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Argentina

Distinguished and Serious

English long form: Argentine Republic

Short form: Argentina

Spanish long form: República Argentina

Greetings:

Distance:	1 to 2 feet (0.3 to 0.6 meters).
Eye contact:	Eye contact among peers is initially very direct and then may taper off to intermittent glances.
Physical greeting:	Shake hands firmly; one kiss on the cheek is appropriate among friends or close colleagues.

Modus Operandi Optimus

Relationships drive transactions in Argentina. Alliances must be built before business can proceed. Never change your negotiating team. If you do, you will have to start over again. A serious, dignified personal demeanor is appropriate for first meetings.

Argentina is a bureaucratic country. In order to implement a project, multiple individuals must concur – including the top decision maker. Litigation is relatively common.



Legal System: Argentina uses a civil law system based on western European legal systems. In 2015, the National Congress passed a government-backed reform to the civil code, which replaced the one that had been in force since 1871.

There are no juries. Judges and lay judges examine witnesses first and drive investigations. Lawyers provide evidence but do not conduct witness preparation.

As of this writing, Argentina has not submitted an International Court of Justice (ICJ) jurisdiction declaration. It accepts International Criminal Court (ICCT) jurisdiction.

Government: Argentina is a presidential republic with executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

Executive Branch: The president is both chief of state and head of government.

Cabinet: The cabinet is appointed by the president.

Elections/appointments: The president and vice president are directly elected on the same ballot by qualified majority popular vote for a 4-year term (they are each eligible for a second consecutive term).

Legislative Branch: There is a bicameral National Congress (*Congreso Nacional*), which consists of the Senate (72 seats; members directly elected in multiseat constituencies by simple majority vote to serve 6-year terms with one-third of the membership elected every 2 years) and the Chamber of Deputies (257 seats; members directly elected in multiseat constituencies by proportional representation vote to serve 4-year terms with one-half of the membership elected every 2 years).

Elections: Senate—last held on October 22, 2017 (next to be held in October 2019); Chamber of Deputies—last held on October 22, 2017 (next to be held in October 2019).

Judicial Branch:

Highest court(s): The highest court is the Supreme Court (*Corte Suprema*). It includes a court president, vice president, and five judges. Judges are nominated by the president and approved by the Senate. The mandatory retirement age is seventy-five.

Subordinate courts: At the federal level: appellate, district, and territorial courts; at the provincial level: supreme, appellate, and first instance courts.

Languages: Spanish (official), Italian, English, German, French, indigenous (Mapudungun, Quechua).

Time and Dates: UTC – 3 (Buenos Aires is usually 2 hours ahead of Washington, DC). Argentina uses military time with the day/month/year format: e.g., 15:00 on 01.12.20 is 3 p.m., December 1, 2020.

Visitors are expected to be prompt. However, punctuality is not an historical virtue—and is not expected for social engagements (except at sporting events, the theatre, etc.). The more important the person, the likelier it is that you will be kept waiting.

Argentina is a polychronic society which values personal time and a civilized, slower pace to work. Appointments should be made in advance, but impromptu meetings occur. Long workdays are normal—an 8:00 p.m. appointment is reasonable. Argentina is very risk-averse and has a slightly shorter-term orientation toward business than the USA.

Money: The official currency is the *peso Argentino* (the Argentine peso, or ARS). Argentina's financial calamity of 1999–2002 still has an impact on business. Argentines do not trust banks, mortgage financing firms, or the government. That said, they are optimistic personal spenders and focus on enjoying the present. They are almost as indulgent as US citizens.

Communication Style: Argentines are initially quite tactful. They are well educated, value diplomacy, and detest conflict with respected associates. Discussions are not linear, and the same issue may be discussed from many different angles. Business is treated with the utmost seriousness, but conversations at meals and after the contract is signed are animated and engaging.

Argentina tests out highly on masculinity scales. Few women are represented as partners in legal firms, although this is rapidly changing.

Negotiating: Begin by finding common ground and mutual advantages. Then let Argentines drive the agenda. When questioned, explain your premise—how you analyzed the data and your methods of arriving at the conclusion. Expect detailed discussions—some of which may seem ancillary to the point.

There are a large number of psychologists in Argentina, so you may want to consider more implications and ramifications to your offer than normal. Subjective perspectives are valid, and the process may be protracted over multiple visits. Be ready to revisit topics that have been discussed.

Until the entire contract is signed, each part is subject to renegotiation. Negotiators have a reputation for toughness, yielding very little. Abjure high-pressure sales tactics; be formal and honest.

Decision-Making: By Latin American standards, Argentines are far more individualistic than those in any other country, and a single senior leader can make final decisions. However, kinships and friendships play a significant role in those choices. In comparison to the USA, Argentines are almost collectivistic in their decision-making patterns.

Appearance: Refined attire is necessary to be taken seriously, and your entire wardrobe will be scrutinized. Argentines are more European in their tastes than much of Latin America, and there is a strong preference for French and Italian style. Subtle, elegant tailoring and elite brands are important. Do not be ostentatious; do not be provocative. Invest in subdued and expensive clothes and accessories.

Privacy: Never offer to part with too much data, but expect questions about your family, your hobbies, your background, etc. Requesting demographic data on employees can be problematic, but as in parts of Europe, résumés often contain photos, marital status information, and nationality.

Modus Operandi Malus

Do not complain about smokers, refuse an invitation to dine, criticize Malbec or the grass-fed Argentine beef.

Contribution from Marcelo Bombau, Partner, M. & M. Bomchil Abogados

Once you are good friends, Argentines tend to make jokes about you. These are not meant to be taken critically—they are more like endearing, gentle putdowns about things like your wardrobe or your weight.

For example, I was in a supermarket one day, and had a question about a product in my hand. Without looking up, I called out for my significant other to come over and help by saying “¡Oye gordita!” (Hey, Curvy!) When I glanced up, 5 or 6 women were looking at me curiously—ready to help! Nobody takes offense. We only mock the ones we love.