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Argentina Volunteering with Underprivileged Youth

Adventure Relaxation Culture

Trip Name: Argentina Volunteering with Underprivileged Youth **Trip Code:** ARVY **Duration:** From 4 weeks

Trip Highlights

- Experience life in Argentina
- Enjoy a Spanish language course
- Make a difference to the lives of local children and young people
- Explore Buenos Aires during your free time
- Enjoy the mix of European influences, cultural heritage and refined atmosphere that make Argentina such an interesting destination!

Overview

There are many underprivileged youths in Buenos Aires who are in need of help due to economic or family reasons. It's time to change the current living situation of these children and give them a chance at creating a brighter and better future. This is where you come in, as a volunteer your skills, knowledge, and time on this project will help to improve the day-to-day lives and living environment of these wonderful children.

Your main aim as a volunteer on this programme is to help the projects offer a safe and secure environment where the children are encouraged to interact with each other. You'll be involved in a wide range of activities education and day to day care and support. With help from you and the projects, these children will benefit from support which may otherwise be lacking in their home lives.

To help you become fully immersed in Argentine life and get the most out of your time away, you'll also receive a 1 week Spanish language course where you'll learn the basics at the beginning of your programme!

Destination Info

There is no better place to learn a new language and completely immerse yourself in South American culture than in Buenos Aires. Where the nightlife never stops, football is a religion and tango is a way of life. It is one of the most lively and diverse cities in the world and often referred to as the “Paris of the South”, voted in the top 10 destinations for European travellers.

Itinerary

To help you get the most out of your time away in Argentina, we include a one week Spanish Language Course at a fantastic language school in Buenos Aires, at the beginning of your programme. The course will not only help develop and improve your Spanish language skills but help you communicate better with the locals, your fellow volunteers and of course help you to get more involved at your volunteer project.

The classes include reading, writing, listening and of course speaking; they are designed to be as interactive and engaging as possible to give you a good introduction to the language and immersion into Spanish Culture. The course is a great way to start your programme, build your confidence with the language and get you ready for your Argentina volunteer programme that follows.

Buenos Aires is home to many childcare centres, children's homes and community centres that work with local youths to offer educational information on health, work, stay-in-school programmes, arts and cultural programmes, self-esteem, leadership activities, and many more. The main aim and hope in doing this is to provide these youngsters with stability and support to help them build a brighter future for themselves.

As a volunteer on this extremely worthwhile programme you'll be involved in a variety of tasks which may depend on the needs of your project at the time of your placement, but some of the activities could include the following:

- Helping children with regular school work
- Giving informal English / Spanish classes
- Spending quality time with children
- Study sessions
- Conversation time
- Assisting in daily tasks
- Playing / sports
- Educational workshops
- Basic education classes (Examples include hygiene, nutrition and safety)
- Games and activities
- Preparation of daily snacks or meals

No matter which tasks you undertake during your time as a volunteer, you will find the programme a truly rewarding experience. All we ask is that you arrive with an open mind, remain flexible and have a proactive attitude to your work and helping out; all of these tools will enhance your experience and help you get the most out of your time away in Argentina.

Accommodation

You will be staying in a safe and basic but comfortable shared apartment in the capital city, Buenos Aires. It is a self-catering option but great for volunteers who want to be independent and live as the locals do. You will be sharing with at least one other person, the host of the apartment, and have your own private room while sharing communal living areas.

Meals

Your accommodation will be on a self-catering basis, so you will need to arrange your own meals during your stay. You can either buy meals out locally or buy produce and prepare your own meals in the kitchen at the apartment. Food in Argentina is relatively cheap for South America.

What's Included

- Arrival transfer
- Orientation
- 1-week Spanish language course
- Volunteer placement
- Accommodation
- Weekly cultural & social activities
- City centre tour
- 24-hour emergency support number

What's Not Included

- Flights
- Travel insurance
- Meals
- Departure transfer

Is This Trip For You?

All volunteers will be required to take a 1 week Spanish course before starting their volunteer programme. Even if you can speak Spanish to a high level, it is still necessary to take the lessons because the Argentina accent and dialect can be difficult to understand. The course will not only increase your Spanish language skills but help you communicate better with your peers and fellow volunteers. The more Spanish you can speak, the greater you will be able to get involved in activities as English may not always be spoken.

Minimum Age

The minimum age for this trip is 18 years.

