

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK



UNIVERSIDAD  
**AUSTRAL**

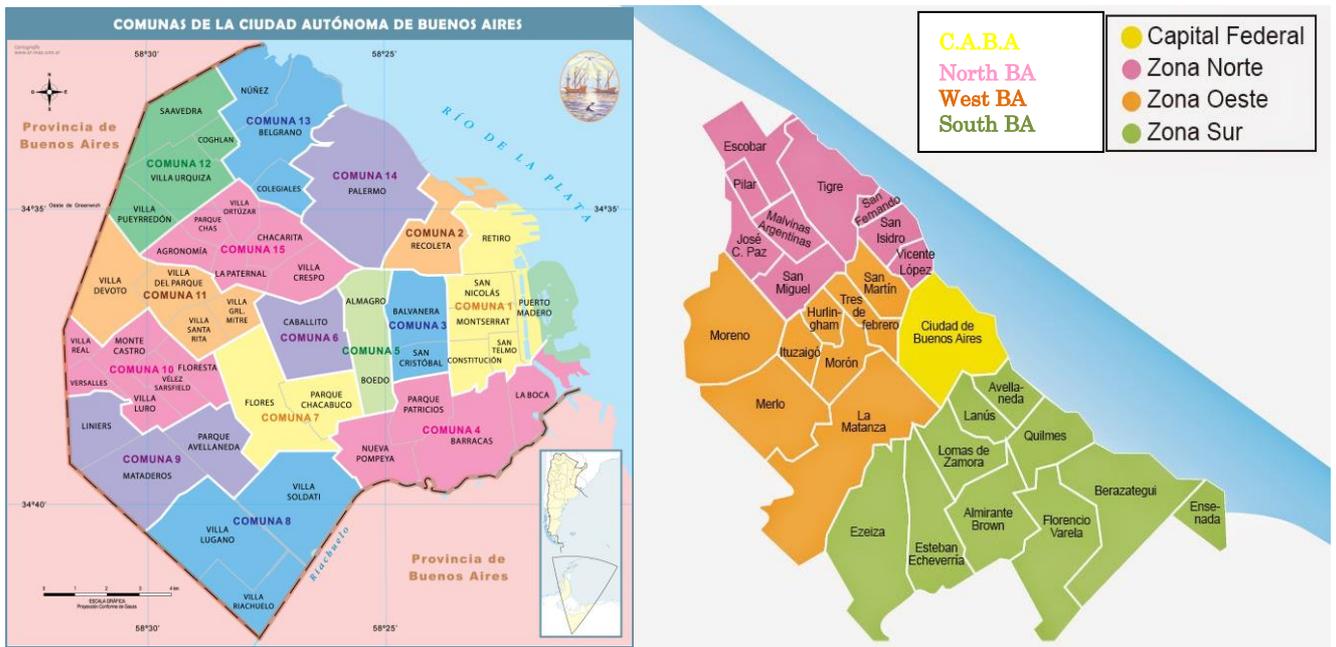
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## A. General Information

### 1. Buenos Aires

When locals say “Buenos Aires”, they refer to the city - Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (CABA) -, or they could be talking about its surrounding areas, Gran Buenos Aires (GBA). “Capital Federal” or “Capital” are other names for the city.



**Travel Buenos Aires:** This app guides you to the tourist spots Buenos Aires has to offer. It includes an interactive map and plenty of self-guided tours. **The best thing?** It works without WIFI.



**Study Buenos Aires:** We recommend that you take advantage of the free activities they organize, and sign up for the free arrival kit. You register to pick up at the airport your personal SUBE card, a SIM card, and discount vouchers for the shuttle to the city.

### 2. Climate

The climate in Buenos Aires has hot summers and mild winters. Temperatures average 35°C (94°F) in January to 10°C (50°F) in July.

### 3. Communication

#### ➤ Language

Argentines speak “castellano”. The main differences with the Spanish are the use of “vos” to say “you” instead of “tu” and the “y” and “ll”, pronounced as “sh” (as in shout).

