Buenos Aires is like a love that one can never forget...

From the tango music echoing down the cobblestone streets of San Telmo to the delicious smells and tastes of Argentine beef asados and Malbec wines, there is something undeniably seductive about Buenos Aires. Located on the Río de la Plata on the South American east coast of Argentina, Buenos Aires is the country’s largest metropolitan area with over thirteen million porteños (people of the port). The port’s history is marked by an influx of millions of immigrants during the 19th and 20th centuries, making Buenos Aires a city of mixed, colorful cultures. The fused cultural traditions and European colonial architecture have led many to refer to Buenos Aires as the Paris of South America.

Comparisons with Europe are not enough to describe Buenos Aires. The past participates in a suggestive dance with the present throughout the 48 barrios of the city. Just as La Boca, the colorful buildings are memories of an era as the capital’s first port, Puerto Madero’s promenades display the modern face of the Port of Buenos Aires. Palermo Viejo exudes decades-old charm while the chic boutiques and restaurants of Palermo Soho and Hollywood manifest the talents of fashion-conscious designers. Past icons of Buenos Aires, like Diego Armando Maradona, Evita Peron, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, and Jorge Luis Borges, live on today as new generations both glorify and vilify these sons and daughters of the city. A tango of generations, tradition and passion makes Buenos Aires an alluring place that you feel, not just visit. With one taste, the smell, the sights and sounds of Buenos Aires, it is all too easy to begin a lifelong love affair with this city.

HISTORY

Argentine poet Jorge Luis Borges once wrote, “I find it hard to believe Buenos Aires ever had a beginning”. It did have a historical start with the Querendi nomadic tribes who lived in the Buenos Aires area for thousands of years before the Spanish arrived. It took two attempts to successfully establish Buenos Aires as a Spanish colonial city. In 1580, the Spanish sent Juan de Garay to establish a fort on the foundation of Pedro de Mendoza’s failed settlement from 1536. What began as a backwater fort in an estuary grew into a strong trading port for silver and slaves in the 1600s. The Spanish attempted to control its trade by forcing all exports to go through the Viceroyalty capital of Lima. Local traders indignantly ignored the rules until 1776, when the Spanish Crown finally granted the port legal status as the capital of the Viceroyalty of Rio de la Plata.

On May 25, 1810, the Buenos Aires government ousted the Viceroyalty and began Argentina’s revolutionary movement, culminating in the 1816 formation of the United Provinces of the Rio Plata, formally separating them from Spain. From the 1860s onwards, Buenos Aires attracted millions of European immigrants, especially from Italy, Spain, England, France, and Germany, giving the city’s culture and architecture a distinctly European flair. By the end of the 1800s, several changes transformed Buenos Aires. In 1879, a bloody military campaign against Argentina’s native tribes, called the “Conquista del Desierto” tragically cleared farmland that boosted the nation’s agricultural economy. In 1880, the city became a federal district, making Buenos Aires the political and economic capital of Argentina.

By the early 1900s, the city’s infrastructure had the functional and aesthetic characteristics of a modern metropolis. Political unrest spawned by the disparities between the Argentine rich and poor turned Buenos Aires into a city of extreme parties, protests, and
military coups. In the 1940s, the city was a political stage for General Juan Peron and his wife, Evita Duarte Peron, who captivated the working class with the promise of the “third position” between capitalism and communism. A series of military coups and failed regimes, including the infamous “Dirty Wars” of the 1970s, rocked Buenos Aires, before finally returning to democracy in 1983. Argentina’s liberalized capitalist policies of the 1990s spurred prosperity in Buenos Aires until the economy and political system finally imploded in 2001. Despite rough times, the lure of the city’s sights and culture has made Buenos Aires one of the top tourist destinations in the world.

BUENOS AIRES PLACES OF INTEREST

1. The political heart of Buenos Aires is the Plaza de Mayo in El Centro along the Avenida de Mayo, which is touted as one of the world’s widest avenues. It is named for the start of Argentina’s independence movement on May 25, 1810. The plaza is intimately connected to the nation’s history, as it has been the scene of countless political events. The plaza is surrounded by many capital landmarks, namely the Casa Rosada, the presidential palace; the Cabildo, the colonial city headquarters; the Metropolitan Cathedral, with the adjacent Mausoleum of San Martin, the tomb of the national independence patriot; the current City Hall, and the oldest monument in Buenos Aires, and the May Pyramid, built in 1811.

2. Italian immigrants to La Boca made the barrio into the colorful area it is today. El Caminito is the neighborhood’s most famous street, as tango dancers perform and local artists sell their latest works.

