

FIRST CLASS



La Mansión, part of the Four Seasons Hotel Buenos Aires

SOUTH AMERICA'S *City of Lights*

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Travel to the alluring city of Buenos Aires, the Paris of South America. From its restaurants, parks, and polo fields to the splendor of nearby Iguazu Falls—there is an Argentinian adventure for everyone.

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During the days of Belle Epoque, Buenos Aires strove to emulate Paris in every way. Mansions rose from the ground and culture thrived as the capital of Argentina enjoyed a period of grandeur. Today the city is somewhat faded yet it still possesses a unique mix of European and Latin American heritages. Tango dancers stroll down cobbled streets, passing buildings that could easily be found on Paris' Left Bank. Architectural wonders from the past stand next to sleek buildings from the present. One of these modern-day buildings houses the Four Seasons Hotel Buenos Aires—the place to stay during your visit to this fabled city.

SHERIDAN ROAD 69

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Four Seasons
Hotel lobby



Recoleta Cemetery

WHERE TO STAY

Four Seasons Hotel Buenos Aires, located in the elegant Recoleta neighborhood, sparkles from top to bottom after undergoing a \$59 million dollar renovation. *Travel & Leisure* magazine ranked the hotel as the No. 1 in Argentina and among the top 100 hotels of the world. We completely agree! The hotel is an extremely tall, white, modern building springing forth from a small hill. Four prancing iron horses in the courtyard introduce the hotel's polo theme. While Four Seasons hotels are known for their impeccable service, the Buenos Aires Hotel outdid even the best.

The staff treated us like royalty. Upon entering our spacious room, we were greeted by a stunning array of treats, teddy bears, and my daughter's name spelled out in a rainbow of colorful letters. One night we returned to our room to find a lovely note handwritten to my daughter along with a large block of white chocolate featuring a silhouette of Evita Perón painted in dark chocolate. After the concierge heard my daughter had portrayed Perón in a school performance, she knew this would be a perfect gift.

The accommodations are on par with the service. Our spacious room overlooked the hotel's inviting pool and the elegant La Mansión—a stunning Beaux Arts landmark built in 1920 by the heir to a South American fortune as a wedding present to his bride. If you wish to embrace a bygone era, a stay in La Mansión is essential.

WHAT TO SEE

Seeing a ballet or opera at the Teatro Colon is a cultural requirement. The unparalleled acoustics in this magnificent and historic opera house intimidated even the great Pavarotti, who noted the acoustics were so perfect that the slightest error could be detected. The Teatro Colon deserves its ranking as the third best opera house in the world.

The famed Recoleta Cemetery, a city within a city whose residents are not among the living, is an experience to be had. It contains the

graves of many notable people including Evita Perón and is full of tales of the city's past. Watch for the cats roaming the Recoleta; local legend says they carry the souls of the dead.

The Casa Rosada, which holds the office of Argentina's President, is a delightful building rich in history. The exterior's curious color comes from a mix of ox blood and whitewash. This color was intended as a symbol of unification between two warring political factions—one represented by the color red, the other by the color white. Casa Rosada's most recognizable architectural detail is the balcony where Perón gave an historic speech shortly before her death at age 33. You may recall this balcony as the one from which Perón sang "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" in the hit Broadway play. Take advantage of one of the many free English-language tours offered daily. During our tour, we viewed rooms once occupied by Perón and went into the President's office, which has an intricate ceiling reminiscent of those found in French chateaus.

On the opposite side of the Plaza de Mayo is the Cathedral Metropolitan, which gained special significance when Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, then archbishop of Buenos Aires, was elected as Pope Francis in 2013. The Cathedral is impressive and holds the guarded tomb of San Martín, the liberator of Argentina, Chile, and Peru.

On Sundays, nestled in one of Buenos Aires' oldest neighborhoods you will find the extraordinary San Telmo market. This outdoor fair

SHERIDAN ROAD 70

LOBBY PHOTOGRAPH BY FOUR SEASONS HOTEL

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Iguazu Falls



Redding and riding after playing polo, with our guide Ezequiel at La Martina Ranch

offers everything from handmade jewelry showcasing the Argentinean rhodochrosite to Guacho knives featuring handles crafted from armadillo tails or Emu toes—great gifts for those awaiting your return.

WHERE TO DINE

The breakfast buffet at Elena's, the Four Seasons' airy and elegant restaurant, is the perfect start for your day. Each morning we were greeted with beautifully arranged delicacies including platters of delicious fresh fruits, breads, cheeses, and an assortment of meats. Our absolute favorite item was the scrambled eggs with Lincoln cheese and corn. For lunch, the menu of the hotel's glass-enclosed Nuestro Secreto restaurant highlights Argentina's most famous foodstuff—beef. We ate our first meal of the trip here—the first of many encounters with Argentinean beef.

The cocktail lounge of the Alvear Palace Hotel is the perfect place to begin any evening. While the hotel is a study in opulence, the cocktail lounge strikes a great balance between coziness and luxury. For dinner, visit Cabana Las Lilas in the now hip area of Puerto Madero. It is a wonderful hot spot known for its food, ambiance, and friendly staff. Follow dinner with a leisurely stroll along the river to the beautiful Puente de la Mujer or "Woman's Bridge." Locals joke it is refreshing to have something so feminine in a city noted for its testosterone-steeped nature.

IF TIME ALLOWS

Adolfo Cambiasso, the No. 1 polo player in the world, grew up on La Martina, a picturesque 300-acre ranch in Canuelas. When we learned La Martina offers lessons for visitors, we couldn't resist the opportunity. Upon arriving, we met our horses, donned our helmets, picked up our mallets, and then set off for a ride around the ranch. Our guides, accomplished players themselves, taught us the rules of polo and the tricks of riding while wielding a polo mallet. It was the adventure of a lifetime to gallop across a gorgeous Argentinean field in fierce pursuit of a small, white ball. While our arms ached for several days following this adventure, we wore our "polo injuries" with pride.

If there is a wing shooter in your party, you can't miss the opportunity to visit Cordoba, the dove hunting capital of the world, just a one-hour flight from Buenos Aires. La Dormida Lodge offers the best dove shooting in the world coupled with spectacular lodging and gourmet dining all set in a luxurious private setting framed by rolling hills and sprawling fields.

Another short jaunt by plane takes you to the Iguazu Falls. The falls were unlike anything I have ever seen, truly nature at its best. As you walk along the platforms, the roar of the water is a constant, rainbows are everywhere, butterflies crisscross your path, exotic birds sing in the trees, monkeys swing from the branches, and coatis walk alongside you hoping you will drop a tasty morsel. Blue Parallel tour company is unparalleled in their Iguazu tour experiences.

The exotic and famed areas of Patagonia, Mendoza, and Bariloche are also easily accessible from Buenos Aires. The reasons to visit this beautiful city are plentiful. *Viajes felices!*

For more information about: the Four Seasons-Buenos Aires, visit fourseasons.com/buenosaires; La Martina Ranch, visit polo-tour.com; La Dormida Lodge, visit Darviddenies.com; and Iguazu tours, visit blueparallel.com