

# Argentina - OVERVIEW

Updated: May 19, 2014



**Country Name Long Form:** Argentine Republic

**Government Type:** Republic

**Languages Spoken:** Spanish, Italian, English, German, French, Indigenous

**National Flag**



**Argentina is a Tier III Country. Significant security measures are necessary.**

	Overall Assessment	Political Violence	Crime	Terrorism	Travel Safety
Argentina					
Key: (L) Low – (M) Medium – (H) High – (C)Critical					

## POLITICAL CONDITIONS

**Political Violence is rated at MEDIUM in Argentina**

There are frequent demonstrations in most major cities; most are related to domestic economic and political issues, including disputes and inadequate utility services. U.S. interests are occasionally targeted based on current events, such as U.S. policy toward Cuba or Syria. U.S. companies are sometimes the targets of labor protests. The largest and most disruptive protests, ranging from dozens to tens of thousands of participants, usually feature “piqueteros” (a collection of social activist groups whose main tactic is to block roads).

In Buenos Aires, demonstrations most commonly occur downtown and often end up at the Plaza de Mayo, Casa Rosada, Congress, or the obelisk on Avenida 9 de Julio. While most protest are peaceful, there are hooligan elements that periodically show up to fight the police and/or engage in vandalism. Furthermore, the use of sound systems, fireworks, and musical instruments is a common occurrence, as is the burning of tires, effigies and flags.

## TERRORISM

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## **Terrorism is assessed as MEDIUM**

There are a number of small and largely ineffective domestic political extremist groups operating in Argentina. Local ultra-leftist, nationalist and indigenous anarchist groups occasionally carry out small bombings, particularly during labor disputes, to mark key anniversaries and to protest against U.S. foreign policy. Attacks usually take the form of small bombings at ATMs and government offices. Bomb hoaxes are also possible at airports and public buildings, and there is a low-level threat to foreign businesses. Politically motivated bomb attacks are also known to occur during election campaigns or other high-profile events, particularly in Buenos Aires. Such attacks are likely to target government and political party offices in the early hours of the morning, with the intention of causing symbolic damage for propaganda purposes but not casualties.

Groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and Peru's Shining Path (SL) have used Argentinean territory as a safe haven. While Argentina is not considered to be a high-profile destination for attacks by Islamist groups, two major attacks targeting Jewish interests in the country in the 1990s indicate that the possibility of Islamist fundamentalist groups present in the country cannot be ruled out. The Lebanon-based Hezbollah Islamist organization is known to maintain a presence in the poorly policed tri-border area (TBA) between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, which includes Argentina's Misiones province.

## **RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION**

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave Argentina a score of 34, indicating that the country has moderate levels of corruption. The CPI rates countries by the perceived levels of corruption in the public sector, with the least corrupt countries receiving a maximum score of 100.

Corruption remains a serious concern throughout Argentina as of 2014. The police force is often accused of being corrupt, with the most frequently reported offense being the solicitation of bribes, particularly from foreign travelers.

## **CRIME**

### **Crime is assessed as HIGH**

Crime is a serious problem. Urban crime includes: pickpocketing/purse snatching, scams, mugging, express and virtual kidnappings, residential burglary, home invasion, thefts from vehicles (including "smash and grab"), sexual assaults/rape, car theft and carjacking. There are also occasional high profile assaults on armored cash carriers. Crimes reported to the U.S. Embassy by U.S. citizens reveal they are most often victims of theft or non-violent robbery, principally in the tourist neighborhoods.

Street and residential crime appears to be increasingly common, is more violent than in the past and is often perpetrated with a firearm or other deadly weapon. Many criminals are armed and ready to use

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their weapons at first sign of resistance. American tourists routinely report stolen U.S. passports to the Embassy. Crimes that occur at all hours and armed robberies often take place during business hours.