FAQs

1. **Do I need to take a sleeping bag?**
   No, you don't need to take a sleeping bag as all bedding will be included however if you are thinking about doing any trips to the more remote areas then you might want to consider taking one with you.

2. **Do I need to take a mosquito net?**
   No, you don't need to take a net with you for this project.

3. **Will there a safe/safety deposit box available?**
   This would depend on which housing option that you choose. In the standard housing options (Shared Apartment With Host), you will have a safe place to store important documents and valuables, but not necessarily a safe or deposit box.

Police Check

This trip requires a Police Check to be carried out - please contact us for further information on how to do this.

Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

Money Matters

In Argentina the currency is the PESO ($). There are bills of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 pesos and coins of 1 peso and 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 centavos.

Paper money comes in denominations of two, five, 10, 20, 50 and 100 pesos. One peso equals 100 centavos; coins come in denominations of one (rare), five, 10, 25 and 50 centavos, and one peso.

US dollars are the best other currency to carry and are accepted by many tourist-oriented businesses.

Cajeros automáticos (ATMs) are found in nearly every city and town in Argentina and can also be used for cash advances on major credit cards.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant $6.63
Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) $2.07
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) $1.06
Water (0.33 litre bottle) $0.94

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

For stays of up to 90 days, citizens of the European Union and the USA are not required to hold a visa. All other nationalities should consult their nearest Argentina Embassy or High Commission.

Citizens from Australia, Canada and the United States of America will have to pay a ‘Reciprocity Fee’ every time they enter Argentina through the International Airport Ministro Pistarini (Ezeiza). Those who enter through the Jorge Newbery domestic Airport in the city of Buenos Aires or from a border country by bus, car, cruise or train, will be exempted from this fee. The amount of this fee varies depending on the amount charged to Argentinians visiting these countries.

Cultural Considerations

Argentines tend to be a gregarious people who enjoy social interaction, both with family and friends. Asados and parrillas, communal barbecues, are typical weekend activities and might involve several hours of eating and drinking. Because of the social culture, Argentines are often willing to include foreigners in their daily lives.

When greeting individuals in Argentina, there is a set protocol that states that you should address the eldest, or most important person first. A handshake is sufficient, and maintaining eye contact is considered important. It is considered rude to not greet someone when entering a room, or to not say goodbye when leaving. If you are invited to an Argentine’s home, it is appropriate to give the hostess a small gift. You should arrive around 30 minutes after the stated time as arriving on time is not usual. It is customary to leave some food behind on your plate, as this is considered polite. You should wait for a toast before taking a drink.

Religion

The predominant religion in Argentina is Roman Catholicism with a large proportion of its population actively practicing. Other denominations of Christianity are to be found, including Evangelical Protestants, which is spreading in poorer areas. Buddhism, Mormonism and Spiritualism also claim some affiliation in this country.

Religion is an important part of the culture in Argentina and you should be respectful at all times in and around places of worship. Do not be surprised to see individuals crossing themselves when passing any object of religious significance or reciting religious adages at appropriate times.

Clothing

It is important to remember, especially for female travellers, that the kinds of clothes you feel comfortable wearing in your own country may not be an acceptable form of dress in Latin America. Short skirts for example, will invite unwanted attention. Just use your common sense and adapt your style in accordance with your surroundings. Often in churches you will be required to cover your shoulders and knees. Cover up for your own safety, and in respect of the local culture and customs.

Throughout Argentina, people tend to dress more formally than in the US. While Argentines might wear jeans, they would pair them with leather shoes and a button-up shirt, rather than a t-shirt and tennis shoes. Always bear in mind the activities you will be doing when you are packing, both at the project and socially.

Smoking and Drinking and Drugs

Smoking and drinking is acceptable in Argentina and readily available. However, please respect other people. Smoking is not permissible in apartments or the host families' homes. Drinking is only permissible in moderation and must not impact on your programme. While we want you to have fun in your free time, anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated.

It is absolutely forbidden to bring drugs into Argentina. Always keep an eye on your luggage while travelling. Never bring anyone else's luggage through customs. If you get caught there is little chance that you will walk away without punishment. As in most countries, Argentina has very strict rules when it comes to the possession of drugs. All drugs, including "soft" drugs like marijuana, are ILLEGAL. Please do NOT use any illegal substances whilst travelling – it is not worth the risk and is not acceptable at the programme.

Tipping

It is customary to leave a 10-15% tip for service in bars and restaurants. Other tipping, such as to hotel staff, taxi drivers etc is at your discretion, depending on your opinion of their service. Bargaining is not usual practice, though may be acceptable if you are paying cash for something.

Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

Safety

Unfortunately, tourists are often targets for pickpockets and thieves. Please educate yourself about South America and Argentina in particular, before you leave, so that you can be alert to all types of situations. General travel safety rules are below.

- Avoid travelling alone, especially at night
- Find out where the unsafe areas are and avoid them
- When travelling keep all-important documents and valuables in a safe place, like an inner hidden pocket or money belt
- Carry only as much cash as you think you will need for the day
- Don't wear expensive jewellery or watches
- Be wary of people who seem too friendly too fast
- Keep cameras out of sight. Always keep bags and purses in your sight
- Before swimming, ask how safe the area is

We advise that you check your government's advice before travelling abroad. For UK, American and Australian customers please see the relevant links below;

UK: www.fco.gov.uk
USA: www.travel.state.gov
Australia: www.smartraveller.gov.au

ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing traps in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

Language Guide

The official language of Argentina is Spanish, though the language differs somewhat to European Spanish. Here are a few basic phrases you should find useful in Argentina. We also suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

Hello - *Hola!*
Good day - *Buenas dias!*
How are you? - *Como estas? ('Como estas usted?' if you need to be extra formal!)*
Goodbye - *Adios*
Please - *Por favour*
Thank you - *Gracias*
I don't understand - *No entiendo*
I don't speak Spanish - *No hablo espanol*
Sorry/excuse me - *Lo siento*
Where is…? - *Donde esta…?*
The bill please - *La cuenta por favour*
Police Station - *La comisaria*
Hospital - *El hospital*
Train Station - *La estacion*

Food & Drink

The history of immigration in this country has left its mark on the cuisine, which is varied in influence, ranging from Spanish to German and even British. The big story in Argentinean cooking is meat, with beef being the most popular. Barbecues and mixed grills are traditional and are popular ways of preparing these meaty meals, and the offal and organs are often included.

Some typical Argentine foods include empanadas (like little meat dumplings), milanesa (breaded and fried steak), and locro (a beef stew with beans). Vegetarian options are limited, especially in less commercial areas, though salads, pasta dishes and breads are always provided as accompaniments to the meats. Common side dishes include potatoes, French fries, salad and rice.

After a typically light breakfast of breads, preserves and pastries, lunch is the main meal of the day, with shops and offices closing in most areas for a long lunch-break between 12 and 3pm, during which time large meals are consumed. Restaurants usually offer a menú, which includes an appetizer, the dish of the day, dessert or coffee, and a drink. Many people also enjoy going to a café around 5pm for a coffee or tea and perhaps a sandwich or pastry. This is called merienda and is quite common! Dinner is subsequently lighter and late, usually taken after 9pm.

When it comes to drinking, a variety of tea called ‘Mate’ (pronounced mah-tay) is very popular and drunk socially to break the ice. With regards to alcohol, Argentines are in general fairly light drinkers. Beer, wine and gin are common drinks as well as the specialities of cana and ginebra bols. (The region of Mendoza produces some excellent wines! Be sure to try a Malbec!)

Please note: It is a good idea to be cautious with what and where you eat and drink because in some places food isn't always prepared to the same health and safety standards that you may be used to at home.

Public Holidays

To view a list of the public holidays for Argentina, please see the link below:

www.timeanddate.com/holidays/argentina/

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. Many schools, government offices, stores and banks are closed on National Holidays. Please note that there may be slight date variations for some of the holidays each year and that the list is not exhaustive and the Argentine Government have been known to introduce new bank holidays or comemorative days at short notice.

Weather

Argentina is located in the southern hemisphere, where seasons are the opposite of those in the northern hemisphere. In general, summer, with mild temperatures and long days, is the most favourable season to travel across Patagonia and the meridianal Andes. Winter is the recommended season to travel along the north, northeast and northwest areas because rains are less frequent and subtropical temperatures decrease some degrees. Autumn and spring are very favourable in Cuyo, La Rioja and Catamarca pre–cordilleran areas and in Buenos Aires.

Time

Argentina is three hours behind GMT. The time is always the same throughout the year as the country does not take part in daylight saving.

Electricity

In Argentina the electric system is 220 Volts and frequency 50 Hertz. If your device does not run on these rates, you'll need a voltage converter.

Outlets in Argentina generally accept one type of plug:

V – shaped flat prongs

Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of reommended travel advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

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