



Nine of Cups

Notes for Cruisers – Inland Travel to Northern/Central Argentina

- Duration: 30 days – (Sept/Oct 2006)
- All travel via bus from Piriapolis
- Guide – Lonely Planet (LP) Argentina and pages from LP South America on a Shoestring for Paraguay
- ATMs & internet were available everywhere although having some US\$ was helpful for exchange when we were short on time.

- **Piriapolis-Montevideo**
 - As of April 2006, US citizens must have a visa to enter Paraguay. We applied at the Paraguayan Embassy at 9am (US passport/2 photos/application from embassy/\$65US or \$45US (multiple entry or single entry). It was ready by 4pm same day. Embassy address: Artigas @ Guiana (2 blocks from Brazilian embassy).
 - We opted to stay over at the Day's Inn opposite Tres Cruces bus terminal the night before to insure an on-time delivery of the visa application in the morning. \$55 night including free internet (computers on 9th floor), cable TV, hair dryers, breakfast, welcome glass of wine.

- **Montevideo – Paysandú, Uruguay**
 - Paysandu is Uruguay's second largest city, but we stopped only as a pass-through on our way to Argentina.
 - Copay bus to Paysandu with local continuing service to Colon, Argentina; leaves 5 times a day (last bus 6:30pm). \$327Ur + \$15Ur terminal fee/pp. 5 hours
 - Overnight in Paysandu...not much to see, but the town was pleasant enough. Equinox Hotel (\$600Ur/night) and not worth it. Probably better choices on 18 de Julio, the main street.
 - Restaurant: Romi on Zabrilla de San Martin; not bad at all with a parilla and fairly extensive menu. We tried the local dessert specialty, "chajá", a meringue-y sort of thing. Good but very sweet.

- **Paysandú– Colón – Concordia – Puerto Iguazu**
 - Copay bus from Paysandú – Colón (\$40Ur+\$12Ur/pp); 45 minutes
 - Note: The bus stops at border and collects passports for stamping. Make sure your passport gets stamped. David's was and Marcie's wasn't so we had to make a separate trip to Migracion in Puerto Iguazu and answer a lot of questions to get the passport stamped properly.
 - Jovi Bus from Colón to Concordia - \$7.50Ar/pp – 1 hour
 - Expresso Singer – Concordia – Iguazu \$94Ar/pp – 12 hours – overnight/full cama including dinner w/wine; breakfast (yuck!)

- **Puerto Iguazu**
 - Hotel Lilian, Fray Luis Beltran 183 – email: hotellilian@yahoo.com.ar; a 5 minute walk (~250 meters) from the bus terminal. Clean, pleasant but no shower curtain

