

Buenos Aires Research Guide

This is a multi-authored document on carrying out research in Buenos Aires, compiled by staff and students at the Centre of Latin American Studies, Cambridge. We hope it will be helpful to you and to many others in the future. Please email Joanna Page (jep29@cam.ac.uk) if you have any new discoveries to add or to update any details that are wrong.

Where to stay

Most students/researchers would opt for one of three areas: Palermo, Barrio Norte or San Telmo. Palermo is the quietest and has low-rise buildings and lots of trendy cafes/restaurants, but it can feel a bit touristy, it's further out from the city centre and the transport links aren't as good, depending on which part you're staying in. San Telmo is a more traditional neighbourhood and lots of people love it, but some parts are more rundown. Barrio Norte is probably a good compromise – nice, safe neighbourhood with lots of facilities and good transport links to the centre. Best to choose somewhere near a subte station or near major bus routes (eg along Avenida Santa Fe, Las Heras, etc.).

Travelling around the city

You will need to buy a Sube card for a small deposit on arrival, which will work for buses and the metro. This can then be recharged at metro stations and many kiosks. For travelling throughout the city, the websites <http://beta.comoviajo.com/> and <http://mapa.buenosaires.gob.ar/> are very useful. You can enter your starting point and destination and they will calculate the fastest public transport connections between them. The city government website (the second website listed) has a better map function than comoviajo, and also allows you to select specific transport methods (i.e. you can select only buses if you're travelling after the subte has closed for the night) but it's useful to have both in case either website goes down! Be aware that the journey times given are often underestimates...

If you don't have data access outside of wifi areas, buy the pocket version of the *Guía T* from a kiosk as soon as you arrive. This has all the subte and bus routes in it and will help you navigate around the city when you are offline. The bus route network is extremely extensive and it is usually possible to find a bus going fairly near to where you want to go. They are often very regular and have stops every two blocks or so. Don't underestimate the time it can take to get across the city at peak times, though, or when it rains. Buses and the subte are very cheap. For both, you will need a 'Sube' stored value card, which can be bought in many places. It's easy to find taxis on the street; they cost a lot more in comparison but are still low in price compared to the UK.

Bookshops and markets

Ateneo. One of the premier bookshop chains in Buenos Aires. <http://www.tematika.com/sucursales/> Lots of branches, but the nicest one is at Av. Santa Fe 1860, in a converted old theatre. They don't mind you reading the books or even taking notes from them in the nice leather armchairs in the theatre boxes, or taking them into the café on the stage. Opening hours Mon-Thurs 9:00-22:00, Fri-Sat 9:00-24:00, Sun 12:00-22:00

Arcadia Libros. A bit of a mess, but they have a lot of books on art in particular. You'll need to ask for help as there is no discernible system to the shelving. Mon-Sat 10-8. Marcelo T de Alvear 1548.

Asunto Impreso. Mon-Fri 10-7. Dr. Rodolfo Rivarola 153. Recommended for art.

Proa librería. Av. Pedro de Mendoza 1929. Tues-Sun 11-19. Good collection on art.

Eterna Cadencia. Honduras 5574 in Palermo. <http://www.eternacadencia.com/ubica.htm>
Lovely bookshop with a good range and a little courtyard café. They often hold events or interviews with writers, so check their blog.

Librería Guadalquivir. Callao 1012 near Marcelo T. de Alvear. There is also a specialist cinema branch nearby.

Prometeo. Several branches, but one of the best is in Palermo, close to Plaza Serrano (Plaza Cortázar on some maps), at Gurruchaga 1580. <http://www.prometeolibros.com/MainSite/index.php>
Very knowledgeable staff, and there's a DVD shop with a reasonable number of Argentine films on the same premises.

Edipo. Good for second-hand books (head for the back of the store). Av. Corrientes, just downtown of Rodríguez Peña.

Club del Cómic. Montevideo 255. Comics only.

Librería Hernández: Av. Corrientes 1311. A classic, old-style (1960s, 1970s) bookshop located at the heart of Avenida Corrientes. <http://www.libreriahernandez.com/> Another branch at Corrientes 1436. Both stores have a very good selection of new books.

Libros del Pasaje (ex Boutique del Libro). Thames 1762.

La Crujía. Tucumán 1993, near Corrientes y Callao. They work closely with FLACSO (located opposite the bookshop) and specialise in communication, which includes cinema, media studies, etc.

Gambito de Alfil. J. Bonifacio 1402. This is in Caballito, a bit far from the central areas but worth a visit especially because it is just opposite the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Buenos Aires, where you can also find several second-hand books.

