



Budget Planner for Study in Argentina

Summer 2015

To begin the process of determining your personal study abroad budget, you should cross-reference this guide with [Preparing to Study Abroad](#) and the program costs listed on our website (www.ifsa-butler.org).

The information in this guide was compiled by staff in the IFSA-Butler Argentina office and based on personal experience and student feedback. Despite years of experience, we have yet to create a “fail-safe” budget. However, if you’re honest with yourself about your expectations and lifestyle, this guide will give you a good idea of how much money you will need abroad.

Costs are in U.S. dollars unless otherwise stated.

Tips for Determining Your Budget

- When calculating your budget, enter the minimum amounts on which you think you could manage. Include items such as meals, personal expenses, entertainment and vacation travel.
- Estimate a second set of figures that are more generous. You might be able to afford the more generous projection.
- If your resources are more limited, go back and make selective adjustments based on close questioning of what you really need, what would be nice to have and what you could do without. Your final budget should fall somewhere in the middle.

The budget worksheet (see the last page of this guide) itemizes costs you will incur in Argentina. It is in three parts—**fixed expenses**, which are expenses prepaid in the United States in American dollars; **variable expenses**, which are mainly in Argentina and include start-up and term-time costs; and **vacation expenses**, which are expenses if you travel or vacation in Argentina before or after the program. We have also added a line where you should enter your personal resources, which you will subtract from your estimated expenses to determine a working budget.

Exchange Rates

The currency in Argentina is the peso (A\$). The latest exchange rate is available at any bank, in most major newspapers and on the web at www.oanda.com.

Fixed Expenses

- **Program fee:** Use the “Services Included in the Program Fee” information in [Money Matters](#), but remember that your \$500 program deposit is credited to the fee.
- **Transportation costs:** Enter the cost of travel from your home city to Buenos Aires. You are responsible for your return travel to the city from which your return flight departs.
- **Cost of medical, travel and property insurance:** IFSA-Butler provides a medical insurance and assistance plan, included in the program fee. However, you should review the plan to determine whether you need additional insurance.

You might also wish to secure personal property or travel insurance. IFSA-Butler is not responsible for your personal property.

- **Passport:** The fee for obtaining a U.S. passport is \$165 or \$140 for renewing an expired one. If you already have a U.S. passport, ensure that it is valid for six months past the time you will be in Argentina.

- **Reciprocity fee:** The Argentine government charges a reciprocity fee for all U.S., Canadian and Australian citizens who enter Argentina. This fee is \$160 for U.S. citizens (valid for multiple entries for 10 years). The fee **must** be paid prior to your arrival in Argentina and you will be asked to present your payment receipt prior to boarding your international flight.

Variable Expenses

- **Personal items:** Estimate what you will spend on clothing, a new backpack or travel items. You will want comfortable, color-coordinated clothes and shoes suitable for walking, but you should also plan on buying some items abroad. See the "Packing" section in [Preparing to Study Abroad](#).
- **Orientation:** During orientation, housing, meals and some entertainment are provided. Lunch is not included, so you'll need about A\$35–\$75 per day.
- **Textbooks:** Our Buenos Aires staff estimate that summer students will spend roughly A\$200 on books.
- **Emergency reserve:** Whether it's a credit card or a cash reserve, set aside money for emergencies. You might want to consider US\$300–\$500.
- **Meals:** The program fee includes two meals a day, and you should budget A\$50–\$70 per week for lunches and snacks. A dinner out may cost around A\$120, but a cheap meal can be had for about A\$70.
- **Local transportation:** Most students walk or take the bus. On average, students in Buenos Aires can expect to spend about A\$10 a day getting to and from class by bus or subway. Additionally, you might want to include additional funds for traveling to entertainment options. We recommend adding about A\$30 a week for additional travel. Students can expect to spend approximately A\$60–\$70 each week on transportation.
- **Personal expenses:** Students report personal spending at about A\$90 weekly. They recommend stocking up on certain toiletries and prescriptions before leaving the United States, if there is room in your luggage. Toiletries in Argentina are expensive, especially contact lens solutions. Some items students often purchase after arriving in Argentina are hair dryers, clothing, and curling irons and hair straighteners because voltage converters are unreliable.

In your planning be sure to include laundry, haircuts, postage, school supplies, photocopying, etc. Stamps for an overseas letter cost about A\$5–\$12.

Also consider purchasing a prepaid phone card or perhaps using a mobile phone. Argentine telephone cards are available for as little as A\$20 and can be used to call within the country or overseas. A phone call from Argentina to the United States will cost around A\$2.50 per minute. Generally speaking, it's cheaper to use a U.S.-based calling card or to have someone from home call you. Mobile phones may also be available for purchase. More information about telephones will be included in your *Student Handbook*, which you will receive upon arrival in Buenos Aires.