- in the shower which drove us crazy. Includes cable TV, breakfast; rooms face a pretty courtyard.
- Laundry – Lavanderia Familiar on Misiones across and down from bus terminal. \$10Ar/basket load/ wash & dry
 - Restaurants
 - El Charro – on Cordoba across from bus terminal; we had brochette for two served on a “sword”; Service was very, very slow...food mediocre.
 - El Patio – Av Victoria Aguirre...open air asado, full of locals; may only be open on weekends. \$15Ar/pp fixed menu. Good!
 - ATM at Banco de Misiones on Victoria Aguirre 330 did not accept Visa ATM card, but we were able to change US\$\$ for \$Ar at the bus terminal snack bar next to the checked luggage booth. Bank opens around 8am. Actually, the snack bar gave us a more favorable rate than the bank advertised.
- **Iguazu Falls**
 - Buses run every 20 mins to the Argentine side from the bus terminal. You can buy tix at terminal or pay on the bus which drops you off at park entrance. Local buses also depart for Brazil, too.
 - Note: US citizens need a visa to enter Brazil so we didn't go to Brazilian Foz Iguacu. Other Americans paid a cab driver to take them to the Falls and he then “paid” the Brazilian MIgracion officials to look the other way when they passed through and they had no problem.
 - Parque Nacional Iguazu – entry fee \$30Ar
 - If you wish to return to the park a second day, have your ticket validated before you leave and it's ½ price entry the next day.
 - Argentinian side is lovely with lots of paved walks, pasarelas (catwalks) over lush terrain. We went in the afternoon one day and did the Upper Circuit of trails including Garganta del Diablo and then did the Lower Trails including San Martin Island the next day. Late in the afternoon we found about 20 coatí (cute animal... cross between a raccoon and an anteater) on the Green Trail. You need to take the little train to the end to see Garganta del Diablo...kind of hokey. You could do the whole park in one long day if you're rushed. Park provides maps of trails at entrance.
 - Park has an ATM, souvenir shops, a couple of restaurants/snack bars, bathrooms and a huge Sheraton.
 - Though we didn't go to Brazilian side, others have commented it had great views and also there was a Bird Aviary nearby that was world-class.
 - **Puerto Iguazu – San Ignacio de Mini**
 - This backwards we know, but we wanted to see the Jesuit ruins in San Ignacio and couldn't find a reasonable bus to take us there from Concordia, so we backtracked.
 - Empresa M. Horanski (that's a bus company, really!) 5 hours - \$20Ar/pp
 - Bus lets you off on the plaza in front of the church within sight of the hotel.
 - Hotel:
 - San Ignacio Hotel – small, quaint, clean but check the beds because David got a puncture wound from a bedspring. \$60Ar/matrimonial. No breakfast but a little restaurant/pool hall/video game place next door serves meals. Internet in the lobby of the hotel (\$3Ar/hr).
 - ATM – MacroBansud across the plaza from hotel with 24 hr ATM
 - San Ignacio de Mini Ruins
 - Several easy blocks from the hotel; you walk the “gauntlet” of artisans/vendors selling tacky stuff to get to the entrance.
 - Entry: \$12Ar/pp includes a museum and grounds; guide extra. We didn't feel we needed one. Brochure on entry is quite informational
 - Grounds and ruins are lovely. Evening presentations no longer given.

- Restaurant – Several around the ruins, but not many elsewhere
 - La Aldea – across from ruins entrance. Good pizza at reasonable prices.
- **San Ignacio - Posadas**
 - Bus: Empresa M. Horanski again; buses frequently in front of the church. Pay on the bus. \$4Ar/pp – 1 hour
 - We stayed in Posadas because the only direct bus to Asuncion left at 0700 daily.
 - Hotel Canciller - \$120Ar (ouch!), but a large, lovely, central hotel w/ breakfast, big bed, cable TV. Junin 1710 esq San Martin
 - Restaurants:
 - Café la Nouvelle Vitrage – Bolivar 1899 on the SW corner of Plaza 9 de Julio. Pleasant place for coffee and media lunas, but quite smoky.
 - Diletto – Av. Bolivar – Great food/excellent service but no frogs!!!
 - Posadas is a pleasant enough city, but many of museums,etc. have closed due to lack of funding including the Natural Science museum. There is a nice walk along the Rio Parana. We checked out the yacht club!
 - Supermercado California on Cordoba& Ayacucho was great for stocking up on fresh fruit/water/snacks for the bus trip.
- **Posadas – Asuncion, Paraguay**
 - Surprisingly different from Uruguay and Argentina...accent is traditional, no bidets, different foods with Guarani flair; cleaner and more progressive than we had imagined (thought it would be like Bolivia);
 - Currency: Guarani- \$5400 = \$1US; exchange only a little at bus terminal to get you into town as the rates were poor.
 - Crucero del Norte – only 1 bus /day 0700 - \$30Ar/pp 8 hours
 - Hotel:
 - We looked and looked for hotels when we arrived, hoping for something in the \$20-25US range. Several mentioned in LP were closed including Nanduti and Sahara.
 - Plaza Hotel - \$29/ni w/ breakfast. Dark, dingy & depressing and out of the central city. We passed on it.
 - Las Margueritas – WOW! Prices for regular rooms were in the \$80US/nig range, but we found the “Junior Room” was \$55+10% tax so we splurged. We ended up staying 3 nights. Accepts major credit cards without a surcharge. Estrella esq. 15 de Agosto.
 - Wonderful hotel with all the amenities including free internet with computers on the mezzanine level. Big breakfast buffet including eggs, meats, etc. in the morning; cable TV; bathrobes & slippers; hairdryer; nice modern bathroom ; gym/sauna/swimming pool on the top floor as well as a rooftop patio with great view of the city at night.
 - Sightseeing/Tours
 - Circuito de Oro – LP describes it as the Central Circuit. A full day tour through several surrounding towns with stops at major churches, a couple of artesan shops (lucky hens & ñandutí lace), lunch included in San Bernardino; good ride through the countryside. VIPs Tour, Mexico 782. \$35US/pp.
 - Self-guided walking tour of downtown past Panteon de Los Heroes, Palacio Gobierno, Cabildo. We stopped in Casa de la Independencia... free museum in old colonial building.
 - Restaurants:
 - We ate at the hotel two nights...food and service were good; prices reasonable.
 - Lido Bar...outside seating across from the Panteon on Chile. Good food and nice view of the plaza. Try the local beer Baviera
 - What to look for...