Clásica y Moderna. Callao 892. Lovely cafe and good bookshop. <http://www.clasicaymoderna.com/>. They often have live music in the evenings.

Librería de las Madres. Hipólito Yrigoyen 1584. The bookshop of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, specializing in human rights.

Paradigma (Maure 1786) and **Las Mil y Una Hojas** (Luis María Campos 1384) are handy bookshops if you live in Belgrano.

Plaza Italia. Has a second-hand book market on some days of the week, with quite a few literary/academic books.

Parque Avellaneda and **Parque Centenario** have also interesting second-hand book markets.

In general. A good place to start looking for books is on Av. Corrientes between the streets Uruguay and Av. Callao as there are lots of bookshops here which are good for both new and secondhand books.

If you get stuck, try looking for second-hand books on the website mercadolibre.com.ar. You 'reserve' the book online and then collect it from the seller (a bookshop or occasionally an individual), paying in person. This would be a time-consuming way to purchase lots of books but is very useful for texts you are struggling to find elsewhere.

Libraries

Biblioteca Nacional. Agüero 2502. Mon-Fri 0700-2400, Sat-Sun 1200-1900. It has an extensive collection, but it is quite patchy, books sometimes go missing, and strikes are frequent. It is usually a quiet place to work, though, especially in the mornings. If you plan to be a regular visitor, it would be worth applying for accreditation as an 'investigador', which you can do via the website in advance, although you will also need to supply a passport photograph.

The entry system is arcane and is subject to change without notice. You will need your passport, and you will need to register on your first visit at the main entrance. You can then pass through the barriers, but you must also check in at the round reception desk, and leave the details of your laptop/tablet at a side desk. Then you may take the lift to the 5th floor and use one of the computers to order books up (max 3 at a time). You can consult the catalogue in advance of your visit at: <http://www.bn.gov.ar/catalogos>. It is advisable to do this and to take a note of the details for the books you want to see with you.

Ordering books using the computers in the library is rather less than an intuitive process, but at the last visit (Sept 2018), the following procedure worked: Click 'Ingreso/Registro'. Under 'número de documento' type 'PA' plus your passport number (no gaps), and then repeat exactly for 'contraseña'. Search for the book, then click on 'solicitar en libros', then 'solicitar', 'solicitar' and 'solicitar' again.

There are lockers on the 5th floor and elsewhere, and you are not allowed to take other notes and books into the reading room itself, so it can be a bit of a wait for books to arrive. Best to go in the mornings during the week, when there are less likely to be queues for the computers. There is a very small café in the building which serves only snacks.

It is easy to get photocopies done in the reading room, even of whole books. You can also take your camera in (declare it when you enter the 5th floor reading room) and photograph sections of books if you ask for permission and fill out a form on the 6th floor.

Instituto de Literatura Hispanoamericana. 25 de mayo 221, third floor. Mon-Fri 0930-1900. Incredibly dilapidated building and the library doesn't look at all promising, but they do actually have a lot of books and journals. Take your passport to leave as a deposit if you want to take books out to get them photocopied at the stationery shop across the road. It belongs to the Universidad de Buenos Aires and the Filosofía y Letras catalogue can be consulted at <http://opac.filo.uba.ar/>

Instituto de Literatura Argentina Ricardo Rojas. In the same building as the one above but on the first floor. It is important to note that unlike the 'Instituto de Literatura Hispanoamericana', the 'Instituto de Literatura Argentina Ricardo Rojas' will not let you take journals out of the building to photocopy articles. Similarly, there are many books which are not allowed to be taken out of the reading room to be photocopied. The librarians do allow you to bring a digital camera with you, however, and to photograph the articles you want in the reading room to be printed at a later time. Tel 4342-9710.

Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana Dr Emilio Ravignani. Same building as the two libraries above, on the second floor. Mon-Fri 1430-1900.

Academia Argentina de Letras. Sánchez de Bustamante 2663. Mon-Fri 1315-1830. Catalogue can be consulted at <http://www.letras.edu.ar>. Pretty building, and they're very quick to fetch books and to do photocopies, although a recent visitor was only allowed a maximum of ten pages per visit. Books cannot be taken out of the building to be photocopied elsewhere, but the staff do not mind you bringing a digital camera to photograph pages to print at a later date. One of the easiest and most pleasant libraries to work in.

