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The Best Full-Day Tours



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Previous page: The neighborhood of La Boca is one of the most colorful spots in the city.

This very full one-day tour takes in the best of historic Buenos Aires, and its neighborhoods Monserrat and Retiro, giving you a taste of its beginnings and recent past as one of the wealthiest places on Earth: its famous European-influenced architecture, old-world cafes, and wide avenues, squares, and parks. You'll need walking shoes. **START: Subte to Plaza de Mayo (A) or Catedral (D).**

1 ★★ Casa Rosada. Americans have their White House, Argentines their Pink House. At the east end of the Plaza de Mayo, the Argentine presidential palace, where the president works but does not live, is known for its distinctive color (the reason for that hue is a matter of debate and speculation, with some asserting that it was originally painted with cow blood). The asymmetrical building, erected in 1885, is where Evita Perón (1919–1952) addressed her adoring masses (though not from the front balcony, as is usually assumed, but from one on the south side, at Balcarce). In the basement is a presidential museum containing official artifacts once belonging to Argentine presidents over the decades. 🕒 **30 min.** *Plaza de Mayo (museum entrance at Yrigoyen 219), Monserrat.* ☎ **11/4344-3802.** www.museo.gov.ar. **Free**

admission. Mon–Fri 10am–6pm (free guided visits 11am & 3pm); Sun 2–6pm (free guided visits 4pm). Palace tours suspended until completion of renovations. Subte: Plaza de Mayo (A), Bolívar (E), or Catedral (D).

2 ★★ Plaza de Mayo. The heart of the historic Monserrat district—and indeed, the entire city—this is the spot where Buenos Aires had its second founding in 1580. The square has been ground zero for virtually every momentous political event in Argentina's modern history, from presidential proclamations to mass protests by Perón's blue-collar workers (the *descamisados*, or shirtless ones) to mournful demonstrations by the “Mothers of the Disappeared,” whose children were kidnapped and murdered by the military governments of the 1970s and early 1980s.

The Argentine presidential palace has a distinctive pink hue.





Catedral Metropolitano was completed in 1836 after more than 90 years.

Today, there are still sometimes frequent protests and occasional appearances by the aging *Madres* (mothers)—whose “ownership” of the plaza is marked by the heads-carves, their symbol, painted on the tiles around the 1811 obelisk in the center. 🕒 **15 min.** *Av. de Mayo, Monserrat. Madres de la Plaza de Mayo: every Thurs 3:30pm. Subte: Plaza de Mayo (A), Bolívar (E), or Catedral (D).*

3 ★ **Catedral Metropolitana.**

Over the centuries, beginning in 1622, a half-dozen churches have occupied this spot. The present cathedral’s long construction period, from 1745 to 1836, is reflected in its inconsistent appearance, with an austere neo-Classical exterior fronting a gilded, baroque interior. A mausoleum inside contains the remains of General José de San Martín (1778–1850), the national hero and “Father of the Nation” known as *El Libertador* for his campaigns to free the southern nations of South America from Spanish rule. 🕒 **30 min.** *San Martín (at Rivadavia), Monserrat. ☎ 11/4331-2845. Subte: Plaza de Mayo (A), Bolívar (E), or Catedral (D).*

4 ★ **Cabildo.** The blindingly white old town hall rests on the spot where the town council first met at the end of the 16th century, and where Argentine independence took root during the May Revolution of 1810. It is the only public building on the Plaza de Mayo remaining from colonial days, and inside is a moderately interesting museum of colonial paintings and furniture. It’s worth a quick look inside to see what’s left of the original building and its views of the Plaza and Avenida de Mayo. 🕒 **30 min.** *Bolívar 65 (at Rivadavia), Monserrat. ☎ 11/4343-4387. Admission: AR\$1 adults. Tues–Sat 10:30am–5pm; Sun 11:30am–6pm. Free tours Fri 3:30pm & Sat 2pm. Subte: Plaza de Mayo (A), Bolívar (E), or Catedral (D).*