- Chipas...manioc flour/eggs/cheese empanada; very common
 - Dulce de mani entero – like peanut brittle...good!
 - Ñandutí – multi-colored spider web lace only found in Paraguay... available in the town of Itaugua but also the artesan shops along Marisco Estigarribia and stalls on Av. Colon.
 - Leather and woven goods
- Supermercado – Stock, huge, modern store at Mall Excelsior where there is also Radio Shack, cinema, Post office, McDonalds, Pizza Hut, Burger King and real food.
 - Lavanderia Divino Nino, Haedo & 14th Mayo – G9500/load

Asunsion – Resistencia – Salta (sidetrip to Cachi/Cafayate)

- Buses:
 - Brujula Bus to Resistencia, Argentina stops at Customs/Immigraton G40,000/pp – 8-1/2 hours
 - We stayed in Resistencia just for the day waiting for the overnight bus to Salta. It is the city of statues and we checked some of them out, had lunch on the plaza. The bus terminal there has an ATM, internet, etc.
 - LaNueva Estrella bus to Salta – full cama w/meals & wine service; \$82/Ar/pp 12 hours
 - Bus terminal
- Hotel:
 - Hotel Colonial, Zuvira 6, Salta hotelcolonial@salnet.com.ar
 - Okay room on the plaza; \$120Ar/night w/ breakfast
 - Villa Vicuna B&B, Caseros 266 looked great, but no prices.
- Restaurants:
 - New Times Café on the Plaza – reasonable menu, good prices & service, great location for people watching
- Tours/Sightseeing
 - Northway Tours, Buenos Aires 44/Carmen spoke English...very helpful, booked the tour below for us.
 - Valle Calchaquies tour – 2 days - \$200/Ar/pp meals and hotel NOT included– worthwhile tour
 - Includes Cachi, Molinos, Angastaco, San Carlos & Cafayate through great landscape of PN Los Cardones, Quebrada de Cafayate. Scenic with stops at Cachi for lunch and free time in town, vicuna farm, artisan weaver. Long trip over rough roads first day, but interesting. Overnight in Cafayate, then winery tours the second day and interesting landscape on road back to Salta.
 - Hotel in Cafayate – Confort Hotel, Av Guemes 232; \$55Ar/night w/breakfast. Okay for a small town; 2 blocks to the Plaza.
 - Baco Restaurant – sidewalk seating; nice menu but slow service.
 - Heladeria Miranda has wine flavored ice creams
 - We tried “Quara” local Cabernet Saugvignon from Cafayate...reasonably good. Local white wine is torrentes...not our cup of tea.
 - Tren a las Nubes no longer runs due to “technical” problems
 - Cerro San Bernardo – cable car to a pretty park on top.
 - Cabildo/Museo Historico del Norte was really good.
 - Iglesia San Francisco – beautiful

Salta - Córdoba...The City of Bells

(This was our favorite city in northern Argentina!)