## KIDNAPPING

Kidnapping in Argentina is a high risk. Although the number of recorded kidnap for ransom incidents has shown signs of decline in recent years (a trend corroborated by anecdotal evidence), the lack of official government/police statistics makes this difficult to confirm. It should be noted that kidnappings are carried out by both well-established and professional crime groups, as well as inexperienced and often desperate criminal individuals. The professional groups that carry out such abductions tend to have the infrastructure and organizational capacity to track their targeted victims in order to discover the best time and place to stage the abduction, and to hold them indefinitely while demanding a high ransom. Most kidnapping victims are targeted on the perception of wealth rather than on solid intelligence of wealth. These organized groups, which frequently comprise of individuals from Paraguay, Bolivia, Colombia and elsewhere in South and Central America, tend to operate in the greater Buenos Aires region and target local businesspeople and their families.

Express kidnapping also poses a significant threat in urban areas across the country; the threat is particularly acute in Buenos Aires. This form of kidnapping involves victims being held for short periods of time and forced to withdraw money or hand over PIN codes so that money can be withdrawn from ATMs. Express kidnapping gangs tend to operate in groups of two or three people and generally work from a vehicle. Criminals choose victims almost at random, although they are certainly attracted to any individuals displaying an indication of wealth. Inebriated individuals also provide an easy target, as do tourist, who is often both easily identifiable and vulnerable. Express kidnappings tend to be initiated near outdoor ATMs, but are also known to occur in taxis with rogue drivers.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault abroad public transportation is a concern, but appears to occur at lower rates than in Peru. However, sexual assaults have been reported on both city and inter-city buses. Most of these reports include groping or undesired advances. Rapes do occur, but is less common on public transportation. On intercity buses, there is also a risk of being accosted at a rest stop when the bus stops for passengers to take a break.

## NATURAL DISASTERS

Argentina is located in an active seismic zone and experiences earthquakes. There is also a threat from tsunamis as a result of seismic activity along the country's eastern coastline. Argentina also experiences heavy rainfall in the summer months of January and February. The inclement weather conditions often lead to widespread flooding in the country, particularly in the eastern provinces of Argentina which generally receive the most rainfall. Landslides in mountainous areas of the country are also possible during this time.

## STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

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- Be careful in San Telmo and La Boca neighborhood where violent robberies have been occurring with increasing frequency.
- Check received currency to make sure it's not counterfeit.
- Don't buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available.
- Dress casually; however shorts are not often seen in the city.
- Many upmarket restaurants require a suit and tie for men. It is acceptable for women to wear pants
- Stay in groups, travel in a caravan consisting of two or more vehicles, and stay on the main roads.
- Ensure that someone not traveling with you is aware of your itinerary.
- Avoid hotels that do not have adequate security.
- It is preferable to stay in the main tourist destinations.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings, especially when walking or driving in Argentina
- Official taxis are a suitable means of travel in daylight hours in urban areas. It is highly recommended that taxis be arranged through your hotel, or program office. Negotiate the price in advance.
- Women should be especially careful when traveling alone and avoid staying out late without a trusted male escort.
- Make sensible security precautions to mitigate the risk of petty crime, particularly pick pocketing and bag snatching.
- Carry a photocopy of your passport when traveling to avoid losing it in a robbery.
- Do not resist if you are being robbed and avoid eye contact and do not make any sudden movements. Victims have been killed when they resisted attack or refused to give up their money or other valuables.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and keep a low profile.
- Never leave your belongings unattended.
- Carry bags close to your body and make sure the fasteners are secure.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or wearing expensive jewelry or valuables.
- Leave all important documents in a safe or safe deposit box at your hotel and only carry certified copies.
- Trust your instincts. If someone or something makes you uneasy, avoid the situation.