5 ★★ **kids Av. de Mayo.** This wide and graceful tree-lined avenue is the most historic thoroughfare in the city. Modeled after Paris’s grand boulevards, it is a showcase of impressive office buildings, hotels, cafes, and theaters; a smorgasbord of Spanish, French, English, and Italian Belle Epoque and Art Nouveau influence. A highlight is **Casa de la Cultura**, the 1889 headquarters of the newspaper *La Prensa*, with its Versailles-like interior. Running beneath the avenue is the historic **A line** of the *subte*, or subway, the first built in South America; the Peru station, with its retro-style posters and kiosks, is the most authentic of the original 1913 stations. 🕒 **45 min.** *Av. de Mayo (between Perú & Sáenz Peña), Monserrat. Subte: Plaza de Mayo (A), Bolívar (E), or Catedral (D).*

6 ★★★ **Café Tortoni.** The oldest, as well as most famous and atmospheric, cafe in Buenos Aires, little has changed at this institution since 1858 except for the attire of its patrons. Although it looks like a

museum piece, with its rich woods, huge mirrors, ornate light fixtures, and stained-glass ceilings, it remains an essential gathering place for locals, as well as hordes of visitors. Politicians, artists, and intellectuals through the years, including Carlos Gardel (1890–1935), Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986), and Federico García Lorca (1898–1936), have all held court at Tortoni. In the back is a cool theater hosting nightly tango performances. **Av. de Mayo 825.** ☎ 11/4342-4328. www.cafetortoni.com.ar. \$\$.

7 **kids** Av. 9 de Julio/

Obelisco. Whether or not it is in fact the widest street in the world, as Porteños love to tout Av. 9 de Julio, is a matter of dispute. Developed in 1937, and widened in the 1960s to its current 16 lanes, the avenue is home not only to some of the city's most important office buildings and a healthy share of its automobiles, but also to some lovingly landscaped garden areas. Four blocks to the north (at Corrientes), rising from the middle of the avenue, is the towering **Obelisco**, the symbol of Buenos Aires built in 1936



The Avenida 9 de Julio is home to the Obelisco monument.

to commemorate the 400-year anniversary of the city's initial founding. Major national sporting events are frequently celebrated here, though one year, to mark International AIDS Day, the monument was draped with a giant condom. Another two blocks north is **Teatro Colón**, the renowned opera house that recently celebrated its 100-year-anniversary (but didn't open in time to celebrate after lengthy renovations). When again open, it's essential to visit for a concert or tour. ⌚ 20 min. **Av. 9 de Julio (at Corrientes), Centro.**

Café Tortoni is the oldest and most famous café in Buenos Aires.



Subte: Carlos Pellegrini (B), Diagonal Norte (C), or 9 de Julio (D).

8 ★★★ kids Palacio Barolo.

One of the most distinctive buildings in the city, this 22-story “palace” was the tallest in the city when completed in 1923. The Italian architect Mario Palanti built it for a local textile magnate and curiously styled the building to closely reflect aspects of Dante’s *The Divine Comedy* (see p. 48). The lobby is gorgeous and the old-school elevators enchanting, but little prepares one for the breathtaking panoramic views from top floors. Tours are offered two days a week, but a visit to the tango clothing shop Tango Moda on the 16th floor also affords dramatic (free) views of the palace’s cupola and all of Buenos Aires from two terraces. 🕒 45 min. *Av. de Mayo 1370 (at San José), Centro.*

☎ 11/4383-1065 (15/5027-9035 for tour information). www.pbarolo.com.ar. Admission: AR\$15 adults. Tours Mon & Thurs on the hr. 2–7pm; English & Spanish. Subte: Sáenz Peña (A).

9 ★★ Palacio del Congreso.

At the end of Av. de Mayo, forming a bookend with the Casa Rosada, is the imposing Greco-Roman Congress building, constructed in 1909 of gray granite and topped by a greenish copper dome. Tours of the Congress’s opulent interior take visitors to the Salón Rosado, now renamed for Eva Perón, who christened the room as a place that women, newly granted the right to vote, could discuss issues without the interference of men (Evita lay in state at Congreso for 2 weeks of public viewing after her death in 1952). 🕒 1 hr. *Yrigoyen 1849, Centro.*

☎ 11/4370-7100 or 11/6310-7100, ext. 3725. Free guided tours in English on Mon, Tues, Thurs, & Fri 11am & 4pm; in Spanish Mon, Tues, Thurs, & Fri 11am, 4pm, & 5pm. Subte: Congreso (A).



Plaza San Martín is one of the city’s favorite parks.

