

STUDY ABROAD

Mendoza

Dear UVa Student,

Congratulations on your decision to visit us in Mendoza, Argentina!

In coordination with professors Bailey and Grazioli, we've reserved your lodging, hired your shuttle bus, organized your all-inclusive group meals and programmed your excursions. But more importantly, we've helped to plan your academic experience.

Study Abroad Mendoza works closely with faculty at leading universities to create unique programs where experiential learning is the focus. We achieve this by leveraging our long-standing relationships in Mendoza to get you consulting engagements at local companies – companies that value your unique perspective as an outsider and your specific area of study. This isn't busy work or a simulation. You will be working on real projects at real firms, in an emerging market where it's anything but business as usual!

Our company was formed in 2008 by two long-time friends, David English from Nashville, Tennessee and Jose Mostafa from San Rafael, Mendoza. David and Jose both hold MBAs. David worked for ten years in financial and real estate consulting before cofounding Study Abroad Mendoza. For fifteen years Jose was the director of the Mendoza office of IFSA-Butler, a U.S. firm that runs semester study abroad programs around the world. David and Jose each bring unique skills and experiences to Study Abroad Mendoza. As your official hosts and guides, you will see both of them nearly every day you are in Argentina.

Now that you know who we are and what we do, please note this important information about your upcoming trip:

Airport Shuttle

1. Study Abroad Mendoza provides free private transportation to and from the Mendoza airport for the largest arriving/departing group of students. If you arrive or depart on your own at another time you will need to take a taxi to/from the airport for a cost of approximately \$6 dollars. There is an ATM in the airport where you can withdraw pesos using your U.S. bank card in order to pay the taxi.

Optional Activities and Cash

2. In case you are arriving prior to the official program start date, departing after it, or have a free day in Mendoza during your program, we have prepared a list of companies that offer rafting excursions, winery tours, gourmet cooking classes, etc. Please ask your professor or program support person for the Excel of optional activities.
3. Argentina is very much a cash economy, so you will receive a better exchange rate for cash than with your ATM or credit card. Many past students wished they had

brought more dollars with them to Argentina, especially since most businesses in Mendoza do not accept credit cards.

Top Tips

4. **Pack all valuables** (such as laptop computers, iPads, cell phones, e-book readers, etc.) **in your carry-on** bag as theft of items in checked baggage has been known to occur at some Latin American airports.
5. In case of lost luggage, also **pack at least one full change of clothes and any important medication in your carry-on bag.**
6. Bring allergy medication such as Claritin. Mendoza is a dusty high-desert environment with allergens to which you may not be accustomed.
7. Do not expect cars to stop for you at crosswalks in Argentina – they will not. Even though pedestrians have right of way by law, cars have right of way by custom!
8. Do not drink directly from bottles or cans (beer, water, soda, etc.), especially those larger than 750ml or at a meal.
9. Do not put your feet up on tables, chairs or stools.
10. Do not speak or laugh louder than the locals when out as a group (watch how the locals behave for insight on how to behave yourself).
11. Do not display expensive cameras, jewelry or computers in public places.
12. Expect for street children to approach you at sidewalk cafes where tourists usually congregate. Simply say “No, gracias” and they should leave. Repeat firmly if necessary.
13. Do not set your cell phone out on the table when having lunch, dinner, or even a coffee, especially if you are seated at a table on the sidewalk. It will likely be swiped when you least expect it.
14. In general, dress up rather than down. Argentines are fashion conscious (think Italy). Flip-flops are a no-no in public!
15. Kiss women and children on their right cheek when greeting them.
16. Always greet everyone when entering or leaving a room.
17. If drinking or eating out, everyone at the table is expected to order something.
18. At nearly all eateries other than Subway, McDonald’s, Mr. Dog and Kingo it will take at least 90 minutes to have lunch or dinner. When time is short, buy food at the Carrefour supermarket around the block from El Portal Suites hotel.
19. Also try the food court and stalls within the Mercado Central on Las Heras street (the stalls close for the siesta, but not the food court!).
20. Do not consider any itinerary you’ve received as set in stone and pay attention to announcements at the end of each day about the schedule for the upcoming day. Flexibility is key to success in Argentina given the informal local culture and the political as well as economic context.
21. Do not expect internet connectivity to be fast, anywhere.
22. In Latin countries public drunkenness is considered an indication of a very poor upbringing. Argentines never go out with the goal of “getting wasted” or doing shots. The objective is to socialize, not consume alcohol in large amounts.

