fe) and arriving at Km 50 on the Panamericana Highway with few stops. You can see the timetable for the bus here: 57 Expresso. The #57 may not appear in Google Maps, but don´t worry, it operates daily. The two services are:

- Pilar Express (white bus): special service with few stops and high frequency.
- "Rápido" (red bus): this bus is cheaper. Even though it has fewer stops than the average, it is much slower than the "express" and not as comfortable.

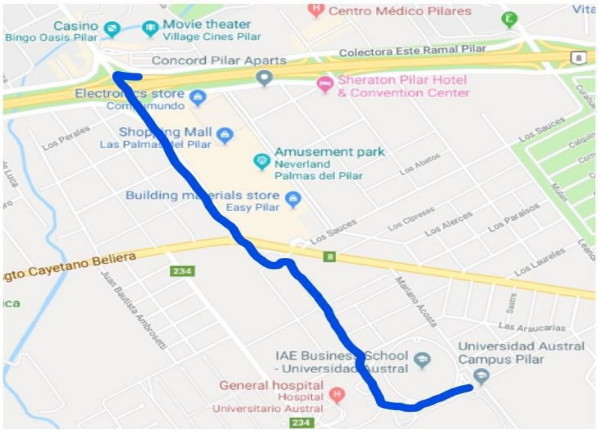
- **Transport from KM 50 to Austral Campus in Pilar**

The transport options described above leave you at the Km 50 of the Panamericana Highway. Once you get off the bus or shuttle, your options are:

- Walking: take a left and onto the bridge crossing the highway, and cross the parking lot of Palmas de Pilar shopping mall to "Ruta 8". With your student card, cross the Austral

Park, and straight ahead to the Campus, taking the road that has the Business School to your left and the Hospital to your right. This takes 20 minutes on average.

- 520 bus: you can take this bus to the Campus on Chubut St, in front of the Torres del Sol shopping mall.
- Remises First: car Service that has an office on Chubut Street, a few meters from Panamericana.



15. Housing

- **What to take into account when looking for a place to live**

- LOCATION: Find the exact location of the apartment/residence, making sure it is safe and that it will work well for your logistics.
- CONTRACT: Request a copy of the contract before you travel. Find out what you are allowed to do or not in the apartment/room. Confirm the services and utilities the place has (water, electricity, gas, cable TV, internet, etc.). Look at the duration and termination clauses. See what the deposit policies are (when and how should they be returned). Ensure there will be someone 24/7 if there is a problem and how to reach them.
- PAYMENT: Consult about the currency and method/s of payment.
- Upon arrival, double-check that everything is as stipulated and inform of any pre-existing damage (take pictures), difference, or missing item as soon as you notice it.
- If you choose to live in a hall of residence or to do a homestay, ask about the rules and policies.

- **What kind of housing should I consider?**

For your first month in Argentina, we recommend a Homestay. It will give you some time to experience the city and the campuses yourself before making the decision where to live the rest of the semester. Sharing your first month with a local family can help you decide your best housing choice, and it is also an excellent opportunity for cultural immersion.

Feel free to check with us at incoming@austral.edu.ar about the location you are choosing to make sure the distances and the neighborhood will suit you. You can also ask us about the places students stayed before you.

The homestay organizations we recommend in Buenos Aires are people we consider a suitable option. Nevertheless, there is no business relation, nor is there any profit, commission, or benefit for the university other than facilitating the logistics of students, staff, and faculty coming to Austral: homeabroad.ba@gmail.com /IG: @homeabroad.ba/FB: HomeAbroad BA
For other housing options:

- Buscoroomy: https://www.buscoroomies.com/region/buenos-aires
- Airbnb:
- Zonaprop:

For housing options in Rosario, contact Ciro Lavadenz: clavadenz@austral.edu.ar

- **Where is it best to live in Buenos Aires?**

Most international students prefer to live in the city for the many things it has to offer. The nicer neighborhoods are Recoleta, Barrio Norte, Palermo, Las Cañitas, and Belgrano. A long avenue, Av. Santa Fe cuts through these neighborhoods. Several bus lines run along it, and the Subte route D runs underneath. Being close to Av. Santa Fe (the name changes to Av. Cabildo in Belgrano), within seven or eight blocks of Av. Cordoba, or down to Av. Del Libertador, would be a good choice.
The best neighborhood to commute directly to Pilar is Palermo, near Plaza Italia, where the main stop of the "57" takes off to Pilar.

16. Medical Care

- **Buenos Aires- Pilar**

We require that you have a local health insurance to avoid the need for payment of immediate attention. With the local health insurance, you will have the specific information and attention you need in each situation. The one that currently covers all the requirements at the lowest cost is William Hope : https://whope.com.ar/estudiantes_intercambio/en

- **Rosario**

In Rosario, you may have a foreign health insurance and seek attendance with reimbursement.

- **How does an international medical insurance work in Argentina?**

All foreign medical insurances use a reimbursement system. You have to make sure you have the cash or your credit card authorized for larger payments. In any hospital or clinic, you will have to leave a down payment to receive attention. After paying for whatever service you received (visit and/or tests and/or treatment), you submit the receipts to your medical insurance for reimbursement. It is important that you are familiar with the administrative procedure. Most probably you will need to keep the receipt/s, the prescriptions and a medical certificate describing the symptoms/illness and the prescribed treatment.

- **Emergencies- "Guardia"**

In case of an emergency, go to the Emergency Room or "Centro de Emergencias" (also known as Guardia) of the nearest private hospital, and call us.

17. Student Visa Requirements

International students studying in Argentina for longer than 90 days must acquire a Student/Resident VISA for their exchange period. Students should apply in their country through the nearest Argentine consulate as soon as they have received their letter of acceptance as the visa process may take up to three months.

Universidad Austral provides students with the certificates they need to get their visa.
The steps for the visa process: https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/services/visas/student-visa-365-days

Students who will stay for longer than six months in Argentina, will be asked to provide an apostilled certificate of good conduct (criminal background check) of the countries in which they have resided for more than one year during the previous three years.

18. Language Courses

In Buenos Aires, students who would like to take a Spanish as a Second Language course, could search for a school at the city, to attend on Thursday/Friday, so that it doesn´t overlap with your Austral classes. Some options are:

- **Exspanish**: https://expanish.com/school-buenos-aires/
- **VOS**: https://vosbuenosaires.com/es/cursos-espanol/
- **Wanderlust Spanish**: https://wanderlustspanish.com/wanderlust-buenos-aires/

19. Sightseeing

There are a few accounts that give advice about what to do:

- **Turistearteba**: https://www.instagram.com/turistearteba/?hl=es
- **Buenosaires.ar:** https://www.instagram.com/buenosaires.ar/?hl=es
- **Rosario :** https://www.rosarioconnection.com/