

TRAVEL TIPS WHEN VISITING CÓRDOBA

1. CULTURE

Most of the books, resources, tourist websites focus on the culture of Buenos Aires, the largest city and capital of Argentina.

In Argentina every province and city, (kind of like in the US), has their own cultural differences. Just like you can't judge the entirety of US culture by studying only on state. For example, life and culture in Texas is much different than New York or California!

The rest of Argentina is actually a lot different and is generally considered more laid back and calmer than Buenos Aires, (BA). When we first came to Argentina this was actually one of the reasons that we chose the city of Córdoba to start our first term rather than in the the province of Buenos Aires.

If I was to pick a US city to compare Córdoba, Argentina, I would probably pick San Antonio, Texas from the 1980's. In some aspects it is more like the 20's or 30's in that you can go into a store and buy three eggs, a cup of flour and 5 nails! In Argentina, in each neighborhood you can find small family owned stores where you can buy groceries: the butcher, the baker, the vegetable vender, Etc. (We haven't found a candlestick maker yet!) You can literally buy all of your groceries walking on your way home and stopping in several small stores and at the same time converse with a lot of people at the same time.

2. MONEY - PESO TO DOLLAR

The Argentine Peso to the Dollar amount changes rapidly, from moment to moment and from day to day. At the time that you come to visit it will have already changed greatly from the time of this writing. An example of what I am talking about: When we first arrived in Córdoba in April of 2018 the exchange rate was 20 Pesos to the Dollar. The street exchange rate at the time of this writing is 488 Pesos to one Dollar. That means that a 100 peso bill would have had the value of \$5.00 US in 2018 and five years later the same 100 peso bill, if you kept it and saved it, would only be worth about 20 cents, less than a quarter. Oddly enough many times you will go to a grocery store with a giant stack of 100's to purchase an item.

Currently in Argentina there are 3 separate exchange rates:

1. The official rate:

This is the rate that the Government “says” that the Peso is worth versus what it is actually worth on the street.

2. The blue rate:

Also called, “Dólar Blue”. This is the rate that everyone, (including the Argentine Government), knows how much the Peso is worth.

3. The tourist rate:

Also called, “Dólar Turista”. This is a new rate that was recently established by the government for tourists that are using a Debit/Credit card. It gives the traveler a rate that is closer to the “Blue” rate.

Here is an example of what one Dollar would be according to today's rate:

Official rate: \$1.00 US = 243 Pesos

Blue rate: \$1.00 US = 488 Pesos

Tourist rate: \$1.00 US = 486 Pesos

(There are actually 3 other exchange rates for special circumstance but are not needed for the temporary traveler.)

Usually paying cash at smaller stores gets a discount, but sometimes it is easier to use a card rather than to carry large amounts of cash.

Cash

If you prefer to use cash when you visit. We can help you to get your cash exchanged into Pesos while you are here. Make sure that any Dollars that you bring are new and Crisp \$100 Dollar bills as they are the easiest to exchange with best rate.



3. PRICES

The prices of items continue to change and usually follow the value of the Dollar rather than the government rate value. At the current exchange rate (2023), you can round the value for quickly figuring out the price of an item that you may wish to purchase:

For example:

500 pesos is about\$1.00

5000 pesos is about\$10.00

50,000 pesos is about\$100.00

4. WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Just by being from the United States makes you “rich” in the eyes of the many Argentines. Many Argentines are opportunistic. They may be your friend simply because they see some value in being friends with you. So be careful who you trust if you are staying at a hotel or hostel. Ask us if you are being taken advantage of or not. If you are staying in a hotel and have a little time to explore be careful of the normal big city problems like pickpockets or thieves on motorcycle.

5. PHRASES TO KNOW

Learn some Spanish

Learn to pronounce Spanish letters:

Reading in Spanish is easier than learning to read in English: All vowels have one sound.

A = “ah” as in **cot**

E = “eh” as in **let**

I = “ee” as in **beet**

O = “oh” as in **oat**

U = “oo” as in **moon**

Sounds that are different here in Argentina are different from other Spanish speaking countries.

