

## MAJOR SHOPPING AREAS

**Calle Florida**, the Microcentro's pedestrian walking street, is home to wall-to-wall shops from Plaza San Martin to all the way past Avenida Corrientes. As you approach Plaza San Martin from Calle Florida, you'll find a number of well-regarded shoe stores, jewelers, and shops selling leather goods. The [Galerias Pacifico](#) mall is located at Calle Florida 750, at Avenida Cordoba, with a magnificent dome and stunning frescoes painted by local artists. Over 180 shops are open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 9pm and Sunday from noon to 9pm, with tango and folk-dancing shows held on Thursday at 8pm.

**RECOLETA Avenida Alvear** is Argentines response to the Champs-Elyse. And, without taking the comparison too far-it is indeed an elegant, Parisian-like strip of European boutiques, cafes, antiques stores, and art galleries. Start your walk at Plaza Francia, in front of the Recoleta Cemetery, and continue to Cerrito, or Avenida 9 de Julio. Along Calle Quintana, French-style mansions share company with upscale shops. Nearby [Patio Bullrich](#), Av. del Libertador 750, is one of the city's most famous malls. Its 69 shops are open daily from 10am to 9pm. It is considered to be upscale, but has offerings similar to other malls in the city. It has an excellent food court, however, and is a good place to stop for a snack.

**AVENIDA SANTA FE** Popular with local shoppers, Avenida Santa Fe offers a wide selection of clothing stores with down-to-earth prices typical of stores catering to the local middle class rather than tourists. You will also find bookstores, cafes, ice-cream shops, and cinemas here. The [Alto Palermo Shopping Center](#), Av. Santa Fe is another excellent shopping center, with 155 stores open daily from 10am to 10pm.

## Outdoor Markets

\*\*The **San Telmo Antiques Fair** which takes place every Sunday from 10am to 5pm at **Plaza Dorrego**, is a vibrant, colorful experience that will delight even the most jaded traveler. As street vendors sell their heirlooms, singers and dancers move amid the crowd to tango music. Among the 270-plus vendor stands, you will find antique silversmith objects, porcelain, crystal, and other antiques. It's especially famous for the tango performances, which can go on into the late evening, even if most of the vendors themselves close up at 5pm. Plaza Dorrego, at the intersection of Defensa and Humberto. Metro: Independencia

Head to **Cabildo Patio Feria** when doing sightseeing in the Plaza de Mayo area. This fair is held on Thursday and Friday from 11am to 6pm in the small garden patio behind the Cabildo, or old city hall. You'll find lots of locally made crafts here, especially pottery, stained glass, and jewelry.

<http://www.patiodelcabildo.com.ar/home.htm>

Friday to Sunday from 11am to 6pm, the Madres hold the **Feria de Madres de Plaza de Mayo** fair in front of their headquarters overlooking Plaza Congreso. The fair has antiques, crafts, food, and a few interesting book vendors. Sometimes there is also live music. This is among the most casual and least touristy of all of the fairs, so it offers an interesting chance to chat with locals.

The La **Boca Fair** is open every day from 10am to 6pm or sundown. It's the most touristy of all the fairs, and most of the items are terribly overpriced. When the vendors start leaving at the end of the day, you should too, for safety reasons.

\*\***Recoleta Fair** (aka **Feria de Plaza Francia**) which takes place Saturday and Sunday in front of Recoleta Cemetery from 10am until sunset, offers every imaginable souvenir and craft in addition to food. This has become the city's largest fair, completely taking over all the walkways and then some.