10 ★★★ kids A Line Subte. A

great way to experience the still-running, antique subway is to hop aboard the A line back from Congreso. You can ride it all the way to Plaza de Mayo, although Estación Peru retains the most period charm, with turn-of-the-20th-century posters and charmingly old-school kiosks, tiles, and lamps transporting commuters back in time. The original wood-paneled cars, introduced in 1913 as part of the first subway system in South America, still run the line, even though some newer cars have been introduced; if you’re riding as much for the experience as the transport, wait for one of the older cars. 🕒 20 min. *From Congreso to Plaza de Mayo, Peru station, Av. de Mayo 500, Monserrat.* www.subte.com.ar. Admission AR\$0.90 adults.

11 ★★ kids Plaza San Martín.

This handsome park in the Retiro district is one of Buenos Aires’s treasured green spaces. Palm trees, *palos borrachos*, and (in spring) the abundant lavender flowers of

jacarandás frame views of an imposing skyscraper, the 1935 Edificio Kavanagh, and two stunning early 20th-century aristocratic mansions: the **Palacio San Martín** (former home to the Argentine Foreign Service), and **Palacio Paz**, a massive and extraordinary palace reminiscent of Versailles, with a miniature gilded opera house within and one wing housing the *Círculo Militar*, a weapons and military museum. 🕒 30 min. (90 min if touring *Círculo Militar*). **Palacio Paz:** Av. Santa Fe 750 (at Maipú), Retiro. ☎ 11/4311-1071. www.circulomilitar.org. Admission: AR\$15 adults. *Círculo Militar* tours in Spanish Tues & Fri 11am & 3pm, Wed & Thurs 11am & 4pm, Sat 11am; English Tues & Thurs 3:30pm. Subte: San Martín (C).

12 Calle Florida. A pedestrian-only street that was once Buenos Aires's most glamorous is today its most commercial. Its swank buildings, somewhat difficult to appreciate amid the hubbub, attest to Florida's erstwhile elegance and status as the city's most famous shopping promenade. Some of that, ironically, is still on view within **Galerías Pacífico** (no. 737), a

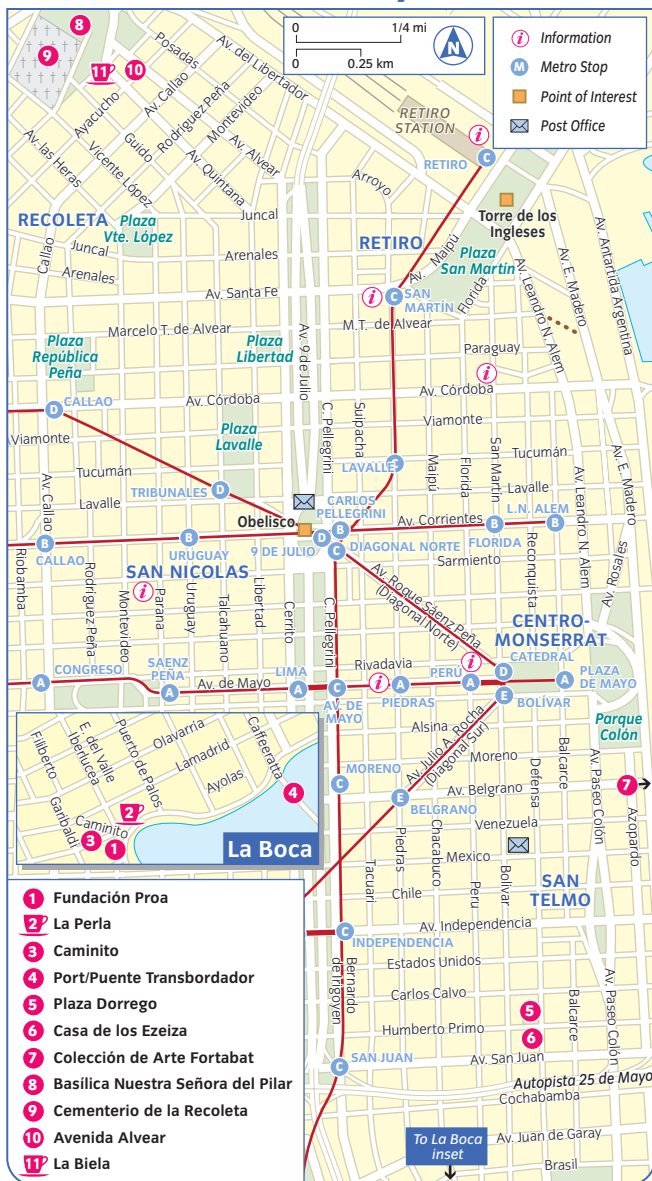
shopping mall with real pedigree; it's even a National Historic Monument. The 1891 building is enlivened by a central dome with colorful, expressive frescoes painted by five Argentine muralists in the 1940s. Other exquisite buildings on Calle Florida include Centro Naval (no. 801); Galería Guemes (no. 165), drab on the outside but with a gorgeously restored back entrance on San Martín 170 and glorious glass dome; and Bank of Boston (no. 99). 🕒 45 min. **Florida** (between Av. Alvear & Av. Corrientes), Centro. Subte: Florida (B) or San Martín (C).