LL or **Y** = “sh” or “zh”

(**Pollo** (chicken) = “posho” or “pozho”)

(**Yo** (I) = “jo” o “sho”)

Yo me llamo (my name is):

In Mexican Spanish is pronounced = “**Yo me yamo**”

In Argentine Spanish is pronounced = “**Sho me shamo**”

There are a lot of free resources on learning some basic Spanish. If you should find yourself in a bind without a translator, learning to say these phrases will help:

Excuse me, I have a question “**Disculpe, Señor/Señora, una consulta....**”

Perdón “**excuse me**” as in “**pardon me**”, Usually if you accidentally bump into someone.

Permiso = Literally means permission. Said to someone if you need to go around them. If they are blocking an aisle or standing in your way.

Gracias “**Thank you**”

Muchas gracias “**Thank you very much**”

No, por favor/De nada”You’re welcome”, basically like saying, “No, it was nothing”

¿Qué hora es?”What time is it?”

¿Cuántos años tiene tu hijo/hija?”How old is your child?”

¿De dónde sos/eres/es/son?”Where are you from?” (Argentines love to ask this question no matter how good your Spanish is! They just know that you are not from here. I have had Argentines ask me this before I even opened my mouth! Argentines don’t refer to us as Americans in Argentina. People from the United States are referred to as “**Yankees**”, pronounced as “**Shankies**”, regardless of whether you are from the north or south of the Mason/Dixon line. So please don’t take offense if an Argentine calls you a yankee to your face. (They don’t mean anything bad by it!) In Argentina we are not referred to as “**Gringos**”. The term “**Gringo**” means, “**the sons of immigrants that work in the field!**”)

Vos sos”You are” (familiar form talking to one person, used in Argentina)

Tu eres”You are” (familiar form talking to one person, used in most other Spanish speaking countries. Argentines understand “**Tu**” but don’t normally use it amongst themselves.

Usted es”You are” (Polite form talking to one person)

Ustedes son”You all are” (Polite form talking to multiple people)

Soy de Estados Unidos/Soy estadounidense”I am from the United States”

6. ARGENTINE ENGLISH

Once they find out that you're from the US, many Argentines will want to try out their English on you. Have fun figuring out what they are trying to say! 😊

Many people do know simple English phrases. There are also many common English words that are used and woven into their daily speech that you might not recognize because of the difference in pronunciation.

If they don’t already consider themselves as English experts then they will enjoy you teaching them new phrases. Always give some genuine compliment, even if it’s for just trying. Argentines love friendly tourists and giving them an enthusiastic “**Muy bien, Very Good**” will make their day.

The two most popular subjects that Argentines like to discuss with visitors from the United States seem to be politics and differences and comparisons between Argentina and the United States. They have seen many US movies and many times follow the current events as filtered through a left oriented media here in the country. Many times we have spoken to people whose imagination of US people and culture was solely based on Hollywood. Then there may be those who ask you like some have asked us to get some famous actor’s signature for them, since we must know so many famous people since we are from the US. Try to smile and be willing to laugh at your mistakes and you will get along well with the people here.

7. TRANSPORTATION

We have a 7 passenger car here in Argentina with Argentine auto insurance. We drive, like many other ExPats that live here with our US driver's license. But both getting a Argentine license or driving with an international license are both options as well. There are also places available where one can rent a car here or hire out a vehicle with driver.

One of the most common means of transportation in the city is by using a combination of Taxis and Buses.

Buses require a bus card which you have to buy and refill at certain small stores called, "**kioskos**".

Taxis can be hailed at most any point in the city, but are easier to find on busier roads where there are more people. There are actually two types of "taxis". The first is the yellow cars that actually say **Taxi**. The second type is called a "**Remis**". These cars are a light green color and do not have a light in their window saying whether they are free or not. You can try hailing one of these if you choose. If they are not on a call to already pick up someone then they may stop. Besides the fact that they normally respond more to phone calls, they function the same as a regular taxi. Both Taxis and Remis have a visible meter inside the front window that you can see the peso amount of the fare as you are going. There are phone numbers that you can call to have a taxi pick you up from a place that might be out of the way. Hotels can call a taxi for you to come directly to the front door of your hotel. If you desire to hail a taxi just hold your hand out when you see a taxi coming with the "**Libre**" (**Free**) light on.