Consulting Considerations

23. Attire for interfacing with clients is always business casual, at a minimum. Jeans, open-toed footwear and t-shirts are inappropriate.
24. Clients and Study Abroad Mendoza support staff arrange their schedules in advance based on students being on-site only during weekday mornings. Because both clients and Study Abroad Mendoza staff may have other commitments during the afternoon, visiting clients outside of pre-arranged morning hours may not be possible. Plan your work schedule accordingly and set clear yet realistic expectations for what can be accomplished each day. Afternoons and early evenings are for working in teams back at the hotel.
25. **Internet speeds are slow and unreliable** almost everywhere in Argentina, so plan on less than ideal connectivity as well as difficulties with bandwidth intensive applications at your hotel and at your client's offices.

Common Mistakes

Jose and David have supported dozens of consulting teams and seen hundreds of student presentations to clients. The following points are based on their accumulated observations over the past seven years.

26. Common mistakes made by past consulting teams:
 - a) Not asking clients for data/information well in advance of arriving in Mendoza
 - b) Not following up with clients if they don't send information in a timely fashion
 - c) Not fully reviewing client data/information before actually arriving in Mendoza
 - d) Not using the initial conference call as a tool to further define the scope of the project and confirm expectations prior to arriving in Mendoza
 - e) Not copying the Study Abroad Mendoza support person on all email communication with the client
 - f) Not stating time zones when specifying call/meeting times (EST, CST, etc.)
 - g) Expecting Study Abroad Mendoza to fully scope the project prior to arrival in Mendoza and deliver it to the team with nothing left to do other than complete the stated objectives (scoping is a key element to any consulting engagement and therefore a critical learning opportunity for students, hence Study Abroad Mendoza defines only the basic parameters of each project – these parameters may change once on the ground in Mendoza if mistakes a, b, c and d above are made!)
 - h) Allowing the client to broaden the scope of the project to such an extent that the work can't be completed in the allotted time (permitting scope creep)
 - i) Unrealistic expectations regarding the client's flexibility and availability (to meet or answer calls/emails outside established morning work hours)
 - j) Failure to consider cultural differences with response times to emails, requests for information, follow-through on deliverables, work hours (siesta), etc.
 - k) Lack of coordination among team members as to what questions will be asked of the client, who will ask the questions, and the order in which the questions will be asked
 - l) Failure to reach a consensus among team members regarding the scope of the project, roles and responsibilities of each team member (based on their

skills/background/interests), timelines and deliverables (and ownership of deliverables)

- m) Lack of rehearsal prior to final presentation so as to receive feedback from faculty/peers
- n) Failure to incorporate rehearsal feedback into final presentation, especially as relates to modifications for foreign audiences (speaking slowly, dropping slang, jargon and acronyms, speaking in turns, etc.)
- o) Inappropriate attire at the final presentation (clients expect and want formality that reflects the seriousness of the consulting work performed)
- p) Not testing/configuring laptops and PowerPoint slide formatting in advance for the projector used for the final presentation

So long as you take the preceding points into consideration, you're sure to have a successful and thoroughly enjoyable experience. Please be sure to consult the Study Abroad Mendoza student handbook for the finer points on cultural differences, health and safety, language and currency.

We look forward to seeing you in Mendoza!

Sincerely,

Jose & David
The Study Abroad Mendoza Team