3. The Recoleta Cemetery is no ordinary eternal resting place. A visit to the high-walled enclave of mausoleums that enshrine Argentina’s most wealthy and notorious names is a step back in time. Mourners still flock to Evita Peron’s grave, as well as those of politicians, writers, and other notable Argentines.

4. Palermo’s Parque Tres de Febrero is like an oasis in the middle of the city. The 965-acre park has a large, picturesque lake surrounded by several bridges, as well as a planetarium with hundreds of roses and flowering plants.

5. Parque Tres de Febrero is a short walk away from the Zoological Gardens, another urban refuge filled with polar bears, camels, elephants, and roaming peacocks.

6. A trip to Buenos Aires is incomplete without a visit to Plaza Dorrego, the heart of the barrio of San Telmo and the second oldest plaza in the city. The Sunday antique mar-
To make the most of your visit to Buenos Aires and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, guests are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.

LOCAL CUSTOMS
Bargaining: Feel free to bargain at markets, but prices are fixed in stores and restaurants.
Tipping: Expect to tip 10% in restaurants.
Local Cuisine: Argentine cuisine boldly features its grass-fed cattle as its starring role. In Buenos Aires, steakhouses abound where you can try a traditional parrilada of grilled meats, including bife de lomo (filet mignon), bife de chorizo (bone-in sirloin), chorizos (spicy sausages), morcillas (blood sausage), and chinchulines (chitterlings). Be sure to also order provolta (thick cuts of grilled provolone cheese) and buttery mollejas (sweetbreads).
Many Italian dishes have been adapted to the Argentine palate. Pizzas, fresh pastas, and milanesas (thin breaded meat often served with ketchup) dominate local menus. Porteños even have a tradition of eating ñoquis (gnocchi) on the 29th day of the month for good luck.
Porteños take their sweets seriously. Dulce de leche (caramelized condensed milk) fills everything from medialunas (croissants) to alfajores (cookie sandwiches), dozens of ice cream flavors, and cakes (like milhojas).
Drink Specialties: Argentina's signature red wine, Malbec, is “the” wine to pair with beef, cheese, and heavy pastas, thanks to its full-bodied character. Torrontés is the signature white wine grown only in Argentina. Fruity and fragrant, Torrontés goes best with spicy foods, as well as light cheeses and seafood. Yerba Mate is not just Argentina's national drink. It is a national custom. Traditionally brewed in a mate (gourd) and drunk through a bombilla (a silver sieved straw), mate is meant to be shared among a group of friends.

SHOPPING FACILITIES
Buenos Aires' best souvenirs include leather and silver products. For the best stores, visit the central shopping area along Calle Florida and Avenida Santa Fe, which stretches from the west side of Plaza San Martin. Fashionistas will love Buenos Aires' Palermo Soho and Palermo Hollywood for its boutiques featuring local designers and European clothing brands. Visit one of the many shopping complexes, including Galerias Pacifico, Alto Palermo, and Patio Bullrich.

LOCAL CURRENCY
Argentina's currency is the peso (ARS). Several banks have ATMs and will accept traveler’s checks for a fee. A few shops accept U.S. dollars and euros. Major credit cards are widely accepted but traveler’s checks rarely are.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES
The Correo Argentina (Argentine Post Office) is located at 132 Libertador Ave. close to the Plaza San Martin.
Dial the following access numbers to use a personal calling card:
AT&T: 0800.555.4288
MCI: 0800.555.1002
TRANSPORTATION
Metered taxis are the best way for visitors to navigate Buenos Aires. Beware of unregulated taxis who may overcharge. The buses, known as colectivos, are another economical option to travel. The Buenos Aires “Subte” subway system is clean, easy to use, and inexpensive. If you can get directions from locals, this is also a cheap, efficient way to get around the city.

TOURIST INFORMATION
The Tourist Information Center is located at 223 Julio A. Roca Avenue.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES
Argentine Spanish (called Rioplatanese or castellano by locals) is very unique, as it uses the “vosotros” “vos” subject form in the place of “tu,” and its musical style sounds a lot like Italian. Porteños also use a lot of lunfardo (slang), which may sound a little confusing to foreigners.
Che – an informal way to call someone’s attention; equivalent to “Hey”.
Chau – saying “good bye” that is reminiscent of the Italian farewell ciao.
Chorro – an informal to say thief.
Guita – an informal way to say money.
Bancame un toque- saying “wait one minute”.
Birra – an informal way to say beer that is reminiscent of the Italian language.
Bondi – an informal way to say bus.
Tacho – an informal way to say taxi.