Always make sure that you have the address of where you want to go and plenty of pesos available. It would be rather embarrassing to not have enough money on you. But if you do need a taxi without sufficient money the driver will usually be willing to wait at the door of your destination while you get an "**amigo**" (**friend**) to help you pay.

Google Maps works well in Argentina as well as Apple or Wayz. You can save your destination spots in Google Maps beforehand as well as saving your hotel location to be able to show the taxi driver even if you can't communicate.

8. TIPPING

In general Argentines don't expect tips. Waiters and waitresses don't expect tips, but do appreciate it if you tell them to keep the change. "**Guarda la vuelta**" or "**Queda con el cambio**" work equally well for a tip. We do not tip a percentage of the cost of the meal like is often the rule in the US. Here even 10% could be a lot of money. The Restaurant staff are paid normal wages and do not expect huge tips. Taxi drivers also don't expect large tips but always appreciate you telling them to "**Keep the change**".

9. BEGGARS, STREET VENDORS AND WINDOW WASHERS

We try to keep small bills such as 10's, 20's and 50's available in a pocket when we are walking in the center for giving to a vendor or beggar that asks money from us. Having small bills in a pocket that is easy to reach is good so you don't have to pull out your wallet and reveal where your money is and how much you have on you. If you don't want to give them money, just say, **"No, Gracias"**.

If you do want to buy something from a street vendor, don't be flashy with your money. Be as discreet as possible. You don't want to become a target for pickpockets and robbers. Guard your cell phone at all times. Be aware of your surroundings and especially watch out for robbers on motorcycles.

10. LAWS, LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement tends to be rather lax in Argentina. Police cars always have their lights on and blinking. They pretty much don't stop cars for any traffic violation unless someone's careless driving results in an accident.

Stop signs are more like caution signs. Speed limits are not really enforced and it's very common for cars to start rolling before the traffic light turns green. So be careful when crossing at intersections. When driving, headlights are mandatory both day and night and the police will most likely stop you if you don't have your headlights on. Traffic police tend to be more strict outside of the city than in the city. It took me by surprise the first time that I was in a Taxi and the driver accelerated fast through a red light and then zoomed quickly around a police car and kept on going with nothing happening!

11. CRIME

Robbery is the main crime that a visitor might encounter, although in Córdoba there is much less crime as there is other places in Argentina such as Buenos Aires, Rosario or Tucuman. There have been reported kidnappings in the past but again that is not as common here as in other places. The main things that a thief would be after would be money or valuable items like cell phones and expensive jewelry. Guard your valuables! Handle money discreetly! Don't make yourself a target!

12. FOOD, WATER AND DRINKS

Food is basically inexpensive here in Argentina when comparing to the prices in the United States. Meat markets sell meat at a much better price than in the US. You will definitely want to have an asado while visiting in Argentina. Fruits and vegetables are safe to eat with just rinsing under tap water. You will find more bugs in some of the vegetables that in the produce in the US, but to us that means that there are probably less pesticides used in the production.

Tap water in general should be safe to drink, but as with most city water you may prefer bottled water which is readily available in most stores. Bottled water is available in two varieties: “**Agua sin gas**” that is regular non carbonated bottled water or “**Agua con gas**” or carbonated water. You may prefer something sweet to drink such as a “**un coke**” or “**un Pepsi**” or “**un Seven**” which what they call a 7 UP. The general term is “**una gaseosa**”. You can also get a fruit flavored drink (It has no fruit in it) if you ask for “**Un agua saborizada**”. Usually the options are apple, “**manzana**”; pear, “**pera**”; orange, “**naranja**” or pineapple, “**anana**”.

Maybe you just would like “**un cafe**”, a cup of coffee to drink. You could ask for “**cafe amargo**” if you like black coffee (literally means, bitter coffee), or “**cafe con leche**” which is coffee with milk.

13. SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

If you have any special dietary needs, please let us know as there are many options to accommodate. There are health food stores called “**dietéticas**”. They have several options to cater to many dietary needs.