### **Important Contact Details:**

**International Dialing Code:** +54

**International Dialing Prefix:** 00

### **Victims of crime in Argentina should contact the following phone numbers for assistance:**

**POLICE:** The local equivalent to the "911" emergency line in Argentina is 101

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:** 100

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**AMBULANCE:** 107

**Note:** Police, ambulance or fire department response may be unreliable in some parts of the country.

## TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY

- Travel to rural areas and poorer parts of Argentina should be avoided.
- The standard of infrastructure in Argentina is medium.
- The supply of basic amenities, such as power and water are adequate.
- Driving standards can be poor and erratic, especially outside urban areas.
- **Always** drive with the doors locked and windows rolled up at all times.

## RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- No rural travel after dark.
- No deviation from approved travel routes.
- No use of ATMs after dark.
- No photos of or near government and oil industry infrastructure.
- No bathing or swimming in rivers.

## HEALTH

Medical facilities in the main urban areas, including Buenos Aires, are generally of a higher standard than facilities in rural area, where the quality of medical care varies; certain types of medical equipment and medicines maybe in short supply outside urban centers. Although the national health system makes provision for free medical treatment, including for foreign nationals, the level of health care is generally lower than US and European standards. Private clinics are widely available in the larger cities, although proof of insurance and a cash deposit are often needed prior to receiving treatment at such facilities. Most medical personnel in urban areas have a working knowledge of English; however, doctors and nurses in rural areas speak mainly Spanish and a translator maybe required.

- Travelers should avoid food from street vendors, and drink only bottled or boiled water.
- Tap water in Argentina is generally not safe to drink; this applies to water used for brushing teeth, making ice or washing foods.
- Unpasteurized milk should be boiled before consumption, or powdered or tinned milk should be used as an alternative.
- Fruit and vegetables should only be consumed if they have been peeled or cooked.
- Undercooked meat and fish should not be consumed.

The following vaccinations are recommended or required if travelling to Argentina:

- Hepatitis A (recommended)
- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Rabies (recommended)

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- Typhoid (recommended)
- Yellow Fever (recommended)

It is also important to ensure that routine vaccinations are up to date for diseases including influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

## **Significant Diseases –**

- **Malaria** – A life-threatening parasitic disease transmitted by mosquitoes. The malaria risk in Argentina exists mainly in the rural areas of the north western Salta, Jujuy and Corrientes provinces, as well as in the northeastern Misiones province.
- **Yellow Fever** – A viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes. It is particularly prevalent in forested areas in the northern and north eastern parts of Argentina, including along the borders with Paraguay and Brazil.
- **Cutaneous Leishmaniasis** – A parasitic disease that is endemic to northern Argentina. The disease causes skin sores and affects some of the internal organs of the body.
- **Coccidioidomycosis** (Valley Fever) – Mainly found in the soil of disease-endemic areas and is contracted through inhalation. It's a particular problem in the rural parts of Argentina.

## **HOSPITALS –**

Hospital Aleman  
Av. Pueyrredon, 1640  
Buenos Aires  
C118AAT  
Tel: +54 11 48 27 70 00

Santatorio Mater Dei  
San Martin de Tours 2952  
Buenos Aires  
1425  
Tel: +54 11 4809 5555

Santatorio Los Arcos  
Av. Juan B. Justo, 909 P.B.  
Buenos Aires  
1425  
Tel: +54 11 5239 4532

## **US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS**

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## **The US Embassy Buenos Aires, Argentina**

Avenida Colombia 4300, Palermo

Phone: +54 (0)11 5777-4533

Fax: +54 (0)11 5777-4240

Website: [BuenosAires-ACS@state.gov](mailto:BuenosAires-ACS@state.gov)

Email: [Argentinaacs@state.gov](mailto:Argentinaacs@state.gov)

**Emergency after hours telephone:** +54 (0)11 5777-4873

## **USF INTERNATIONAL HOTLINE**

USF 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 813-317-5815

AXA Assistance 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 1-877-577-9504 / +1-203-399-5130 (Call collect from abroad)

ASSIST ID #: GLMN 04983932. <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/resources/>

\* Information derived from CIA World Fact Book, US Department of State, OSAC, and Travel Guard. This travel overview summarizes some of the most important concerns; however, it does not negate the need for detailed trip planning.