13 ★ Florida Garden. A classic café from the days when Calle Florida reeked of elegance and everyone from politicians and bankers to student activists and artists gathered here. It's still a revered spot for coffee, chocolate cake, sandwiches (including the house specialty, *pebete de pan negro*—ham and cheese on house-baked brown bread), and in the bar at the back, a stiff drink at the end of the day. **Florida 899.** ☎ 11/4312-7902. Daily 6:30am–midnight. \$\$.

The Galerías Pacífico shopping mall is a National Historic Monument.



The Best in **Two Days**



On day two, we move south of the center to two historic neighborhoods, **La Boca and San Telmo**—where tango was born, nurtured, and lives on—followed by a glimpse of forward-looking Buenos Aires in Puerto Madero. And we finish in rarified Recoleta, home to some of Buenos Aires's finest apartment buildings, hotels, and shops, and the stunning cemetery where Evita and other pillars of Argentine society are buried. **START: Taxi to Vuelta de Rocha (La Boca).**

1 ★★ Fundación Proa. Standing in stark, gleaming white contrast to colorful Caminito is this contemporary art museum and foundation, one of the city's most interesting and progressive art spaces. In addition to excellent exhibits (in past years, featuring Marcel Duchamp, Jenny Holzer, Sol LeWitt, and Sebastião Salgado), the recently transformed building—an ingeniously converted Italianate mansion with a modern glass addition and nod to the area's edgy past—contains a cafe, library, wide terrace with great views of the port and barrio, and auditorium holding occasional concerts and film series. 🕒 1 hr. **Av. Pedro de Mendoza 1929, La Boca.** ☎ 11/4104-1000. www.proa.org. **Admission:** AR \$10 adults, AR\$6 students, AR\$3 seniors. **Tues–Sun 11am–8pm. Subte:** No access.

2? ★★★ La Perla. This 1920 cantina—said to have been a brothel in years past—is about as cinematic a cafe as you'll find in Buenos Aires, chock full of worn wooden tables, walls covered in old photographs, mirrors, and local artwork, and colorful seltzer bottles on the tables. Protected by law as a cafe notable, the bar has long been a hangout of the artistic and politically motivated set, though today its prices are more likely to appeal to foreigners. Grab a seat by one of the windows for a great view of the port and touristy goings-on at the start of Caminito. **Av. Pedro de Mendoza 1899.** ☎ 11/4301-2985. \$\$.

La Perla.





The pedestrian-only alleyway of Caminito is a magnet for tourists.

3 ★ kids Caminito. Sure, it's one of the most touristy and colorful spots in the city, but the pedestrian-only alleyway—full of wood-and-corrugated-tin tenement houses with rickety balconies that used to house new immigrants—is so brightly painted and perfect for pictures with tango dancers and street performers that you can't very well skip it completely. **La Boca**, the old port area, is where Italian immigrants who worked the shipyards settled, and locals claim the tango was born among the working-class (and sailors and prostitutes) in the late 19th century. Part of one of the city's oldest residential neighborhoods, the local artist Benito Quinquela Martín (1890–1977) conceived of the street in 1959 as a way to give other local artists a massive outdoor canvas outlet and to feel proud about their rundown barrio. While it hasn't transformed the district—just venture a couple streets off Caminito to see the plain brown reality of La Boca—it has converted it into a tourist magnet. 🕒 30 min. *Av. Pedro de Mendoza (at Vuelta de Rocha), La Boca. Subte: No access.*