There are different accents within Argentina’s 23 provinces. Most people in Buenos Aires understand English; they are accustomed to tourists and are usually very open. Argentina’s main port, “puerto”, is in Buenos Aires. So “porteños” are the people from Buenos Aires. The term is also used in a negative way, to stress that they come across as boastful and cocky, in contrast to the people from other provinces “del Interior”, who are calmer and humbler. In spite of the fact that they do tend to behave like people from any other major metropolitan city, “porteños” are very friendly and helpful. To learn more about the city’s “porteño” accent, you can see this app: [Porteño Spanish](#).

#### ➤ Making calls

In Buenos Aires, all telephone numbers have 8 digits. Argentina’s country code is **+54**; Buenos Aires area code is **011**, and Cell phones have the prefix: **15**.

#### Calls in Argentina

- Cell phone to cell phone: 011-xxxx-xxxx
- Landline to cell phone: 15-xxxx-xxxx
- Cell phone to landline: xxxx- xxxx
- Landline to landline: xxxx- xxxx
- From outside BA to BA: 011-xxxx-xxxx (cell or landline)

#### Calling from Abroad

- To a local cell phone: +54-9-11-xxxx-xxxx
- To a local landline: +54-11-xxxx-xxxx

#### ➤ Cell Phones

To have a local cell phone line you can buy either the phone or a SIM card, if it’s not blocked. The local cell phone companies are:



movistar.com.ar



personal.com.ar



claro.com.ar

Usually the calls are free when calling to a cell phone of the same company. Therefore, if travelling with a friend, you may want to have the same cell phone company. We recommend getting a pre-paid card or buying credit virtually, “recarga virtual”, at kiosks and “Locutorios”. You just need to tell the vendor your cell phone number, company and how much credit you want. Remember to ask for the receipt.

#### ➤ Post Mail

Try to avoid getting things shipped from abroad. Customs restrictions and fees may apply. You might have to pick up the package at the Customs Office downtown where there are long queues or at Ezeiza Airport. It can be time-consuming.

#### 4. Currency

- Argentine currency: “Peso Argentino”-ARS.
- The Banco Nación publishes the official exchange rate at its website: [www.bna.com.ar](http://www.bna.com.ar).
- You can exchange foreign currency at any bank from 10:00AM to 3:00PM
- There are AR\$ 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1000-peso bills.
- There are 0.10, 0.25, 0.50, 1.00, 2.00, 5 and 10-peso coins.
- Some stores accept US Dollars, but it is customary to pay in Pesos argentinos. Be careful with fake bills.
- Always carry some cash with you. Credit cards are not always accepted, or if so, only if the payment spent exceeds a certain minimum.

ATMs: look for **Banelco** or **Link**. Your home PIN should work and you can generally find a menu in English. Bear in mind that international and local fees may apply. Therefore, it is cheaper to withdraw larger amounts fewer times.



- If withdrawing money from an ATM is too expensive, you can also choose to get cash transfer from your home country by: **TransferWise, WorldRemit or Azimo:** <https://www.monito.com/>
- Some restaurants and stores take US Dollars, and occasionally Euros too. The exchange rate at these places varies.
- Counterfeit 100-Pesos bills are the most common ones, but be careful with smaller denomination bills too. Avoid using high denomination bills in taxis at night or in any other place where you cannot keep track of the bill

#### 5. Business hours

In the city, shops are open from 9AM to 9PM, weekdays, and 9AM to 1PM on Saturdays. Shopping malls open every day from 10AM to 10PM. Banks open 10AM to 3PM, weekdays. In other parts of the country, shops open from 8AM to 12PM, and from 4/5PM to 8/9PM.

#### 6. Electricity

Argentina uses **220V AC at 50 Hz**. Make sure to read the label and manual on your device **BEFORE** plugging it in, the Argentine 220V will destroy any other device if you do not use a converter. You can buy adapters in Argentina.



