

We love the Lonely Planet travel guides. Although they sometimes aim for the backpacker market, they often find great out of the way hotels, restaurants and other things sometimes missed by big tour operators. We always include their books when planning for a new destination. They are currently spotlighting Argentina, and feature not one but two great books to check out:

[Argentina, 6th edition](#)
[ISBN: 978-1-74104-702-8](#)
[\\$25.99](#)

[Buenos Aires, 5th edition](#)
[ISBN: 978-1-74104-699-1](#)
[\\$18.99](#)

Destination of the Month- Argentina

Fell the thunderous crash of icebergs calving into the icy waters of Lago Argentino. Explore the vast landscapes of Quebrada de Humahuaca with your own pack-carrying llama. Tango like a porteno after learning the unspoken codes of Argentina's sexiest dance. Cycle between Mendoza's legendary vineyards in search of the perfect malbec. Salivate over your choice of 10 different cuts of meat in Buenos Aires' steak houses. This is ***Lonely Planet Argentina!***

DID YOU KNOW?

WHATCHA GONNA DO ABOUT IT

Throughout Latin America, Argentines endure a reputation for being a bit cocky. "Yo Argentino" is a classic Argentinism, which literally means "I'm Argentine" but is usually accompanied by a shrug of the shoulders and means "Don't ask me. I've got nothing to do with it". (p. 41)

FOOTBALL MANIA

You don't have to travel too long in Argentina to realize that football (soccer) is the number one thing here. Argentine football traditionally combines a South American flair in attack with a rugged Italianate defense, a very effective synthesis that has won the national team two World Cups. (p.44)

THE GNOCCHI BEAURACRACY

Gnocchi is big in Argentina, and it gets its day in the spotlight on the 29th of each month, when it's traditionally served in Argentine households. In Argentina, the word

ñoquis

(gnocchi) has another meaning: it refers to government employees. The nickname arose during the Perón years, when many industries were state-operated and government employment was a source of government gratuity. The implication is that government employees appeared on the job just before monthly paychecks were due- once a month, gnocchi style. The term -and the tradition- persist today. (p. 45)

THE MYSTERIOUS TANGO

Tango is not an easy dance to describe; it needs to be seen and experienced. Despite a long evolution from its origins, it's still sensual and erotic. At an established *milonga* (tango dance hall), choosing an adequate partner involves many levels of hidden codes, rules and signals that dancers must follow. The

cabezazo

- the quick tilt of the head, eye contact and uplifted eyebrows- can happen from way across the room. The woman to whom it is directed either nods yes and smiles, or pretends not to have noticed. If you don't want to dance with anyone, don't look around too much- you could be breaking some hearts. (p. 51)

LATIN AMERICAN GELATO

Because of Argentina's Italian heritage, Argentine *helado* (ice cream) is comparable to the best ice cream in the world. The capitals

ladías

(ice cream parlors) are a great place to start lickin'. Important:

granizado

means with chocolate flakes. (p.118)

THE GAUCHO JUDÍO

The gaucho (cowboy) is one of Argentina's archetypical images, but it's a little known fact that many a gaucho was of Jewish origin. Mass Jewish immigration to Argentina was in the late 19th

century and these rural Jews readily assimilated into Argentine society, mixing their own traditions with those of their adopted country, so that it was not unusual to see a figure on horseback in baggy pants, canvas shoes and skullcap, on his way to throw a lump of cow on the

asado

(barbeque). (p. 191)

‘GAUCHITO’ GIL

Spend time on the road anywhere in Argentina and you are bound to see at least one roadside shrine surrounded by red flags and votive offerings. These shrines pay homage to Antonio Gil, a Robin Hood-like figure. Little is known for sure about “El Gauchito” as he is affectionately known but many romantic tales have sprung up to fill the gaps. He deserted the Federalist Army and roamed the countryside with other deserters stealing cattle from the rich and sharing them with the poor. He achieved saintlike status when at his execution, he told the executioner that the executioner’s son was gravely ill and that if he were buried – not the custom with deserters- the man’s son would recover. Legend has it that this came true. (p. 201)

COCA CHEWING

Once you get seriously north, you see signs outside shops advertising coca and bica. The first refers to those leaves, mainly grown in Peru and Bolivia, which are used to produce cocaine. Bica refers to bicarbonate of soda, an alkaline that, when chewed along with the leaves, releases their mild stimulant effect and combats fatigue and hunger. By all means chew some coca if invited by a local, but you’d be wise not to buy or carry any. Although possession for personal use is legal, it’s hard to prove you aren’t intending to sell it if the police search your belongings. (p. 249)

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

It’s not just freaks and hippies. Even normal-looking people in Capilla del Monte have stories about strange lights appearing in formation in the night skies over nearby Cerro Uritorco. In 1935 Manuel Reina reported seeing a strange being dressed in a tight fitting suit when walking on a country road. In 1986 two brothers saw a spaceship so big that its lights illuminated the surrounding countryside. A burn mark measuring 400x210 feet was found at the point it supposedly landed. A couple of years later, 300 people witnessed another ship which left a burn mark 140 feet in diameter. And in 1991, another burn mark measuring 40 feet was found with a temperature of 644 degrees F. Geologists were called in and they claimed that nearby rocks had recently been heated to a temperature of 5500 degrees F! (p.330)

COMFY TRAVEL

Argentines are avid travelers, and they've mastered the art of bus travel; imagine two stories of big, plush, fully reclining seats, complimentary meals, cheap wine and even aperitifs! Overnight rides have never been so fun. (p. 625)

About the Books:

[Argentina, 6th edition](#)

[ISBN: 978-1-74104-702-8](#)

[\\$25.99](#)

[Buenos Aires, 5th edition](#)

[ISBN: 978-1-74104-699-1](#)

[\\$18.99](#)