

Buenos Aires Quick City Guide

One-page printable reference for Buenos Aires, Argentina.

For The Lean Nomad — Built 2026-07-20

1. At a Glance

Buenos Aires is Argentina’s cosmopolitan capital, often called the “Paris of South America” for its wide boulevards, European architecture, and cafe culture. For nomads, the real draw is value: a USD-earner can live well here because the city runs on a dual-currency system where cash USD exchanges at an unofficial “blue” rate far better than the official bank rate. Spanish is the language (Rioplatense dialect with voseo and sh-sounding ll/y), English is moderate in Palermo and Recoleta, and the lean baseline is about **\$30/day**. The city has four distinct seasons, inverted from the Northern Hemisphere; spring (September-November) and fall (March-June) are ideal. Summer (January-February) is hot and humid; winter (June-August) is damp and chilly. Power is 220V, Type C and I plugs. Time zone is Argentina Time (ART, UTC-3), no daylight saving.

2. First 48 Hours

Hour 0-2: Land at EZE (international, 35 km south) or AEP (domestic/regional, close to center). Pre-book a remise or use Uber/Cabify to your accommodation; expect **\$20-35** from EZE. Avoid unofficial taxi solicitors.

Hour 2-6: Check in, test the Wi-Fi, then head to a Western Union branch or a reputable *cueva* to exchange **\$200-500** of crisp USD cash into ARS at the blue rate. Buy a Personal or Claro SIM (**\$5-10**) and a SUBE transit card (**\$1-2**) at a kiosko.

Day 1 evening: Walk your neighborhood, find a *panadería*, and eat your first *menú del día* or *parrilla*. Do not book dinner before 9 PM; locals eat at 10 PM or later.

Day 2 morning: Load your SUBE card, ride the Subte to the historic center, walk Plaza de Mayo and the Obelisco, and calibrate your daily spending. By 48 hours you should have cash, transit, and connectivity sorted.

3. Where to Stay

Neighborhood	Best For	Nightly USD (long-stay)	The Catch
Palermo Soho	Cafés, nightlife, nomad density	\$25-55	Noisier, highest rents

Neighborhood	Best For	Nightly USD (long-stay)	The Catch
Palermo Hollywood	Food scene, coworking, walkability	\$20-50	Trendy but can be loud
Recoleta	Safety, architecture, upscale	\$30-70	More expensive, less edgy
San Telmo	Tango, antiques, historic feel	\$20-45	Noisy, petty theft risk
Belgrano	Local feel, families, calm	\$20-45	Fewer tourist amenities
Villa Crespo / Almagro	Budget, close to Palermo	\$15-35	Less polished, research blocks

Budget monthly: studio **\$380-585**, 1BR **\$450-825**, 2BR **\$585-1,100**. Use Airbnb for the first two weeks, then switch to local Facebook groups or temporal agencies for furnished monthly deals. Confirm fiber internet and clarify whether rent is quoted in USD cash or ARS.

4. Getting Around

The **SUBE card** is mandatory for the Subte (subway) and buses (*colectivos*). Rides cost **\$0.20-0.40**. The Subte is fastest for north-south; buses reach everywhere, including late night. For private rides, **Uber, Cabify, and Didi** are safe and cheap: under 30 minutes typically **\$1-5**. Traditional *remises* are pre-booked radio cars, useful for airport runs (**\$20-35** from EZE). **Ecobici** offers public bike sharing for flat neighborhoods like Palermo. Driving a rental car is not recommended: chaotic traffic, parking headaches, and aggressive local driving.