Here are a few useful terms that may be useful to learn if you have any special needs:

Gluten free = “**Sin TACC**”, “**Sin gluten**”, “**Libre de gluten**”, “**Apto para Celiaco**”

Diabetic “**Diabetico**”, “**Sin azucars**”

Artificial sweetener “**Endulcorante**”

Stevia “**Estevia**”

Sugar “**Azucar**”

Honey “**Miel**”

Vegetarian “**Vegetariano**”

Vegan “**Vegano**”

Lactose intolerance “**Intolerancia a la lactosa**”

Peanut allergy “**Alergia al maní**”

Allergy “**Alergia**”

14. RESTAURANTS

You'll find plenty of restaurants in the city of Córdoba. We as your hosts will have some of your meals and restaurants arranged for your dining comfort. However if you get hungry for a midnight snack or just want to explore your surroundings here are some things that you need to know.

1. **No Free refills**

That little tiny cup of drink is all you get with the meal. Make it last or be prepared to pay full price for another drink.

2. **Not an all you can eat buffet**

Yes, you can grab a plate and fill it up with food but you pay by the weight. So don't be surprised at the price and no you don't go back for more unless you want to pay for another plate.

3. **Bad graphic design - the food in the picture looks bad**

The real hamburger is much bigger than the picture

It is a strange thing but many times in the US there is a great big hamburger on the menu picture and a sad, little, wimpy burger that you actually receive. In Argentina, it is the opposite (unless you are at a US company like McDonalds). Many times we have ordered an item on the menu that looked really small, only to find that in real life it turned out being a very large portion.

4. To go box

If you can't eat all of your food, you could then ask for a carryout box, "**para llevar**". Don't fight them for trying to take your food away. They take it and put it in a box for you and bring it back to you. Yes, we were that person, until the waitress assured us that she would bring it back.

5. Argentine Cuisine

Argentines are not spicy eaters. Don't expect Mexican food just because they speak Spanish. Think more Italian. European instead of Mexican. Even so called Mexican food here isn't very authentic.

6. Argentine foods to try

There are several amazingly great tasting foods here in this country and several dishes that are local to this area in Argentina.

Here is a short list of some things that you should try while you are here: Pizza, empanadas, steak, choripan, lomos, milanesa, locro, Armenian foods.

7. Common Argentine meal times

Desayuno (generally from 8-10 AM)

Desayuno "**Breakfast**" This word seems slightly deceiving as it will be on the menu and can be ordered at any time of the day. Refers to the first meal of the day. Argentines generally eat much smaller breakfasts than the US.

If you order "**un desayuno completo**", it will come with coffee, orange juice, carbonated water together for the drinks and to eat depending on the restaurant, it will include either "**Medialunas**" (croissants) or "**Criollos**" (kind of like biscuits) and maybe some fruit on the side.

If you order "**un desayuno light**", don't think that because it says light that it is less, it just means that instead of croissants or biscuits it comes with toast and something to spread on it.

If you are needing a breakfast with some eggs, look for "**un desayuno protanico**" as it should have some type of scrambled eggs.

Almuerzo (generally from 11-2 PM)

Almuerzo "**Lunch**". There will be several traditional Argentine places open during this time but if you miss this time window many will close for siesta which is generally between 2-4 PM. During this time there will be several places that will be closed. Some restaurants like those at the mall and shopping centers do not keep traditional hours, so, if you eat at weird times like us you can still find some places open. Check Google Maps for hours of restaurants.

Merienda (generally from 4-6 PM)

Merienda”**Afternoon Snack**”. During the time that a lot of people from the US are ready for supper or evening meal, the Argentine is having his Merienda. Basically the merienda is identical to what they ate for breakfast and is pretty much the same menu with a different name.

La Cena (generally from 8 PM-1 AM)

La Cena”**Supper**” About 8 PM a lot of stores in the center have just closed and the restaurants begin to open. Argentines tend to eat supper very late and go to bed late. This is really hard for US Missionaries that like trying to get their kids to bed at a decent US time. 😊

15. ARGENTINA GREETINGS

Argentina is a Latin American country with a heavy European influence. Argentines are really friendly and will want you to feel welcome. If they realize you are from the United States, they will probably shake your hand. However some will want to give you an Argentine greeting.

There are two main greetings in Argentina.