#### 7. Argentine meals

**Argentines usually have four meals a day:**

**Breakfast – “Desayuno”:** traditionally coffee or tea with toasts or croissants

**Lunch-“Almuerzo”:** around 1:00-3:00PM

**Tea -“te” or “merienda”:** around 5:00PM, same as breakfast

**Dinner- “comida” or “cena”:** no earlier than 8:30/9:00PM. Restaurants do not open before 8:00PM for dinner.

➤ **Fresh food**

The best place to get fresh fruit is the “Verdulería”, the traditional fruit and vegetable stores you will see spread around town. You will find fresh eggs and poultry in places called “Granja” or “Pollería”, and meat in a “Carnicería” (Butcher’s).

➤ **Delivery Apps**



➤ **Food and Dining Apps**

If you’re looking for the best places to eat in Buenos Aires.

For those who prefer universal food.

Offers chefs the opportunity to organize meals at home.



## 8. Local Culture Tips

➤ **Peatón**

Buenos Aires is big, crowded, cosmopolitan and a bit hectic, like all big cities. Traffic is messy and drivers do not always respect traffic regulations, nor the pedestrian- “peatón”. Be careful when crossing streets that have no stoplights and when getting on and off the buses. When in doubt, wait: the driver is king!

➤ **Physical Contact**

Both men and women kiss once in the right cheek when saying hello and good-bye. Shaking hands is the formal way to greet someone you do not know.

➤ **Piropos**

If someone throws a flattering phrase at you on the street, ignore it and keep walking, you will not be followed or harassed. These phrases are called “piropos” and they are usually quite poetic but may also be inappropriate.

### ➤ **Mate**

This is a loose tea-like beverage that comes from a specific type of Argentine bush, “yerba mate”. It is prepared by steeping dried leaves of yerba mate in hot water and is served with a metal straw, “bombilla”, from a shared hollow calabash gourd. Drinking “mate” is a very common custom in Argentina, Uruguay and the South of Brazil. Argentines drink “mate” at work, during class, at home with friends, while studying, during an afternoon snack and sometimes at a café. In Uruguay, it is even more common to see people drinking “mate” while walking on the street. When sharing “mate” with a group of people say "gracias" only when you do not want anymore. Drinking “mate” is a common reason for a person to stop what they are doing, relax a little and enjoy conversation with friends and co-workers.

## 9. Safety

Buenos Aires is like any big city. It is safe overall, but you should take care not to expose yourself to undue risks or dangers.

- **Make 2 photocopies of your important documents and a keep a digital one.** This includes your passport, visa, driver’s license, etc. Whenever possible, leave one set of copies at home with the originals, and carry the second set of copies with you. Do have a valid ID on you at all times. Bear in mind that you will need the originals when purchasing a plane ticket, getting your visa, etc.
- **Always have a little cash.** Always have some on you for emergencies, including small bills, since getting change can be hard.
- **Beware of pick pocketers:** Some touristy spots in town are places where pick pocketing may occur. Be alert if someone “accidentally” bumps into you, or distracts you in any way (asking for directions, dropping keys, calling out for help, etc.). Try not to use your cellphone while in the street, and keep your bag in front of you in public transport.
- **Avoid large crowds** in protests. Roadblocks as a way of protest, “piquetes” with “Piqueteros” burning tires, beating drums, or just holding signs in the middle of the street may be picturesque at the beginning, but may get violent. Keep a low profile and leave if the situation escalates or if you feel uncomfortable.
- **Never lose sight of your belongings.** Always keep your bag as close as possible. At restaurants and cafés, do not hang it over your chair, even if you are sitting indoors. If you are at a bar or at a discotheque, keep it on you at all times. During long bus trips, keep bags at your feet.
- **Do not walk alone at night.** Keep the radio taxi/cabify apps in your cellphone. If you feel you are in a dangerous zone by mistake, go into a shop and call a cab to leave.

## B. Getting around in Buenos Aires

### ➤ **The SUBE card**



This rechargeable card is the only payment method allowed in public transport. You can purchase the SUBE in kiosks, at the Post Office or get it

free by registering for the Buenos Aires Welcome kit you pick up at the airport. You charge it in kiosks, Subte and train stations. We recommend that you register your SUBE card online to check your credit, and in case, you lose it.