5. Eat This

Dish	What It Is	Cost (USD)	Where
Bife de Chorizo / Ojo de Bife	Grilled sirloin / ribeye	\$8-30	Parrilla (La Cabrera, Don Julio)
Empanadas	Savory pastries	\$1-2 each	Bakeries, San Telmo Market
Milanesa	Breaded meat cutlet	\$6-12	Every neighborhood café

Dish	What It Is	Cost (USD)	Where
Medialunas	Sweet croissants	under \$3 with coffee	Panaderías for breakfast
Pizza a la Piedra / Fugazzeta	Thick-crust pizza	\$5-12	El Cuartito, classic pizzerias
Menú del Día	Fixed-price lunch	~\$4	Local eateries, huge value
Mate	Herbal tea ritual	Free (social) / \$2 café	Carry your own gourd + thermos

Vegetarians do well thanks to Italian influence: look for *fainá*, gourmet pastas, and vegetarian *menú del día* spots in Palermo. The late dinner hour (10 PM) is non-negotiable at popular restaurants.

6. Top 10 Sights

Attraction	Time & Cost	Pro Tip
Recoleta Cemetery	1-2 hrs, ~\$2-5	Visit Evita's tomb; go early to avoid crowds
Teatro Colón	1 hr tour, \$10-20	Book a guided tour for the architecture
Casa Rosada & Plaza de Mayo	1 hr, free	Museum visits by reservation
Caminito, La Boca	1-2 hrs, free	Stay on the main tourist strip; avoid side streets
MALBA	2-3 hrs, \$5-10	Strong Latin American art collection
Puerto Madero	1-2 hrs, free	Best at sunset; bridges and dining
San Telmo Sunday Fair	2-3 hrs, free	Antiques, crafts, street tango
Jardín Japonés	1 hr, ~\$3-5	Calm escape in Palermo
El Ateneo Grand Splendid	30-60 min, free	Former theater turned bookstore
Obelisco	15-30 min, free	Classic photo stop at Plaza de la República

7. Day Trips

Trip	Time	Cost (USD)	Notes
Tigre Delta	Half day	\$10-20	Train to Tigre + boat ride; fruit market
San Antonio de Areco	Full day	\$25-45	Gaucha town, silverwork, estancias
Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay	1-2 days	\$40-80 round trip	Ferry from Puerto Madero; UNESCO colonial town
Iguazú Falls	2-3 days	\$250-450	Fly from EZE/AEP; one of the world's great waterfalls
Luján Basilica	Half day	\$15-25	Accessible by bus; pilgrimage site

8. Safety & Etiquette

Buenos Aires is generally safe, but petty theft and **motochorros** (thieves on motorcycles snatching phones/bags) are common. Do not hold your phone out on the street; step into a shop to check maps. Use Uber/Cabify at night rather than hailing street taxis. Avoid shanty towns (*villas*) and stay on main streets in La Boca and San Telmo. Protests and roadblocks (*piquetes*) happen around Plaza de Mayo; detour if you see crowds.

Etiquette: Greet with a single cheek kiss. Dinner starts late; reservations before 9 PM are unusual. Tipping 10% in restaurants is standard but not mandatory. If invited to share *mate*, do not move the straw or say “thank you” after every sip (that signals you do not want more). Football is a religion; be cautious criticizing Boca or River.

9. Budget Snapshot

Tier	Daily	Weekly	14-Day	Notes
Lean Nomad	\$37	\$258	\$515	Shared/studio, menú del día, SUBE, cafés
Comfortable Nomad	\$62	\$432	\$863	1BR in Palermo/Recoleta, coworking, parrillas

Tier	Daily	Weekly	14-Day	Notes
Flashpacker	\$112	\$782	\$1,563	Premium rental, fine dining, private transport

Monthly totals from the full guide: **Lean \$1,100 / Comfortable \$1,850 / Premium \$3,350**; 90-day totals: **\$3,300 / \$5,550 / \$10,050**.

10. Quick Links

- **Migration / visa extension:** Dirección Nacional de Migraciones
- **Official tourism:** Visit Buenos Aires
- **Airports:** Ezeiza (EZE) and Aeroparque Jorge Newbery (AEP)
- **Transit:** SUBE card registration and balance checks
- **U.S. Embassy:** ar.usembassy.gov
- **Money:** Western Union self-transfer for blue-market cash
- **Hospitals:** Hospital Italiano, Hospital Alemán, Hospital Británico
- **Full guide PDF:** Buenos Aires 90-Day Survival Guide