Be sure to set aside money in case you need to visit a doctor or fill a prescription.

- **Entertainment:** Past students report spending about A\$150 a week on entertainment. For some students, the cost of alcohol should be considered—a night in the clubs could cost as little as A\$30 or as much as A\$60, depending on lifestyles.

A night at the theatre may cost about A\$70 and movies about A\$30. Our staff in Buenos Aires can give you suggestions for entertainment that won't wreck your budget. If you plan to rent movies, be sure to set aside money for that.

Vacation Expenses

We highly recommend that you invest in a good guidebook—*Let's Go*, *Lonely Planet* and the *Rough Guide* are some of the best. A guidebook can help you find good deals on travel, lodgings, meals and entertainment, as well as help you create a realistic vacation budget.

- **Travel:** Most students travel by bus, as it's one of the most inexpensive ways to see Argentina. The buses themselves can be quite luxurious and worth the trip. If you are pressed for time, flying allows you to see more in a shorter trip, but flying is generally more expensive. Check with our Argentina staff for their advice on the cheapest and safest ways to travel.

No matter where you're going, be sure to check out the State Department warnings; they're available at most travel agencies.

- **Accommodation:** Your program fee includes housing with a host family throughout the program for as long as classes are in session. Our Buenos Aires office and host families cannot store luggage if you travel before or after the program dates.
- **Meals:** While traveling, you will take most of your meals in restaurants, so you might want to estimate A\$35–\$55 a day, not including beverages. Food will cost more during popular vacation times.
- **Personal expenses:** The telephone call component of your budget will be higher during vacation periods than in term time, but other expenses should be about the same. Entertainment and recreational expenses will vary—obviously you will need less if you're backpacking and hostelling than when staying in city hotels. It's difficult to gauge how much you'll spend on clothing and gifts, but keep in mind you must carry (or ship) all those purchases home at the end of your program.

Approximate Costs of Commonly Purchased Items in Argentina

Now you're ready to begin your budget planning. Check for the exchange rate is still in effect by consulting the business section of any major newspaper or on the web at www.oanda.com.

Grocery Items

Milk	A\$4.50/liter
Yogurt	A\$3
Eggs	A\$4.50
Juice	A\$4.25/liter
Soda	A\$5.50
Bread (loaf)	A\$10/kg
Beef/steak	A\$35/kg
Apples	A\$6/kg
Oranges	A\$7/kg
Bananas	A\$8/kg
Lettuce	A\$10/kg
Potato chips	A\$12/kg
Coffee	A\$20/kg
Tea	A\$3.50
Potatoes	A\$8/kg
Sugar	A\$4/kg

Personal Items

Contact lens solution	A\$35
Deodorant	A\$10
Shampoo/conditioner	A\$20
Soap	A\$4.50
Toothpaste	A\$7.50
Tampons (box of 20)	A\$12
Hair dryer	A\$60
Haircut, men	A\$30
Haircut, women	A\$50
Clothing iron	A\$70
CD player/radio	A\$50
Laundry detergent	A\$20
Cigarettes (pack of 20)	A\$4.50

Entertainment

Movies	A\$30
Theatre	A\$70–\$200 (ask for a student discount)
Museum or gallery	Free
Quick meal	A\$30–\$50 (i.e., burger and a soda)
Beer in a bar	A\$20
House wine	A\$35 (by the glass in pub or wine bar)
Alcohol/mixed drinks	A\$30–\$50 (by the glass in pub)



Budget Worksheet

Argentina Summer 2015

Study Abroad Program: _____

Current Exchange Rate: _____

Fixed expenses

Program fee (see www.ifsa-butler.org)	US\$ _____	
U.S. domestic and roundtrip transportation	US\$ _____	
Medical, travel and/or personal property insurance	US\$ _____	
Passport fee (first time or renewal)	US\$ _____	
Reciprocity fee	US\$160	
Total fixed expenses		US\$ _____ A

Variable expenses

Visa fees	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Personal items (clothing, luggage)	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Orientation spending money	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Textbooks	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Emergency reserve fund	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Meals	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Local transportation	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Personal expenses	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Entertainment	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Total variable expenses			US\$ _____ B

Vacation expenses (Check with travel professionals and/or guidebooks)

Travel costs (train, airfare, etc.)	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Accommodation	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Meals	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Personal, including entertainment	A\$ _____	US\$ _____	
Total vacation expenses			US\$ _____ C

Total estimated expenses (add lines A, B and C) US\$ _____ D

List personal resources available, such as savings, family contribution, financial aid, summer earnings, etc.:

Total estimated resources	\$ _____
Less total estimated expenses (line D)	\$ _____
Equals your study abroad budget	\$ _____

You may want to double this amount just to be on the safe side while you're abroad.