

Walking Tour 5: Avenida Alvear



Start: The Alvear Palace Hotel.

Public Transportation: There are no real public transportation options; a taxi is best.

Finish: The Four Seasons Mansion.

Time: 1 hour, provided you don't get caught up shopping.

Best Times: Monday through Saturday between 1 am and 8pm.

Begin at Av. Alvear 1891, at the intersection of Ayacucho, site of the:

1) Alvear Palace Hotel This is the most famous hotel in BA, and certainly its most elegant. Opened in 1928 and built in a French neoclassical style, the luxurious lobby is a gilded marble confection, and the central dining area, known as L'Orangerie, and resembles the Palm Court in New York's Plaza Hotel

Mayorano Av. Alvear 1824, La Recoleta

Cardon Av. Alvear 1847, La Recoleta

Walk out of the Alvear Palace Hotel and with the hotel to your back, cross Avenida Alvear, turn to your left, and then cross Calle Callao before heading to Av. Alvear 1750, home to the:

2) Ralph Lauren Shop Shop here if you want, but I recommend taking a look at the physical setting of this Ralph Lauren store, one of the most exquisite of all the shops on this street. It was once a small Art Nouveau mansion. Within the interior, much of the ornate and heavy wood decoration remains, and a stained-glass skylight oversees the central staircase.

Continue walking down Avenida Alvear, staying on this side of the street. Cross Parera Street to Av. Alvear 1683, location of the:

3) Duhau Palace Almost hidden behind overgrown trees, this high Victorian Gothic revival structure almost looks like part of a church or the setting for a horror movie. The structure was built in about 1890, in a part of the city that, at the time, was considered to be in a suburban neighborhood. Back then, there was almost nothing surrounding it. Now the multicolored brick facade of this structure contrasts strongly with the neoclassical limestone and white marble structures that were built over the next 3 decades in the area.

Continue walking down Avenida Alvear until you get to no. 1637. the:

4) Apostolic Nunciature, or Anchorena Palace Though originally built for the wealthy Anchorena family, they never lived in this magnificent French-style mansion with its distinctive circular front. The next owner wanted to give the building to the Vatican. but the local representative felt it was too ostentatious. Still, the Papal insignia, a papal tiara over a pair of keys, remains on the building. As of this writing, the palace is surrounded by scaffolding and construction. Eventually the alace will be the entranceway for a new Hyatt hotel being built behind it, which will certainly be another last word in BA luxury.

Continue walking for 2 more blocks until you reach a widening of the street and a small plaza with a statue and fountain. the:

5) Plazoleta Carlos Pellegrini I think this is one of the most beautiful of all the small plazas in BA, not just for the plaza itself, but also for the buildings that surround it. A large, recently restored statue of Carlos Pellegrini, a famous intellectual and industrialist and a senator representing the province of BA, sits in the center of this plaza. The statue was created in France by Felix Coutan and dedicated in 1914. A small fountain and a bench add to the relaxed environment. This plaza is the most Parisian-appearing part of Recoleta, and it gives an idea of all that was lost when BA decided to widen Avenida 9 de Julio in the 1960s, destroying other little corners of the city that were similar to this one.

With Carlos Pellegrini to your back, turn to your right and cross the street, heading to Calle Arroyo 1130, site of the:

6) Brazilian Embassy First, a note about the name of this street. Arroyo means "stream" in Spanish, and one once flowed through this area until it was filled in as the city began to develop in this area. The Brazilian Embassy, one of the city's most beautiful embassies, is one of the most impressive structures overlooking this plaza. Once a private mansion, it took almost 20 years to build and has details borrowed from the Palais Fontainebleau in France.

