



# Quest Program ARGENTINA



**Argentina** is known as “the European country in South America.” Descendants from Italy, Spain and other European countries make up the majority of Argentina’s population. Buenos Aires, the capital city, is undeniably the most European city in South America and considered by many its cultural capital.

Furthermore, Argentina is a country rich in geographical varieties, from the northern subtropical regions to the southern glacial zones, the vast green plains in the center, and the highest mountains of America. Like the tourist slogan says, “Come to Argentina and discover the five continents!”

## Country Information

The name Argentina, comes from the Latin term “argentum,” which means silver. The origin of this

name goes back to the first voyages made by the Spanish conquerors to the Río de la Plata.

The National Constitution adopted in 1853 included the name “República Argentina” (Argentine Republic) among the official names to designate the government and the country’s territory. The country consists of grasslands and savannahs, vast plateaus, mountains and parts of the Antarctic. It borders to Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia and Chile and has a beautiful coastline by the Atlantic Ocean, which is 4,725 Km long.

Argentina’s main characteristic is the enormous contrast between the immense eastern plains and the impressive Andes mountain range to the west. This is the frontier with Chile and boasts the highest peak in the Western hemisphere: the 6,959 m high Aconcagua.

Between the Paraná and Uruguay rivers, the Argentinian Mesopotamia is formed by low hills, where pools and marshlands evidence the ancient courses of these great rivers. In some places within the subtropical rain forest, there are fissures which provide such spectacular phenomena as the Iguazú Falls.

The Pampas, in the center of Argentina, is the largest and best-known area of plains. Agricultural and livestock activities are performed in this area, which

Estadísticas  
de Argentina

Location: South America  
Area: 3.8 million square kilometers  
Inhabitants: 40,858,000  
Capital: Buenos Aires  
Government: Federal presidential republic  
Official language: Spanish  
Official religion: Roman Catholic

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A nonprofit corporation committed to advancing intercultural educational student exchange.

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includes the province of Buenos Aires, the northeast of La Pampa, the south of Córdoba and south of Santa Fe. Towards the south, from the Andes to the sea, there appear the sterile and stony plateaus of Patagonia, swept by the wind during most of the year. The Atlantic coast, lined with high cliffs, forms massive indentations like the Peninsula Valdés, with its spectacular and unique colonies of sea animals.

## School life

Education in Argentina is democratic, free and secular. Most of the secondary schools where the exchange students will study are semipublic or private, with a monthly fee to pay that is not included in the program fee. In most Argentine schools it is compulsory to wear a uniform. Before coming to Argentina, the student will receive information on the characteristics of the school.

A typical school day in Argentina could look like this: The students get up early in the morning, have breakfast (coffee, milk and toasts with butter), they begin school around 8 – 8.30 am. Most students either go to school by bus or bike, and sometimes they are driven by host parents. Before starting school in the morning, student participate in the important ritual, “el saludo de la bandera”.

Once all students are in the principal hall remaining quiet, two students hoist the flag of Argentina. In some schools, the national anthem is also sung. After hoisting the flag, the students head for their classrooms where classes are held according to the different subjects. In some schools, it is common to work with projects. A class generally lasts 45 minutes followed by a break. There are schools where classes are held from the morning until the afternoon, especially bilingual schools. In this case, the students have lunch at school. Otherwise they go home to

have lunch. There is always time, either at lunch or at dinner, for the family to get together. After having lunch the students usually do their own activities such as studying, resting, or an extra-curricular activity. Some of the most common activities after school are; studying English, acting classes, gym, basketball, football, volleyball, hockey, rugby or athletics. Of course dance is also popular, especially the tango!

## Host family life

The typical Argentine family consists of the father, mother and two or three children at least. The students will also have quite frequent contact with extended family members, who will be very eager to take good care of the student as well. Family relationships are characterized by visible affection that the students have to know about beforehand, in order to avoid surprises!

Affection is shown with kisses and hugs, which the student will experience from the moment of arrival in Argentina. The host family will be excited to show the student the natural beauty of their area, social customs such as drinking the popular “mate” beverage, play football, eat barbecue, and fully immerse them in the culture of Argentine. The host family will also be curious about the student’s culture, so it is important that the student is prepared to answer a lot of questions.

## Program Extras

Directly upon arrival, the exchange students will gather as a group in the outskirts of Córdoba to attend a preparation course. The students will have Spanish classes for about four hours every day in order to improve their reading comprehension, writing abilities, listening and oral expression. The students will be divided into different levels depending on

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their Spanish pre-knowledge. The students will also be introduced to Argentine culture, such as food traditions etc. After these days of preparation, the students will go directly to their host families.

The following trips are also offered in order to give the students the chance to learn about the country's history, flora and fauna, lifestyle and traditions. Each trip has a different theme according to the destination and the activities planned, and it is coordinated by a specialized team with educational experience in different areas.

First experience, October: "Argentinean atagonia – Magical Nature" We visit the home of the first inhabitants in South America, and we walk in the footsteps of dinosaurs, penguins, guanacos and sea wolves. Feel the indomitable Patagonia wind in your face and listen to the blended music of the Atlantic Ocean and the Southern whales, the second biggest whale in the world.

Second experience, February: "Northern Argentina – Culture & History" This trip will take us, as in a time machine, to the root of the Argentinean culture, from pre-Columbian times. We'll visit places that bear witness to ancient times, when people had different gods and a different relationship with the land.

Third experience, April: "Argentina's Andes – Rough & Adventurous" During five days we will live an intense adventure with activities as fascinating as rafting and abseiling. We will stay in rustic cottages in the area of the Atuel river gorge in Mendoza, right by the Andes, where you can see Aconcagua, the second highest peak in the world.

Fourth experience, June: "Buenos Aires – The Capital of Tango." Buenos Aires is a vibrant metropolis that never rests and is always moving. This city has been the scenery of the most relevant events of Argentinean history. We will visit the Government house from which J. D. Perón and Evita used to talk to the people; Plaza de Mayo, where the mothers of people who disappeared during the dictatorship do their weekly demonstrations; Colón theatre, one of the most renowned theatres all over the world, and the traditional neighborhoods of San Telmo and La Boca. On this last trip, students will also have the chance to take an intensive Spanish course, and do an exam at the University of Buenos Aires in order to obtain an international certificate of their level of Spanish.

## About Quest

Quest International was founded in 1999. We are a nonprofit organization committed to international, educational student exchange. Our goal is to promote cultural awareness and international understanding by offering quality, educational and cultural programs for students, host families and schools. Our staff is dedicated to creating a positive exchange experience for all program participants.

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