<http://www.feriaplazafrancia.com/home.asp?/En>

### 3 Major Shopping Malls

**Alto Palermo** Located on Santa Fe in the Barrio Norte shopping area, Alto Palermo offers several floors of shopping, with about 155 stores and services. This mall is significantly less touristy than the Galerías Pacifico. The mall's design is not very straightforward and the connections between levels can be confusing. If shopping with children, this is one that they can easily become lost in. Alto Palermo is open daily from 10am to 10pm. **Av. Santa Fe and Coronel Diaz. @ 1115777-8000. [www.altopalermo.com.ar](http://www.altopalermo.com.ar) Metro: D-line Bulnes.**

**Galerías Pacifico** \*\* Located on Calle Florida, the walking street in the Microcentro, the Galerías Pacifico is probably the most famous all in Buenos Aires. Architecturally, it is stunning, designed to recall the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan, with its long halls, glass cupola, and several tiers of shops. First opened in 1891, in 1945 its main dome was covered with stunning frescoes painted by local artists. There are over 180 shops here, and they offer a free service where all your purchases can be sent to your hotel, so you can shop without the schlep. But Galerías Pacifico is more than shopping: The building also houses the Centro Cultural Borges, where you can see shows, check out art displays, take tango lessons, and see performances by Julio Bocca's Ballet Argentino. It's open daily from 10am to 10pm. **Calle Florida 750, at Av. Cordoba. (S) 1 115555-51 10. Metro: San Martín. <http://www.galeriaspacifico.com.ar/ingles/home.htm>**

### 4 Other Shopping Highlights & Centers

**Galería Promenade Alvear** Naturally, any place attached to the Alvear Palace hotel is going to be exclusive. You'll find wedding shops, jewelry stores, and antiques and art boutiques, as well as a few clothing stores here. Store hours here vary tremendously, with some shops only open on weekdays and some closing during lunch hours. Others are by appointment only. The back of U L'Orangerie, the Alvear's lobby restaurant, opens into the central courtyard of the shopping area, making for a pleasant place to grab a coffee. Av. Alvear 1883, at Ayacucho; attached to the Alvear hotel. No metro access.

\*\***San Telmo Market** Though this is definitely a place to shop, the building is also worth seeing on its own. The San Telmo market opened in 1897, and it is a masterpiece not just for its soaring wrought-iron interior, but for the atmosphere of decades ago you still find here. Half of the market is made up of things that locals need—butchers, fresh-fruit-and-vegetable grocers, and little kiosks selling sundries and household items. This part looks like the kind of place your grandmother probably shopped in when she was a child. I recommend chatting with the staff in these places who seem to have all the time in the world. The other half is more touristy, but never overly so, with various antiques and vintage clothing shops. There are several entrances to this large market, almost a block in size but squeezed between several other historic buildings. It's open daily from 10am to 8pm, but each stand has individual hours. 961 Defensa or Bolívar 998, both at Carlos Calvo. Metro: Independencia. <http://www.frommers.com/destinations/buenosaires/A34255.html>

## FASHION

**Rapsodia** There are many branches of this chain of women's clothing stores, which tends to exhibit exotic fabrics and displays, with virtually all of their items made in Argentina. More than six of these stores exist throughout Buenos Aires, but they have two large stores on the same street in Las Canitas, one selling new clothing, the other mainly vintage. Open daily from 10am to 9pm. **Av. Arguibel 2899 and Av. Arguibel 2860, both at Arce.Metro: Carranza.**

\* **Shesh** This is a funky little store where Brady Bunch-style multicolored underwear is the highlight. They are strictly a women's store, but their racy ads show men wearing the clothing. The styles here are best for very young women, and they have many teen and 'tween customers. In addition to fashion, they also offer a few women's accessories and jewelry. The designer is Silvana Troncoso, who is considered a rising young designer in the city. All the clothes are made in Argentina. The store has a "Power Puff Girl" feel to it, with its hot-pink decor and fashion-with-a-punch philosophy. This store opened in August 2004, and they now have plans to open a few branches around the city. Open daily from 1 lam to 8pm, though hours fluctuate in the summer. **Pasaje Russel 5005, at Borges.. No metro access.**

## LEATHER

Many leather stores will also custom-make jackets and other items for interested customers, so do ask if you see something you like in the wrong size or want to combine ideas from pieces. While most can do this in a day or two, if you are looking to really have something from Argentina, to avoid disappointment, you should start checking out stores and prices early on in case something is complicated to make and might take more time than usual.