4 Port/Puerto Transbordador. Buenos Aires was founded near La Boca for the first time in 1536 (though the settlement was soon abandoned), and not for nothing are the city's residents called *Porteños* (people of the port). Today the port, though, is anything but picturesque—in fact, it's downright malodorous—but it's a crucial part of the city, given its past maritime and commercial importance. That significance is perhaps best symbolized by the 1914 iron transporter bridge that carried trains and cargo across the Río Chueca (canal) until the mid-20th century. 🕒 15 min. *Av. Pedro de Mendoza (at Almirante Brown), La Boca. Subte: No access.*

5 ★★★ kids Plaza Dorrego. The heart of historic, bohemian San Telmo is this laid-back plaza with a smattering of bars, cafes, and restaurants. On Sundays, however, the renowned San Telmo Antiques Fair takes over it and the surrounding streets, transforming the square into the shopping and tourist epicenter of Buenos Aires. Sellers and shoppers crowd the plaza, the

The port is a critical part of the history of Buenos Aires.





San Telmo never fails to entertain.

second-oldest in the city, while tango dancers and orchestras fight for space on the packed streets leading to it. It's worth planning your trip to Argentina to include a Sunday morning in San Telmo; whether it's people-watching or serious silver and glass antiques you're interested in, this busy square cannot fail to entertain. And be sure to check out the superb permanent antiques dealers and art galleries on the cobblestoned streets radiating out from the plaza (principally along Humberto I and Defensa). 🕒 **1 hr. Defensa (at Humberto I), San Telmo. Subte: Independencia (C).**

6 ★ Casa de los Ezeiza. Few places so succinctly sum up San Telmo's past and present. This sprawling, Spanish-style mansion was constructed in 1850, just before yellow fever would drive wealthy local residents to (literally) higher ground in Recoleta. It later became a *conventillo*, or tenement house occupied by several families, and then a school and warehouse before its current function housing antiques dealers and assorted shops. With its two interior patios, faded walls, and worn black-and-white tiled flooring, the house is a shadow of its former grandeur and looks a bit like a multi-family dwelling in Havana, but it

The Real Caminito

Caminito ("little alley") was inspired by the classic tango of the same name, not the other way around. The famous tango **Caminito**, by Juan de Dios Filiberto (1885–1964) and Gabino Coria Peñaloza (1881–1975), might appear to be an homage to the little street in La Boca, but in fact, the song dates to 1926 and has nothing at all to do with it, La Boca, or even Buenos Aires: Rather, it speaks nostalgically of a flower-bedecked path in Argentina's far-off La Rioja province.

seems perfect for today's bohemian and antiques-crazed San Telmo.

🕒 20 min. *Defensa 1179, San Telmo. Subte: Independencia (C).*

7 ★★ Colección de Arte Fortabat. The nearby district of Puerto Madero, the site of recycled 19th-century warehouses and the city's most rampant new development, is also home to its newest art museum, garnering a great deal of attention for its avant-garde design by Rafael Viñoly. In spectacular style, it houses the art collection—including some of the biggest names among both Argentine and international artists of the last 100 years—of one of Argentina's richest women, Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat. Inaugurated in November 2008, the cylindrical building features fantastic views of Puerto Madero, the yacht club, and the city beyond from the upstairs galleries. Previously best known for its office buildings and upscale restaurants, Puerto Madero is a good place to grab lunch alongside politicians and business folks. 🕒 1 hr. *Olga Cossetini 141, Puerto Madero.* ☎ 11/4310-6600. www.coleccionfortabat.org.ar. Admission: AR\$15 adults, AR\$7 students & seniors. Tues–Fri noon–9pm; Sat–Sun 10am–9pm. Subte: L.N. Alem (B).

8 ★★ Basílica Nuestra Señora del Pilar. The Recoleta neighborhood may not be as old as San Telmo or La Boca, but it does have the second-oldest church in Buenos Aires, which was originally part of a convent belonging to the Padres Recoletos. This attractive church, inaugurated in 1732, has an unadorned colonial exterior, though its current pristine whiteness is a modern alteration (in colonial days, it was white and sun-yellow). Inside, you'll find outstanding Spanish colonial artwork and a baroque, silver-plated altar brought from Alto Perú.



The Basílica Nuestra Señora del Pilar is the city's second-oldest church.

The small religious art museum within the old convent is worth a visit to see the original flooring, windows, and other period details where cloistered nuns once lived.