If you use different means of public transport within a 2-hour period, you get 50% off the second trip and 75% off the third. You can combine up to five trips, always within 2h.

➤ **Metro: “Subte”**

The Subte (metro/underground/tube) is the fastest way to travel in the city I  
For information log into: <https://www.metrovias.com.ar/>

➤ **Bus: “Colectivo”**

There are over 100 bus lines. Each one of them has a number and a colour combination to identify them. The bus fare depends on the distance. When you get on, you must tell the bus driver the fare or the destination (streets intersections or street name and round number). Most lines run 24/7, but during the weekend and at night the frequency decreases. To get off, you must go to the middle or rear door and press the button to request the stop. Do it the block before your stop comes.

➤ **Trains: “Tren”**

The Retiro Station has four lines that take you to the North of Buenos Aires: Belgrano Norte, Mitre, Sarmiento and San Martin.

You will not use the train to get around the city. However, to visit the Tigre/Delta, for example, the Mitre line is your best option: <https://www.trenmitre.com.ar/horarios/>.

To go to Pilar by train, you would take the San Martin line to President Derqui station. At the Derqui station you can take the 520 bus to the Campus, or a “remise”.

<https://www.trensanmartin.com.ar/horarios/> . We do not recommend this option for the moment.

➤ **Taxis**

Taxis in BA are painted in black and yellow, you stop them by outstretching your hand. If the taxi is available, a red sign on the windscreen will be on. Radio taxis are safer because a company monitors their trips. You can call them so they pick you up any place in town. Taxis are cheaper than in other parts of the world. When you say where you are going, make sure you specify the part of town, for a street’s name may be identical in different ends of this megacity.

➤ **Apps to get around:**



**BA Cómo llego.** This APP offers detailed routes on bus, trains, subway, car, and even on foot, as well as any combination of them.



**Cabify.** Fully regulated (legal) as the drivers are registered as “remises”, car owners who work as private drivers.



As has been the case in other cities around the world, the arrival of **Uber** in Argentina was complicated because of its legality (or lack thereof). If you decide to take one in the city, it would not hurt to sit upfront with the driver, especially when coming or going from the airport or popular areas like Palermo.



**BA Taxi.** We recommend you check reviews before you try this one.

## C. Commuting to Pilar

### ➤ Shuttles to the Campus

#### **Austral Shuttle**

The University offers a shuttle Service from three neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires directly to the Pilar Campus of the University. You can see the stops here:

<http://www.austral.edu.ar/ingresantes/campus/charter-universitario-austral/>

To confirm the price and make reservations, contact Andrés Zelaya -

Monday to Friday 9:30AM to 4:00PM (0230) 448-2833 / (+549) 11-5428-7207/  
[azelaya@austral.edu.ar](mailto:azelaya@austral.edu.ar)

#### **Expreso Pilar**

This private shuttle has several stops in Buenos Aires and at the Austral Campus in Pilar. Make sure to make a reservation before you go to the stop: [Expreso Pilar](#).

### ➤ Transport to KM 50 of Panamericana Highway: Public bus: “#57”

This public bus has two services leaving from Plaza Italia (Av. Sarmiento and circulating pathway- Av. Santa Fe) and arriving to Km 50 on the Panamericana Highway with very few stops. You can see the timetable of the bus here: [57 Expreso](#)

The two services are:

