



Name: Madeleine Tucker

Program: Universidad del Salvador – Buenos Aires, Argentina

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10 Things Future Students Should Know about USAL

1. Your Spanish should be pretty good before departure as very few classes taught in English are offered (all 6 of my classes were in Spanish).
2. If you want to have an apartment rather than a host family experience, I would recommend getting an AirBnb because you pay the landlord directly online (my friends who had normal apartments had to take out tons of cash from ATMs which can add up with all the fees) Also if you use AirBnb the rent is a fixed rate and you know you aren't getting ripped off.
3. If you have an extra cell phone laying around your house I would definitely bring two phones with you just in case your normal phone gets stolen (as it is ridiculously expensive to buy one there or have one sent from the US to you... I learned this the hard way).
4. I wish someone would have told me that Argentina is an expensive country to study abroad in. I thought it was going to be cheap (similar to other countries I had visited in South America like Peru and Brazil), but it was pretty expensive. I would say that the food in the grocery stores was as expensive as the US or maybe a little more expensive, food in restaurants was about the same and traveling around the country was super expensive (flight to Patagonia was around \$600). My rent was pretty comparable to Milwaukee, around \$650/month and I lived with 1 roommate in a very nice 2 bedroom apartment.
5. If you get an apartment I would definitely live in either Recoleta or Palermo, both are really nice "barrios" or neighborhoods of BA. I lived in Recoleta and I loved it because I could walk to school in 30 minutes but I was also close to where all the restaurants and bars are in the "hip" area of Palermo. If you want to walk to school you probably couldn't from Palermo.
6. It was really hot when we arrived in late February, March was warm, April was pants and a short sleeve shirt weather, May was pants and a light jacket and June was chilly but not cold compared to Wisconsin! The coldest it got was maybe 55-60. I would definitely bring rain boots and a rain jacket. Bring a heavy coat if you want to travel to the mountains (Patagonia, Mendoza or Bariloche!).

7. If you get an apartment/pick exactly where you live I would make sure there is a “Subte” subway stop with at least 10 min walking distance from where you are living. The subway system is super great and goes right to school.
8. Bring as much cash (in US dollars) as you can with you from the US. The ATM fees are ridiculous, and also there is a different exchange rate from banks in BA and on the “black market”. You can get way more for your money if you change it on the street (the name of the street is “Calle Florida”). The money is still legit I promise!!!
9. I really wish I had joined one of the sports teams or clubs at USAL, I had friends who joined the soccer teams and they made so many Argentine friends. USAL also has choir and some other clubs too! Even though I was the only exchange student in most of my classes, sometimes I found it hard to connect with and befriend the Argentines. I feel like it would’ve been a lot easier to do so in a nonacademic setting.
10. PICK UP THE FORK. There is an amazing blog called pickupthefork.com. It is written by an American who traveled to BA in 2006 for study abroad and never left!!! (YES, that is how amazing BA is). She has created this blog with a food guide of all of the restaurants, cafes and bars that she has tried during this time and she rates and reviews them. She even helped Obama choose restaurants when he visited BA. You will save a lot of money by avoiding bad food if you follow this blog. This blog was my Bible.