🕒 30 min. *Junín 1904, Recoleta.*

☎ 11/4803-6793. Admission: AR\$3 adults. Tues–Sat 10:30am–6:15pm; Sun 2:30–6:15pm. Subte: No access.

9 ★★★ kids Cementerio de la Recoleta. One of the most famous cemeteries in the world, and not just because Evita is buried here, this moving and beautiful city of the dead is one of the highlights of Buenos Aires. Many of the tombs and mausoleums of Argentina's wealthiest and most powerful residents are audacious, no-expense-spared works of Art Nouveau, Gothic, and neo-Classical art: small marble and granite houses with soaring angels and crosses gracing tree-lined boulevards. Opened in 1822, Recoleta is even more exclusive than the neighborhood that has grown up around it: the final resting place of military generals, presidents, and aristocrats, including Bartolomé Mitre (1821–1906), the first president of

Argentina; José Paz (1842–1912), the founder of *La Prensa*; and, of course, Eva Perón, buried in a relatively modest mausoleum indicated by her father's surname, Familia Duarte. 🕒 1 hr. **Junín 1790** (at Plaza Francesa), Recoleta. ☎ 11/4804-7040. Free admission. Free English-language tours Tues & Thurs 11am. Subte: No access.

10 ★ Avenida Alvear. Recoleta drips with glamour and wealth, something one can get a taste of by strolling along this swank residential and commercial avenue. Home to elegant apartment buildings and two of the city's most famous and elite hotels, the Alvear Palace (no. 1883) and Park Hyatt/Palacio Duhau (no. 1661), it is also the site of luxurious digs for high-end fashion stores, including Hermés (no. 1981), Valentino (no. 1923), Ralph Lauren (no. 1780), and Emporio Armani (no. 1750), as well as shops with local

flavor, such as the exquisite silversmith Juan Carlos Pallarols (no. 1883). 🕒 45 min. **Av. Alvear** (between Schiaffino & Montevideo), Recoleta. Subte: No access.

W ★★ La Biela. One of the city's most famous and pedigreed cafes, with a history that goes back to the mid-19th century, La Biela is where Recoleta's elite come to sip coffee and nibble on petit-fours on the broad terrace, under umbrellas and massive ombú branches. It's a classic, European-style cafe inside, where the Argentine author Julio Cortázar (1914–1984) and other illustrious figures settled in over the years, but outdoors is where the practiced art of people-watching, second only to polo season among this crowd, goes on. **Quintana 600.** ☎ 11/4804-4135. www.labiela.com. \$\$\$.

Cafe La Biela is a great place for sipping coffee and people-watching.



0 1/4 mi
0 0.25 km

Hospital
Metro Stop



1 Museo Nacional de Arte Decorativo
2 Croque Madame
3 MALBA
4 Parque Tres de Febrero
5 Museo Evita
6 Jardín Botánico Carlos Thays
7 Palermo Viejo
8 Bar 6

- 1 Museo Nacional de Arte Decorativo
- 2 Croque Madame
- 3 MALBA
- 4 Parque Tres de Febrero
- 5 Museo Evita
- 6 Jardín Botánico Carlos Thays
- 7 Palermo Viejo
- 8 Bar 6

Moving northwest for a more relaxed third day, we visit **Palermo**, a sprawling neighborhood of upscale apartment buildings, expansive parks and gardens, and several of the city's most interesting museums. Palermo Viejo, a formerly rundown area, has become the city's hottest zone for restaurants, boutique shops, and chic little hotels—and its cobblestoned streets and chic venues are perfect for an afternoon of window shopping. **START: Taxi to Av. Libertador (at Pereyra Lucena).**

1 ★★ Museo Nacional de Arte Decorativo. Calling this the “National Museum of Decorative Arts” does it a bit of a disservice, since it is in fact an extraordinary private residence with a tremendous art collection, and the only early-20th-century French-styled mansion in Buenos Aires open to the public. The **Palacio Errázuriz** itself is as rich in architectural detail as the collection of 4,000 Euro-centric “decorative arts” objects it holds, donated to the state by the family—Chilean diplomat Matías Errázuriz and his wife, Josefina de Alvear, who possessed one of the city's great fortunes in the early 20th century—in 1937. The massive home was designed in 1911 by the French architect René Sergent (1865–1927), also responsible for

the building that houses the current U.S. embassy. The English Tudor two-story Grand Hall, with its massive fireplace, is extraordinary, as is the Louis XV–style dining room. The art collection includes works by El Greco (c. 1541–1614) and Manet (1832–1883), as well as 17th- and 18th-century Flemish tapestries.