- Flecha Bus – overnight – full cama \$90/Ar w/meal-champagne service

- Bus terminal has everything...ATMs, internet, left luggage, etc.
- Hotel Sussex, San Jeronimo 25 – reservas@hotelsussexcba.com.ar
 - Central location, 1 block off main plaza; Rm 1002 had fantastic view of the plaza; \$121Ar/night inc breakfast, very nice room, cable, internet.
- Restaurants:
 - Doña Anastasia, Blvd San Juan 325; Very romantic, food okay but not outstanding; prices reasonable. Worth it for the ambiance.
 - LaMamma, Av Alcorta & Santa Rosa; Touted as the best Italian in Cordoba...acceptable but not great.
 - Alcorta, Av Alcorta 330...steaks good, waiter a bit snotty, prices were on the high side and there's a service charge for EVERYTHING including butter for the bread and a cubierta on top.
 - Grido's Heladeria – arguably the best ice cream in Cordoba.
- Sightseeing/ Tours
 - We used Nativo tours located across from the cathedral on San Jeronimo. Wide range of tours. English guides extra.
 - City Tour was not worth the money. We whizzed by points of interest in a van and stopped at very few. We'd suggest a well-thought out walking tour of downtown.
 - Jesuit Estancia tour (Triangulo Jesuitico) definitely worthwhile in our minds. Visit the most significant Jesuit ruins...very impressive, most have a small museum.
 - Manzana Jesuitica (Jesuit block) is great. You can arrange a guide at the entrance office for much less than Nativo charges. Jesuit Chapel is next door.
 - Jesuit Crypt – free entry, free guide; quite interesting
 - Many, many interesting churches and cathedrals
 - Zoo – Considered 2nd best in South America (hmm!). Located in Parque Sarmiento; very woodsy with lots of meandering paths and walks. Good selection of animals in good condition; restaurants/snack bars; \$6Ar/pp entry fee.
 - Antique shops along Calle Belgrano are interesting and fun to look at; on weekend artesan stalls set up.
- Lavanderia – 2-1/2 blocks from the Hotel Sussex on Chacabuco; delivers laundry back to the hotel; \$8Ar/load

Cordoba – Mendoza

- Bus: San Juan Mar del Plata bus with “en suite” service...ooh, la, la; Great!
 - \$80Ar/pp – 10 hours
- Hotel: Condesa 1, Gutierrez 375/377; condesapri@yahoo.com.ar
 - 1-1/2 blocks north of the Plaza Independencia; bright, clean, nice w/breakfast, cable; \$90Ar/night; English spoken.
- Restaurants
 - Helados Ferruccio Soppelsa – great ice cream including wine flavors!
 - Tommaso Trattoria – on Sarmiento west of the Plaza; good food, salads, wine, but slow, slow service.
 - LaEscala – excellent lunch on Peatonal Sarmiento. Diego, the owner, speaks English and likes to chat with customers. Good food. Closed Sundays. Highly recommended. Set menus for lunch are great!
 - Mi Tierra – (Chandon Room) – Mitre @ San Lorenzo; open Mon-Sat for lunch (11:30am) and dinner (8:30pm). Flights of wine (3 glasses of different varieties from the same bodega/\$26Ar); good food; impeccable service. Highly recommended for a special evening.
- Sightseeing/ Tours
 - City tour on Trollebus; ticket good for the day; \$5Ar/pp
 - Winery tours galore. We passed in favor of “flights.”