\***Ashanti Leather Factory** This small store on Calle Florida offers a wide selection of leather goods, from men's and women's jackets to funky and interesting women's pocketbooks. Their prices on jackets are not the best, but women's accessories are very competitively priced, and you can always bargain. Best of all, their factory is in the basement of the shop, so they can easily custom-make almost anything for you. Ask them for a tour through which you can meet the craftspeople Roberto, Victor, and Oscar, who sit surrounded by sewing machines and colorful bolts of leather. Open daily from 10am to 10pm. Calle Florida 585, at Lavalle. Metro: San Martin.

\*\* **Casa Lopez** Widely considered among the best *marroquineria* (leather goods shop) in Buenos Aires, Casa Lopez sells an extensive range of Argentine leather products. (There is also a shop in the Patio Bullrich Mall.) Marcelo T. de Alvear 640, at Maipu, near Plaza San Martin. Metro: San Martin.

**Chabeli** This store offers a wide selection of women's shoes and pocketbooks, with nothing costing more than \$75. They also offer an interesting selection of handmade Argentine jewelry from crystals and semiprecious stones. Designs of both leather accessories and jewelry fall into two main categories: native Argentine to very pretty and feminine, using pink and pastel materials. Open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 8pm, and Sunday from noon to 7pm. Calle Florida 702. Metro: San Martin.

**Cardon.** Pine floors, pine walls, and pine cabinets-it's all very country down at Cardon. The estancia crowd comes here for reasonably priced, no-nonsense sheepskin jackets, cashmere sweaters, and riding boots. Items from the line of *talahareria* (traditional gaucho-style leather items), including cowboy hats, make great gifts. Calle Florida 986 Plaza San Martin, *La Recoleta*

**El Nochero** All the products sold at El Nochero are made with first-rate Argentine leather and manufactured by local workers. Shoes and boots, leather goods and clothes, and decorative silverware (including *mates*, for

holding the special herbal tea Argentines love) fill the store. Open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 9pm, Sunday and holidays noon to 9pm. Posadas 1245, in the **Patio Bullrich Mall**. No metro access.

**Mayorano.** If Katharine Hepburn had dressed in leather, Mayorano would have been just up her alley. The selection is small, but the ultra-simple tan suits and trench coats in flawless calfskin are more than enough to justify a visit. Av. Alvear 1824, *La Recoleta*

**Prune** \*\* *Galerias Pacifico* This is a chain with additional stores in Alto Palermo, **Patio Bullrich**, and many other locations in town and throughout Argentina, but the Florida store is among their largest. It's great for women's accessories and small leather goods, and carries some of the best purses in all of Buenos Aires. Most of the purses run about \$65. The store has a light, airy feel and even a back patio. Most of the things here are Argentine products but a few are Chinese-made. Open daily from 10am to 11pm

**Rossi & Caruso** *Galerias Pacifico* This store offers some of the best leather products in the city and is the first choice for visiting celebrities-the king and queen of Spain and Prince Philip of England among them. Products include luggage, saddles, and accessories as well as leather and chamois clothes, purses, wallets, and belts. There is another branch in the Galerias Pacifico mall, AV. Santa Fe 1377, at Uruguay. Metro: Bulnes. Also *Posadas 1387, La Recoleta*

**Uru Recoleta (Sam Brown)** If there's one thing to bring home from Buenos Aires, it's a leather jacket. Samantha went shopping at Uru Recoleta and discovered this store can make a custom-fit jacket in five hours! From hundreds of selections you pick the style, the color and the leather. The quality is wonderful, and the price can't be beat! Vicente Lopez 2132 (south side of cemetery)

## Buenos Aires Shopping

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# Calle Florida Shopping