 **1 hr.** **Av. del Libertador 1902, Palermo.**  **11/4801-8248.** **www.mnad.org.** **Admission: AR\$2 adults, AR\$1 students; free on Tues. Tues–Sun 2–7pm. Guided visits in English Tues–Sat 2:30pm. Subte: No access.**

2 ★ Croque Madame. Just inside the massive gate to the Museo Nacional de Arte Decorativo is this charming, and surprisingly elegant, cafe-restaurant, in a sweet little



The Museo Nacional de Arte Decorativo houses a tremendous art collection.



house with a sweeping staircase, chandeliers, and relaxing outdoor terrace. It's the perfect spot for a late breakfast or full tea service, but the very complete menu—with pizzas, salads, namesake croque madames and croque monsieurs, risottos, and even fish dishes—makes it a great stop for lunch or dinner, too. *Av. del Libertador 1902.*

 11/ 4806-8639. \$\$.

3 ★★ MALBA. The Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, occupying a dramatic modern stone-and-glass building, is in fact the private contemporary art collection of Eduardo Costantini, a local businessman. Major Latin American artists are represented, including Diego Rivera (1886–1957), Frida Kahlo (1907–1954), Roberto Matta (1911–2002), and Wilfredo Lam (1902–1982), as well as top Argentine painters such as Antonio Berni (1905–1981) and Xul Solar (1887–1963). In addition to the estimable collection, the building is distinguished by its abundant natural light, a two-storey central atrium, and a terrific cafe-restaurant (Café des Arts;  11/4808-0754) with a pretty outdoor terrace, a favorite

lunch spot of many professionals who work in the area.  1 hr. *Av. Figueroa Alcorta 3415, Palermo Chico.*  11/4808-6500. www.malba.org.ar. Admission: AR\$15 adults, free for students & seniors; free admission on Wed. Thurs–Mon noon–8pm; Wed noon–9pm. Subte: No access.

4 ★★ kids Parque Tres de Febrero. Buenos Aires's answer to New York's Central Park is the city's most prized green space, often called the "Woods of Palermo" by locals. The sprawling park, decreed by President Sarmiento in 1872, features over 1,000 acres of gardens, three lakes, walking paths, and woods. It's the city's lungs, the place Porteños hit on weekends to run, bicycle, go inline skating, rent paddle boats, sunbathe, and stroll. Don't miss El Rosedal, a lovely rose garden with more than 12,000 plantings, designed by the Frenchman Carlos Thays (1839–1934), responsible for the landscaping on Av. 9 de Julio and other parks in the city; or the immense statue Monumento a los Españoles, a gift from the Spanish government in 1910 (Av. Libertador at Av. Sarmiento).

 1 hr. *Av. Libertador (between Av.*

You'll find major Latin American artists at MALBA.





The Museo Evita helps explain the pivotal figure's iconic status.

Casares & Av. Dorrego), Palermo.
Subte: Plaza Italia (D).

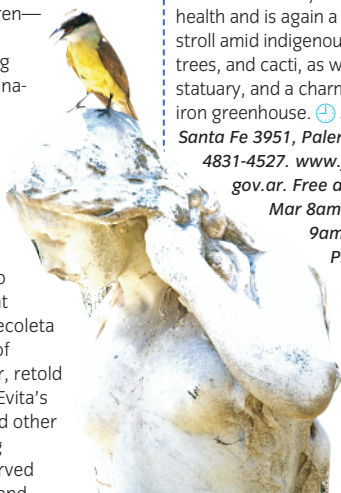
5 ★★ kids Museo Evita. Eva Perón became a surprisingly pivotal, and lasting, figure in Argentine life for someone who was the wife of the president and died at the young age of 33. This intimate museum dedicated to her life—in a lovely Renaissance-style residence on a quiet Palermo street, which Perón herself appropriated and transformed into a shelter for women and children—goes a good way towards explaining the enduring fascination with Evita. Adored by throngs of Argentine workers and women, her remains took a long and convoluted way to reach their current resting place in Recoleta Cemetery, a tale of intrigue and caper, retold in a short film on Evita's life. Through it and other exhibits, including remarkably preserved dresses, jewelry, and

personal belongings, the museum explains the reasons underlying Evita's iconic status, reminding us of her work in health care, getting women the right to vote, facilitating access to education for marginalized millions, and increasing wages for union workers. More than a half-century after her death, she continues to divide Argentines, still largely along class lines. The attached restaurant-café (J.M. Gutiérrez 3926; ☎ 11/4800-1599) has a beautiful, verdant outdoor terrace and is an excellent stop for breakfast, lunch, or dinner—or just tea or a cocktail.