With the Brazilian Embassy behind you, turn to your right, cross Calle Cerrito, and stop once you reach the other side. Be aware that this odd intersection has a confusing traffic pattern, so be careful when crossing to see the:

7) French Embassy It's hard to believe when you see this beautiful structure, but the plans for the expansion of Avenida 9 de Julio originally included the demolition of this building. Fortunately, the French government refused to give up the building, and it now serves as the vista point for the northern terminus of Avenida 9 de Julio. Created by the French architect Pablo Pacer, it became the French Embassy in 1939. The building is a beautiful example of Belle Epoque, and you should be sure to notice the main dome and the grillwork on the surrounding fence. You'll notice *trompe l'oeils* of mansard roofs and windows on some of the surfaces of the surrounding modern buildings, an attempt to give an impression of the Belle Epoque buildings that were demolished to make way for the expansion of Avenida 9 de Julio.

With the Obelisco on Avenida 9 de Julio to your back, cross Arroyo and Cerritos, stopping at the corner, where you'll find the:

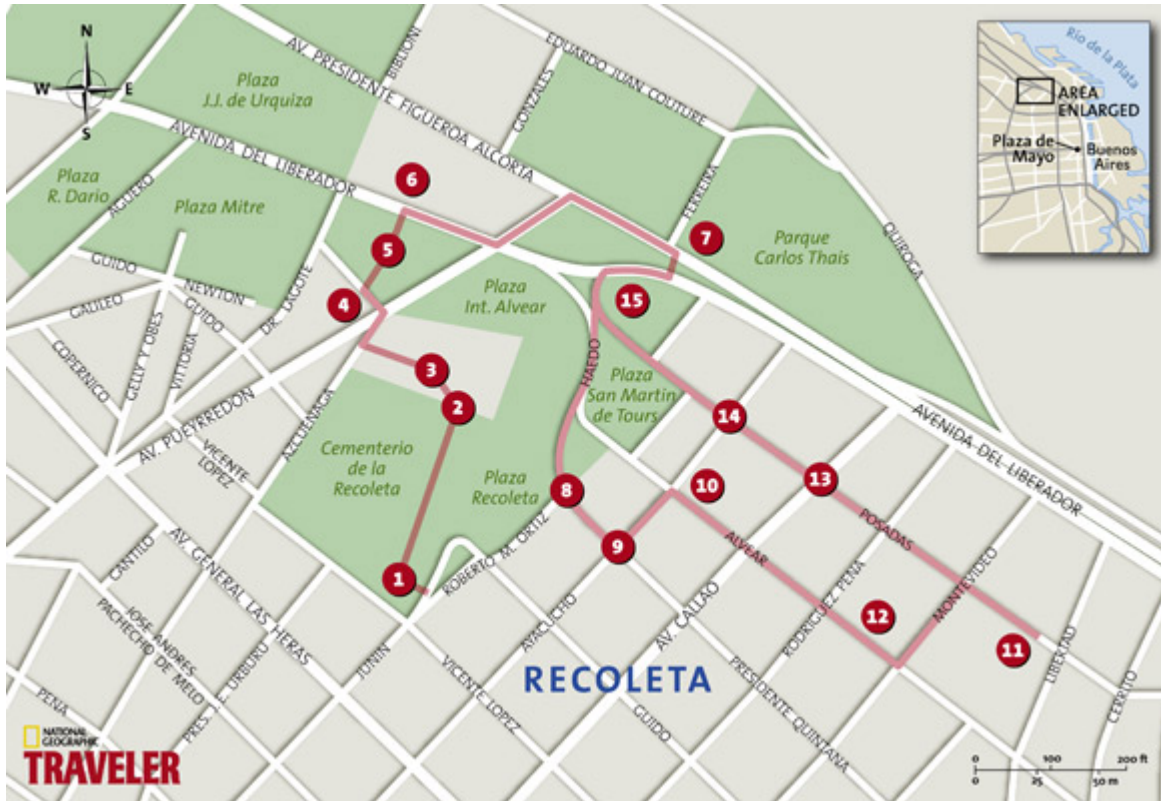
8) Jockey Club Carlos Pellegrini, whose statue sits across the street in the plaza out front, started the Jockey Club in 1882 along with other like-minded equestrians. The Jockey Club became a major part of the social networking scene for the wealthy and powerful of Argentina. The Jockey Club's original Calle Florida headquarters were burned to the ground on April 15, 1953, after a riot provoked by Peron against this elite institution. Peron seized the assets of the organization, but it was able to regroup in 1958 a few years later he had been thrown out of power. This current building was once the mansion of the Uzue' de Casares family and the organization moved here in 1966. It is not open to the public but its interior is full of tapestries, works of art and an extensive library.