- General San Martin Park – van tour is interesting and takes you past the major sights and to the top of Cerro de la Gloria. City Gates and Marly Horses are the best!
- Grocery – El Norte supermercado on Av Las Heras
- Shopping – Several shops along the pedestrian mall; nothing outstanding.
 - Souvenir and leather shops along La Heras
 - Carpincho leather (from the rodent capybara)
 - Penguino pitchers traditionally used to serve house wine
 - Hundreds of artesan stalls set up on Plaza Independencia on the weekends
 - Mercado de Artesenales open M-Fri 9-8pm and Sat 9-1:30pm; great if you need whips, braided leather, rugs, baskets.

Mendoza – Vina del Mar

- Vina del Mar/Valpo was the only area we missed on the Chilean coast due to delay for medical issues in Coquimbo. So we decided to take the bus over the Andes for a few days to see what we missed.
- We took a day bus CATA (\$40Ar/pp – 8 hours including 2 for border formalities; also note 1 hour time change from Argentina to Chile). Even if you don't want to go to Chile, take a ride over the Andes, it was the best part of the trip. Views of Aconcagua (highest mountain in SA), lots of tunnels and hair-raising curves especially on the Chilean side.

Vina del Mar – Mendoza - Buenos Aires

- Bus – CATA - \$70,000Ch/pp (ouch!) - semi-cama to Mendoza then “en suite” to BsAs. Total 21 hours including border crossing plus waiting time for connection.
- Hotel Marbella, Av de Mayo 1261; Beatriz speaks English; \$90Ar/night cash or \$100Ar/night credit card; w/breakfast, cable, internet. Acceptable.
- Lots of good restaurants but La Espana just down from the hotel on the corner had good food, cheap wine and was a locals place. Open breakfast, lunch & dinner.
- Highlights:
 - “Swan Lake” at Teatro Colon
 - A walk through Recoleta
 - Fine Arts Museum
 - LaBoca (note that tango exhibitions were much better here...and definitely a lot cheaper... than at the touristy, hokey tango dinner show we attended Sabor de Tango).
 - San Telmo Sunday afternoon antiques fair
 - Train to Tigre then water taxi to Tres Bocas for lunch

BA – Piriapolis

- Buquebus ferry/bus back home!

Buen viaje,
Marcie & David

Peru Trip – Packing List (4-6 weeks)

Note: It's very cool in the high altitudes; we wore long sleeve shirts and our sweatshirts nearly everyday, but they were sufficient.

Marcie

Backpack + leather bag + fanny pack
Camera/ batteries/memory sticks
(1) T-shirt
(3) Long sleeve jerseys
Fleece pullover
Rain poncho
Spanish Dictionary
Lonely Planet – Peru + Bolivia pages
Passport & Copies (for both)
ATM card
Makeup / Hairspray/Handcream
Hairbands/clips
(3) Disposable razors
Sandals
Address book
(3) socks & underwear
Swimsuit
Hat
Journal/pencils
(1) pr slacks (to wear while jeans are being washed)
Eyeglasses/sunglasses
Snacks

Wear:

Jeans / belt
T-shirt / denim blouse
Running shoes/socks

David

Backpack
(1) T-shirt
(3) Long sleeve jerseys
Sweat shirt
Rain poncho
Extra nylon carry bag (for souvenirs)
(3) socks/ underwear
Swimsuit
Hat
Cash
Electric razor & charger
(1) pr slacks
Extra plastic bags(laundry/trash)
Eyeglasses/sunglasses
Leatherman tool
Cable ties (to “lock” backpacks)
Flashlight

Wear:

Jeans/belt
T-shirt /denim shirt
Deck shoes / socks

Shared Dop Kit:

- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Shampoo/Conditioner
- Floss
- Hairbrush/comb
- Deodorants
- Soap
- Toilet paper

- Nail clippers
- Bug spray
- Sunscreen
- Ibuprophen/Aspirin/
Naproxen
- Q-tips
- Band-aids

Other:

Deck of cards
(2) Books (to be exchanged en route)