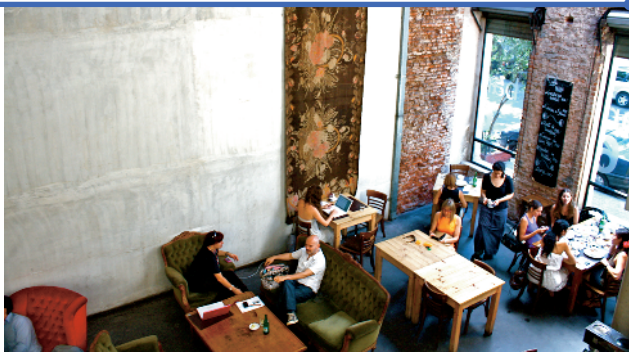
🕒 1 hr. Lafinur 2988 (at J.M. Gutiérrez), Palermo. ☎ 11/4807-0306. www.evita-peron.org. Admission: AR\$12 adults. Nov–Apr Tues–Sun 11am–7pm; May–Oct Tues–Sun 1–7pm. Subte: Plaza Italia (D).

6 ★ kids Jardín Botánico Carlos Thays. Also conceived by the landscape designer Carlos Thays in 1898, and named in his honor, the botanical garden is a delightful refuge from the city. Although in recent years it became abandoned and overrun by a population of feral cats, it has been slowly nursed back to health and is again a lovely place to stroll amid indigenous flora, massive trees, and cacti, as well as fountains, statuary, and a charming wrought-iron greenhouse. 🕒 30 min. Av.

Santa Fe 3951, Palermo. ☎ 11/4831-4527. www.jardinbotanico.gov.ar. Free admission. Nov–Mar 8am–8pm; Apr–Oct 9am–6pm. Subte: Plaza Italia (D).



The botanical garden is a delightful refuge from the city.



Modern Bar 6 boasts excellent cocktails, DJs, and free WiFi.

7 ★★ Palermo Viejo. A formerly forgotten area of rundown, squat buildings, this neighborhood has gotten a makeover in the last few years, and now it's Buenos Aires's coolest barrio, where the chicest boutique hotels, shops, restaurants, and hipster bars have taken root. While the concentration of places to spend your pesos is daunting and the residential towers have moved in with a vengeance, the area hasn't lost its charm. On a late afternoon, it's a joy to wander the cobblestoned streets and small alleyways, and take in the shops, many of which are so chic and visually creative that they practically dare you not to step in. Whether you're shopping for one-of-a-kind handbags and shoes, sheepskin rugs, silver-and-horn trays, or uber-trendy clothes, you'll find it here. The epicenter of life in Palermo

Viejo is Plaza Serrano (also called Plaza Cortázar); look for the quiet *pasajes* (alleyways) Soria, Russel, and Santa Rosa. Cool cafes, restaurants, and hotels abound. 🕒 **2 hrs.** **Bordered by Av. Corrientes, Av. Scalabrini Ortiz, Av. Santa Fe, & Av. Dorrego. Subte: No access.**

8 ★ Bar 6. A modern, but relaxed, high-ceilinged space with cement floors, couches, and comfortable sitting chairs, this restaurant is perfect for a leisurely coffee or great fruit batido (shake), as well as sandwiches, quesadillas, and more ambitious fare such as ceviche and grilled lamb. Plenty of folks come early for breakfast and others late for the excellent cocktails, DJs, and free Wi-Fi. **Armenia 1676. ☎ 11/4833-6807. www.barseis.com. \$\$.** ●

Palermo Cómo?

As Palermo Viejo has grown in popularity and become the center of all things hip, it has been unofficially subdivided, somewhat annoyingly, into districts known as Palermo Soho, Palermo Hollywood, and even Palermo Queens—signaling that Porteños, despite their city having been lauded as the hippest spot in South America, still look beyond their borders for inspiration.