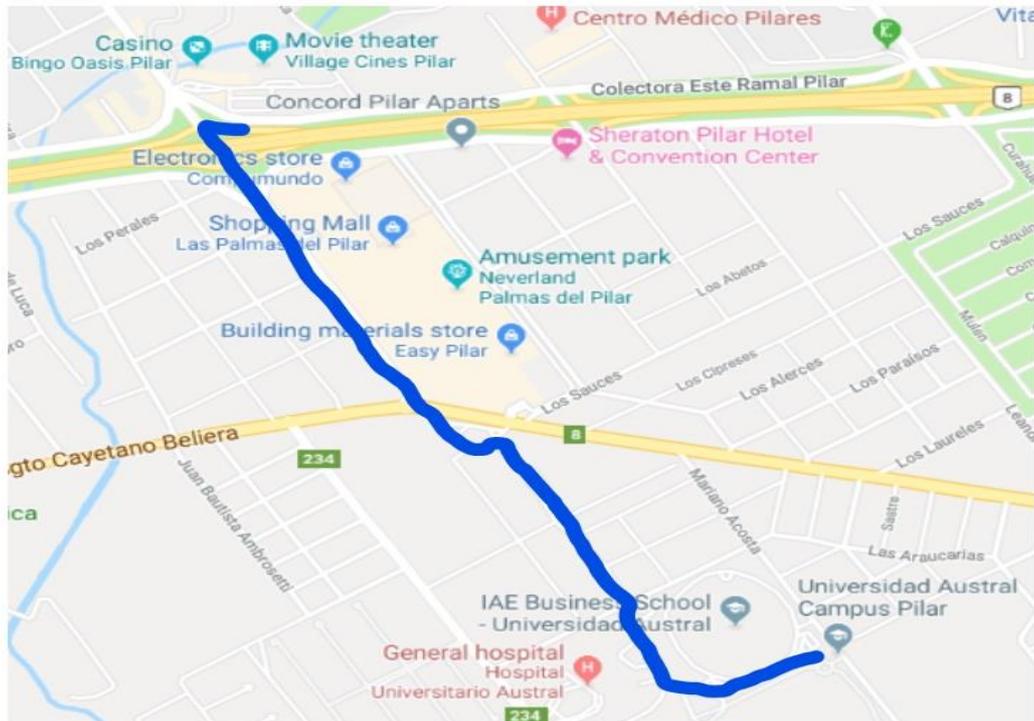
- Pilar Express (white bus): special service with very few stops and high frequency.
- “Rápido” (red bus): this bus is cheaper. Even though it has less stops than the average, it is much slower than the “expreso” and not as comfortable.

### ➤ Transport from KM 50 to Austral Campus in Pilar

The transport options we described above leave you at the Km 50 of the Panamericana Highway. Once you get off the bus or shuttle, your options are:

- **520 bus:** you can take this bus to the Campus on Chubut St, in front of Torres del Sol shopping mall.
- **Remises First:** car Service that has an office on Chubut Street, a few meters from Panamericana.

- **Walking:** take left and onto the bridge crossing the highway, and cross the parking lot of Palmas de Pilar shopping mall to “Ruta 8”. With your student card cross the Austral Park, and straight ahead to the Campus taking the road that has the Business School to your left and the Hospital to your right. This takes 20 minutes on average.



## D. Housing

### What kind of housing should I consider?

For your month in Argentina, we recommend a Homestay. It will give you some time to live the city and the campuses yourself, before making the decision where to live the rest of the semester. Sharing your first month with a local family can help you decide your best housing choice, apart from being an excellent opportunity for cultural immersion.

Feel free to check with us the location you are choosing, to make sure the distances and the neighborhood will suit you. You can also ask us about the places students stayed before you.

The homestay organizations we recommend are people we consider are a suitable option. Nevertheless, there is no business relation, nor is there any profit, commission or benefit for the university other than facilitating the logistics of students, staff and faculty coming to Austral.

**HomestayBA:** Patricia Sardo - +54.911.3109.1672 ; [psardo@bahomestay.com.ar](mailto:psardo@bahomestay.com.ar)

**Ex Spanish:** <https://exspanish.com/student-accommodation-in-buenos-aires-argentina/>

### Where is it best to live?

Most international students prefer to live in the city for the many things it has to offer. The nicer neighbourhoods are: Recoleta, Barrio Norte, Palermo, Las Cañitas and Belgrano. A

long avenue, Av. Santa Fe cuts through these neighborhoods. Several bus lines run along it, and the Subte route D runs underneath. Being close to Av. Santa Fe, (the name changes to Av. Cabildo in Belgrano), within seven or eight blocks toward Av. Cordoba, or down to Av. Del Libertador, would be a good choice.