1. **Besos**”**Kisses**” (A cheek to cheek kiss)

This is the greeting that is given by all women and occasionally between men. Women might look at you awkwardly if you offer them a handshake. Now some men will offer American women a handshake because they know that it is customary for us. The best way not to be awkward is to let the woman lead. The lady will greet you and come toward you with her right cheek. You then turn your right cheek toward hers and your cheeks touch. There are not many but a few women that will give a kiss on both cheeks but the majority only kiss the right cheek. The number one thing to remember is that you don't actually touch your lips to their cheek, just the cheeks touch and a slight kiss sound is made. It's normal for Americans to feel awkward at first, but just remember that it's not awkward to them unless we make it awkward.

2. The Argentine Handshake

Men don't usually greet other men with the kiss on the cheek unless they are close friends. The typical greeting between men is a handshake. They often start off with a normal handshake and then grab each others hand another direction or sometimes pull in for a hug, but not always. They may not give you the full greeting knowing you are an American. There are times when the greeting is not necessary like at stores, restaurants or when they hold back shyly. Not all Argentines are comfortable greeting strangers. A good rule of thumb is to let them initiate the greeting. In other words follow their lead. Since the pandemic in 2020 fist-bumps have become very popular, especially amongst men and teens.

16. PROTESTS AND HOLIDAYS

In Argentina there are several national holidays, "**Feriados**" throughout the year that may take the visitor by surprise. There are about 20 each year with about 10 or 11 long weekends where a lot of normal activity shuts down. In addition to the national holidays there are also "**manifestaciones**", "**protests**" that seem to pop up without warning. I have never felt unsafe when a protest was going on. I normally just try to stay out of their way, although I have been known to use the opportunity to pass out tracks and engage protesters in conversation. Generally it is just a great inconvenience as the taxis and buses don't run during that time which can instantly change your plans. Recently, needed to go to the post office downtown and had to through a tightly packed group of protesters downtown representing the "Leftist Retiree Community". The motto in Argentina is to be flexible!

PRINCIPALES ATRACTIVOS DE LA CIUDAD



Siete Maravillas de Córdoba Construidas por el Hombre

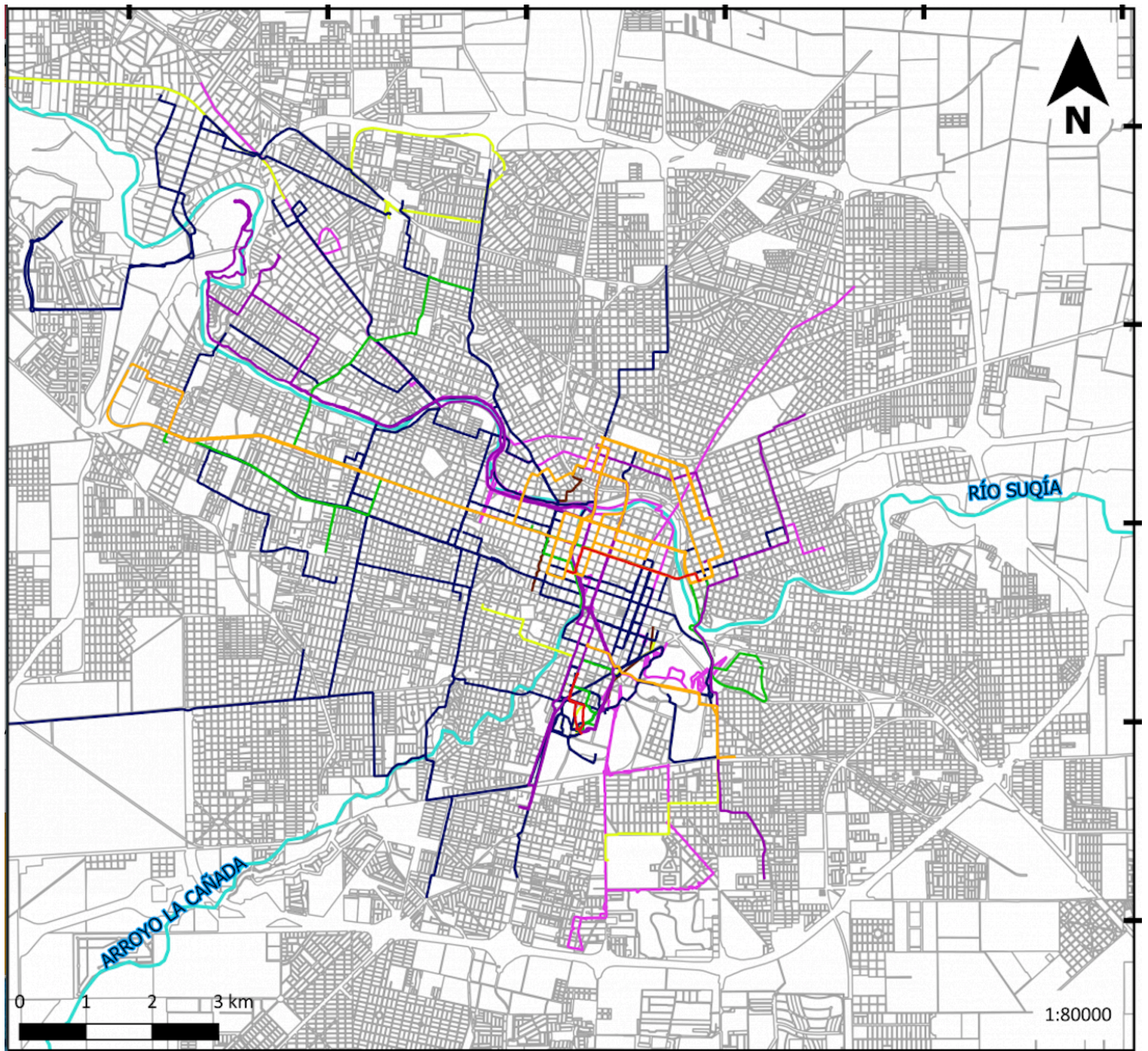
- 1 Iglesia de los Capuchinos
- 2 La Cañada
- 3 Palacio Ferreyra
- 4 Manzana Jesuítica
- 5 Iglesia Catedral