Walk back across Cerritos, walking only for a few feet toward the immense tower a block down, but stop when you get to Calle Cerrito 1455, site of the:

9) Four Seasons Mansion The official name of this Louis XIII-style redbrick palace with heavy quoins is Mansion Alzaga Unzue. It was built in 1919 and was designed with three facades, anticipating the eventual construction of Avenida 9 de Julio to the east of the building. It was designed with an extensive garden complex in front of its northern facade. The mansion is now part of the Four Seasons Hotel, and it is attached to the main tower through a garden courtyard. The tower sits on what were once the mansion's gardens. The tower and the [mansion](#) were previously known as the Park Hyatt until the Four Seasons purchased the property.

Congratulations, you have finished another tour. There are no nearby metro stations, but there are plenty of cabs in the area that can get you wherever you want to go next.

Buenos Aires Walking Tour: Recoleta



Recoleta

The Recoleta neighborhood is the hub of the city's aristocracy, where old-money families live in pricey apartments along avenues with soaring French architecture. Men in ascots and tweed jackets sip espresso at shaded sidewalk cafés, and women with heavy fur coats walk tiny dogs.

*Begin your stroll at the **WHEN CATS FED?***

(1) [Recoleta Cemetery](#) (Junín 1790) and lose yourself among the gorgeous family mausoleums. Look for former first lady and Argentine icon Eva Perón's final resting place—admirers always leave flowers and other tributes—but be sure to wander the other corridors.

[Uru Recoleta](#) (Sam Brown) This store can make a custom-fit jacket in five hours! Vicente Lopez 2132 (south side of cemetery)

Next to the cemetery at Junín 1892 is the

(2) [Nuestra Señora del Pilar Basílica](#), which was built in 1732 by Jesuit architect Andrés Blanqui. Many of the original altarpieces, structures, and art are impeccably maintained.

Next door is the

(3) [Recoleta Cultural Center](#) (1930 Junín), featuring several interesting local and international art exhibits in its 27 exposition rooms.

Beyond that, browse in

(4) [Buenos Aires Design mall](#) at 2501 Avenida Pueyrredón, one of the city's fancier malls—known to locals as “shoppings”—where stores sell high-end leather furniture, appliances, and art. **HARD ROCK CAFÉ**

During the week, the nearby

(5) Plaza Francia is a quiet park where kids play on swing sets, but on weekends the plaza fills with dozens of artists peddling paintings, mate gourds, hand-knit clothing, and other products of varying quality. Snuggling couples and picnicking families recline on the grass and watch rock bands and puppet shows.

Across Avenida del Libertador, you can visit

(6) [Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes](#) (1473 Libertador) for free.

Just beyond the museum is the monument to

(7) General Carlos María de Alvear.

Head back toward Avenida Quintana toward the Recoleta neighborhood. Just beyond the gnarled branches of an old gum tree, stop at the notable cafeteria

(8) [La Biela](#) (corner of Avenidas Quintana and Roberto M. Ortiz) for a strong (and overpriced) coffee and top-notch people watching. The café is the historic anchor on this strip of restaurants and bars along Avenida Roberto M. Ortiz that serve moderate quality food, but have great patios for dining outdoors on a sunny day.

Amble down the Quintana into a neighborhood of treed sidewalks, French balconies, grand marble facades, and pricey brand-name stores.

The **(9) [Un' Altra Volta](#)** ice cream shop at Quintana and Ayacucho serves decadent BA-style ice cream.