If you can manage to arrange your class schedule so that you only go to Pilar twice a week, you might want to stay one night in Pilar, thus reducing the commute and making it easier to enjoy the activities available on campus.

### **What to take into account when looking for a place to live**

1. **LOCATION:** See where the apartment/residence is exactly located; make sure it is a safe area and that it will work well for you logistics.
2. **CONTRACT:** Request a copy of the contract before you travel. Find out what you are allowed to do, or not, in the apartment/room. Confirm the services and utilities the place has (water, electricity, gas, cable TV, internet, etc.). Look at the duration and termination clauses. See what the deposit policies are (when and how should they be returned). Make sure there will be someone 24/7 if there is a problem and how to reach them.
3. **PAYMENT:** Consult about the currency and method/s of payment.
4. Upon arrival double-check that everything is as stipulated and inform of any pre-existing damage (take pictures), difference or missing item as soon as you notice it.
5. If you choose to live in a hall of residence or to do homestay, ask about the rules and policies.

## **E. Medical Care**

If you have the local medical insurance, you will have the personal support of a William Hope representative 24/7. If something happens, you just contact the number in your card.

### **How does your international medical insurance work in Argentina?**

Most medical insurances use a reimbursement system. The great advantage is that you may pick any hospital or clinic. After paying for whatever service you received (visit and/or tests and/or treatment), you need to send a claim requesting your medical insurance company to reimburse you. It is important that you become familiarized with the administrative procedure. Most probably you will need to keep the receipt/s, the prescriptions and a medical certificate describing the symptoms/illness and the prescribed treatment.

### **Do you know where to go in case of an emergency?**

Public hospitals are available, but we strongly recommend you go to a private one, especially if you need to be hospitalized. There are many good hospitals in Buenos Aires. It is important that you find one close to your location. We recommend is Hospital Aleman.

If you are in Pilar, go the Austral Hospital, and remember to say you are an exchange student with us.

### **What do you need to take with you in an emergency?**

- Money. A private visit to a doctor is usually around the AR\$ equivalent of 50 USD, plus the cost of whatever test needs to be run. The Hospital accepts credit cards, so it is highly advisable you take it with you.
- Passport or any other valid photo ID. The Hospital may need to confirm your identity, especially if paying with a credit card.

### What should you take into account when you see the doctor?

- Inform of any pre-existing condition, or medication you are taking.
- Ask for a receipt and a certificate with the diagnosis, signed by the doctor. You will need both things if you are to be reimbursed by your medical insurance company.
- If you are prescribed any kind of medicine or treatment, make sure you understand the doctor's instructions. If you are afraid you might have a language barrier, ask for permission to record them to double check later.
- You may want to check out if your medical insurance has an agreement with this hospital or any other hospital or clinic, so you do not have to pay upfront.

### Hospital Alemán

The Hospital Alemán is [located](#) in Av. Pueyrredón 1640 (C1118AAT), between Juncal St. and Beruti St., city of Buenos Aires. It is one of the best hospitals in town and you can receive practically any kind of attention you may need.

The Hospital is two blocks away from Av. Santa Fe and five blocks away from Av. Las Heras. There are many buses running along these avenues (12 - 39 - 41 - 59 - 60 - 61 - 62 - 64 - 68 - 95 - 101 - 102 - 110 - 118 - 152 - 194), or along nearby streets. There is a Subte station (Route D/Pueyrredon) as well, not far from the Hospital.

### Emergencies- “Guardia” at Hospital Aleman

In case of an emergency, go to the Emergency Room or “Centro de Emergencias” (also known as Guardia).



## F. Student Visa Requirements

International students studying in Argentina for longer than 90 days must acquire a Student/Resident VISA for their exchange period. Students should apply through the [nearest Argentine consulate](#) as soon as they have received their letter of acceptance as the visa process may take up to three months.

Universidad Austral provides students with the certificates they need to get their visa.

The steps for the visa process can be found at:

<https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/services/visas/student-visa-365-days>

Students who will stay for longer than six months in Argentina, will be asked to provide an apostilled certificate of good conduct (criminal background check) of the countries in which they have resided for more than one year during the previous three years.