* La referencia indica el orden en que fueron elegidas.

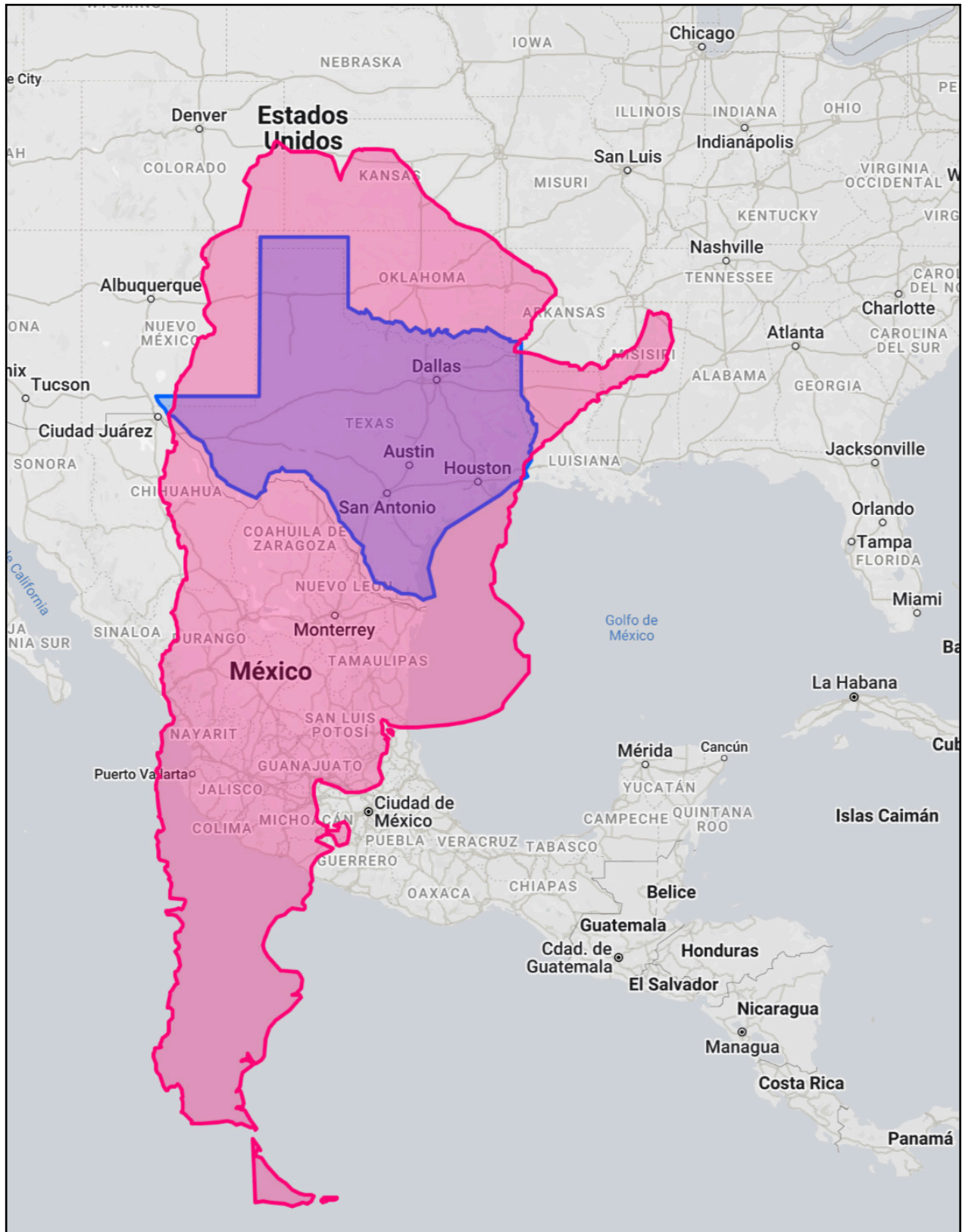
REFERENCIAS

- | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|---------------------------|
| 01- Plaza San Martín | 07- Museo Municipal de Bellas Artes Dr. Genaro Pérez | 14- Museo Religioso Ob. Fray J. Antonio de San Alberto | 23- Paseo de las Artes | 32- Paseo del Buen Pastor | 41- Centro Cívico |
| 02- Iglesia Catedral | 08- Basílica de Santo Domingo | 15- Centro Municipal de Exposiciones Jose Malanca | 24- Observatorio Astronómico - Museo Meteorológico Nac. | 33- Museo de Cs. Naturales | 42- Ciudad Universitaria |
| 03- Cabildo Histórico | 09- Museo de Arte Religioso Juan de Tejeda | 16- Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús | 25- Palacio Ferreyra - Museo Superior de Bellas Artes Evita | 34- Municipalidad de Córdoba | 43- Parque de Las Tejas |
| 04- Centro Municipal de Exposiciones Obispo Mercedillo | 10- Museo Obispo Salguero / Iglesia San Roque | 17- Museo Histórico UNC | 26- Estación Terminal de Ómnibus 1 | 35- Tribunales | 44- Museo de Antropología |
| 05- Iglesia y Convento Santa Catalina de Siena | 11- Museo Histórico Municipal Marqués de Sobremonte | 18- Colegio Nacional Nuestra Señora del Monserrat | 27- Estación Terminal de Ómnibus 2 | 36- Estación Ferrocarril Mitre | 45- Biblioteca Córdoba |
| 06- Cripta Jesuítica del Noviciado Viejo | 12- Basílica de Nuestra Señora de la Merced | 19- Iglesia de San Francisco | 28- Patio Olmos | 37- Nuevo Centro Shopping | 46- Museo de la Industria |
| | 13- Paseo Sobremonte | 20- Iglesia del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús / Padres Capuchinos | 29- Teatro del Libertador | 38- Faro del Bicentenario | 47- Museo Palacio Dionisi |
| | | 21- Plaza España | 30- Ciudad de las Artes | 39- Plazuela y Monumento "Gral. Juan Bautista Bustos" | |
| | | 22- Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio Caraffa | 31- Zoológico | 40- Paseo del Bicentenario | |

**Touristic map of the center of Córdoba
including notable tourist attractions.**



Street plan of the city of Córdoba



Size of Argentina compared to Texas