Centro de Documentación e Investigación de la Cultura de Izquierdas en Argentina (CEDINCI) Fray Luis Beltrán 125. (011) 4631-8893, informes@cedinci.org. Catalogue can be consulted at <http://catalogo.cedinci.org/>. Nice building, and they tend to be quick to fetch books and to do photocopies or scan materials. It is a specialised library and thus has a wide range of cultural and political materials (books, journals and other documents) related to the history of radicalism and the left in Argentina broadly understood. It is certainly a pleasant library to work in.

Biblioteca Municipal Miguel Cane. Talcahuano 1261. It does not have a huge collection but it might be interesting to visit because Borges was employed there.

http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/cultura/dg_libro/miguel_cane.php?menu_id=29789

Biblioteca Nacional de los Maestros. Pizzurno 953. http://www.bnm.me.gov.ar/la_biblioteca/

Memoria Abierta is an archive dedicated to human rights and has a lot of material on the 1976-83 dictatorship. They have a small centre at Corrientes 2554, 3º B, and you can request to consult documents and borrow films (see their online catalogue). You do need to request items well in advance, though, and an official letter of introduction may help. <http://www.memoriaabierta.org.ar>

DVD shops

Miles. Gurruchaga 1580. Next to the Palermo branch of Prometeo.

Solo Cine. Corrientes y Rodríguez Peña.

Librofilm. Corrientes 1145. In galería. Open 12-19.30 during week, 11.30-1330 Sat.

Artevideo. Lavalle 1999.

Liberarte. Corrientes 1555

Museums and Cultural Centres

Check these out as they often have interesting exhibitions or events on.

MALBA (Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires). Excellent museum of modern art; also has a cinema which shows art films. <http://www.malba.org.ar>

MAMBA (Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires). Serious and well curated collection, now in an expanded building in San Telmo.

Centro Cultural Recoleta. <http://centroculturalrecoleta.org>

Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas. <http://www.rojas.uba.ar>

Centro Cultural Haroldo Conti. In the building that used to be owned by the ESMA during the dictatorship. <http://www.derhuman.jus.gov.ar/conti/>

Fundación Proa. Contemporary art; in La Boca. <http://www.proa.org>

Teatro General San Martín. Drama, film exhibitions, contemporary art in general and other cultural activities. <http://www.complejoteatral.gov.ar/hm/institucional/comollegar0.html>

Museo Xul Solar. Museum of modern art. Good guided tours. <http://www.xulsolar.org.ar/index.html>

Galería Ruth Benzacar. Gallery of contemporary art. <http://www.ruthbenzacar.com/index.php>

Centro Cultural de la Cooperación. Corrientes 1543. Drama, concerts, dance, book launches and a wide range of cultural activities. It has a nice café and a bookshop as well, particularly good for books on memory and human rights. <http://www.centrocultural.coop/>

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Libertador 1473. <http://www.mnba.org.ar/index.php>

Nice places to go when you're not working

The **Centro Cultural Kirchner** (<http://www.cck.gob.ar>) has an extensive cultural programme, with most events, concerts and exhibitions free. Try to attend a concert in the fabulous symphony hall – tickets are free if you reserve them in advance via the website, but you will have to be fast to secure them when they go online.

Plaza Francia (near the Recoleta Cemetery) is a nice place for a stroll at the weekend. There's a craft market and a branch of a delicious icecream chain (Freddo). You can visit the famous **Recoleta Cemetery** and at times the cultural centre has interesting exhibitions.

Theatres – check out the listings at <http://www.alternivateatral.com/teatros.asp>

Cinemas, other cultural events, etc – check the *Espectáculos* section of Clarín or La Nación on online at <http://www.clarin.com/espectaculos/>. The cinema listings change every Thursday.

Milongas – attend a traditional neighbourhood milonga (you can just spectate if you wish!) – a good one is Milonga Parakultural at Scalabrini Ortiz 1331 in the Salón Canning. www.parakultural.com.ar

Restaurants – good restaurants and night spots are in Palermo, Las Cañitas, Puerto Madero.

Cafés – abundant and usually nice places to work in – no one will disturb you if you set up camp for 2-3 hours with your laptop or some books. Most have free wifi.

Crafts markets – lots of these around at the weekends, especially Sundays. The one in Mataderos is particularly big and fun to walk around, with traditional dance displays, etc., but it's about 45 mins on the bus from downtown.

Tigre (a delta to the north of Buenos Aires) – you can get there by bus or the more scenic/tourist-oriented Tren de la Costa. Makes a nice day out: some good restaurants, a pleasant waterfront to walk along, the Mercado de Frutos, and boat-trips.