

Ambos Mundos

Christine Tsai suggests Spanish immersion destinations in the New World and the Old

With more than 330 million native speakers around the world, the ability to speak Spanish has become imperative. More than 50 million people speak Spanish as their second language, and each year this number is increasing. Not only is Spanish taught in local high schools and universities, but more students are traveling around the world to fully immerse themselves in the Spanish language and culture.

Because Spanish is so widely spoken, it is only natural that a range of dialects, pronunciations and accents have emerged in various parts of the world, leaving those who want to study Spanish wondering where they should begin. Whether it is the old world of Spain, or a Spanish-speaking country in the new world, there are quality institutions which will provide the committed learner with the opportunity to improve their language skills in just a few weeks.

New World: Buenos Aires, Argentina

Argentina's capital, Buenos Aires, is a South American city with European flare, offering a range of cosmopolitan cuisines and a riveting nightlife. One cannot escape dancing in the birthplace of the passionate tango, where tango houses or "milongas" litter the city.

Home to more than three million people, Buenos Aires is located on the southeastern coast of the continent. Bordered by the Rio de la Plata and the Riachuelo, the city's inhabitants are frequently called "portenos," emphasizing the city's role as a major port.

As for the language, Spanish learned in Argentina will be understood worldwide, however, there are a few subtle differences. According to Professor Monica del Milagro Plaza, the director of Bien Argentino, Instituto de Idioma y Cultura Argentina, "All of the varieties of Spanish are correct Spanish. Since Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, regional particularities are to be expected. If you learn all your Spanish in one place (Argentina, Ecuador, Spain, etc.), you will understand Spanish speakers all around the world. However, the [Argentine] differences are lexical. For example, [Argentines] use voseo instead of *tu* and they use only one "s" sound, as in "song," for words with s/z/c."

Academia Buenos Aires is dedicated exclusively to teaching Spanish as a foreign language, with emphasis on academic excellence, professional service, and complete immersion. Located in an exclusive, completely restored historic building in downtown Buenos Aires, on central Plaza de Mayo, the Academy caters to students from around the world in search of a high-quality academic experience. Motivated teachers with degrees in linguistics, specially-designed study materials, and years of experience, have earned the academy a cooperation agreement for university credit with the prestigious Universidad de Buenos Aires. The professional service at Academia





Buenos Aires is guaranteed through multilingual staff available 24 hours a day. The complete immersion approach is based on rich study materials, the possibility to live in homestays or shared apartments with Argentines, and the extracurricular program of the Academy — at least twice a week, staff accompany students to museums, exhibitions, different barrios, concerts, tango classes, asado dinners, wine tastings, etc. All activities are free of charge. The Academy has recently opened up a second school in Montevideo, Uruguay, based on the same approach and study materials, allowing students to switch destinations seamlessly. Montevideo is a three-hour boat ride from Buenos Aires across the Rio de la Plata.

Located a few yards away from Plaza de Mayo and Puerto Madero, Alem Spanish School offers a relaxed and comfortable ambience for learning Spanish. Each class is balanced with vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, conversation, reading, and writing exercises. Students are given numerous opportunities to practice their Spanish in a wide variety of formats. Aimed at maintaining quality programs for its students, Alem offers private lessons as well as group lessons with no more than five students.

Argentina Idioma Español, with four locations in Argentina, Buenos Aires, Patagonia, Cordoba, and Ushuaia, is the only Spanish language school in Argentina that specializes in teaching Spanish for adults and professionals. All of the school's professional teachers hold a university degree in Spanish as a Foreign Language, which guarantees intensive and solid learning progress in a minimal amount of time. AIE offers a wide variety of immersion Spanish programs in a private or group setting as well as a Business Spanish Program, a Medical Spanish

Program, internships and volunteer programs.

With locations throughout Argentina, including Buenos Aires, Argentina I.L.E.E. Spanish Schools provide the same levels of instruction at all their locations in order to provide consistent instruction for students who want to transfer to a different location.

All teachers at I.L.E.E. hold a University of Buenos Aires Master's degree in either Literature or Education, and have taught Spanish as a foreign language for more than three years.

Bien Argentino has two locations in Argentina, one in Buenos Aires and one in Salta. While most readers may only be familiar with Buenos Aires, Salta is located in the foothills of the Andes mountains in Lerma Valley. Also known as "Salta La Linda" or "Salta the Beautiful", tourists visit it every year for its magnificent landscapes, architectural wonders, and museums.

Because of Argentina's rich culture, the school emphasizes the importance of culture in its programs. The school offers three main kinds of programs: Spanish language, Argentine culture, and cultural immersion. For its cultural immersion program, Bien Argentino arranges cultural immersion activities in groups of four led by experts in Argentine art and history.

Buenos Aires Spanish School, which is located two blocks away from the National Congress, offers a variety of courses including an immersion program which consists of 20 hours of instruction per week, a semi-immersion program (10 hours a week), private classes, and Spanish language classes for children. Group courses consist of no more than six students per class and courses begin every Monday of the year. The school is a member of the Asociación Argentina de