Turn left on Ayacucho and walk to Avenida Alvear, a street lined with beautiful apartment buildings and hotels. Among the gems:

(10) Alvear Palace Hotel (corner of Alvear and Ayacucho), in a 1928 building STOP IN TO LOOK

(11) Ceasar Park Hotel (1232 Posadas)

(12) Palacio Duhau Park Hyatt BA (1661 Avenida Alvear)—all elegant spots to enjoy brunch, an English tea, or a glass of *tinto*, red wine. STOP IN TO LOOK AND FOR A DRINK

[Rossi & Caruso](#) Posadas 1387, *La Recoleta*
Patio Bullrich,

****[Prune](#)** Open daily from 10am to 11pm

****[Casa Lopez](#)** Considered among the best *marroquineria* (leathergoods shop) in BA Store 1019

[Rapsodia](#) Open daily from 10am to 9pm.

El Nochero Shoes and boots, leather goods and clothes, and decorative silverware. Open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 9pm, Sunday and holidays noon to 9pm.

A quick detour down Ayacucho to the gorgeous Posadas street will bring you to

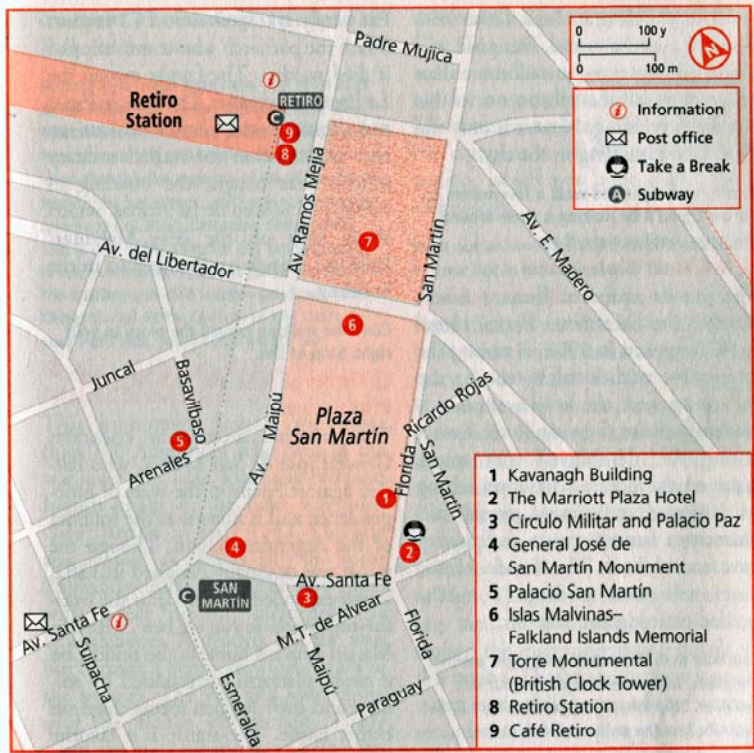
(13) [El Sanjuanino](#) (1515 Posadas) where you can sample piping-hot empanadas and other traditional Argentine dishes.

(14) Confeiteria La Rambla (corner of Ayacucho and Posadas), where harried waiters serve amazing *lomito* sandwiches.

End at the

(15) [Palais de Glace](#) (1725 Posadas), a former ice skating field turned museum and exhibit hall.

Walking Tour 2: Plaza San Martín & Retiro



Start: The east side of Plaza San Martín, facing the Kavanagh Building.

Public Transportation: Metro: San Martín.

Finish: Retiro Station.

Time: 1 1/2 hours if you're just walking; 3 to 4 hours if you go inside all buildings mentioned.

Best Times: Monday through Saturday between 11 a.m. and 4pm.

Worst Times: At night when things are closed.

At the turn of the 20th century, some of BA's most fabulous mansions were built overlooking Plaza San Martín, and quite a few remain. The enormous plaza, with its overgrown trees and lazy atmosphere, will call to mind the squares of Savannah, Georgia. The Retiro area spreads down a gentle hill from the plaza and encompasses the train station complex built by the British, once the main entrance to this grand city.

Start in the plaza itself, looking toward the east

1) Kavanagh Building At the time of its construction in 1936, this was the tallest building in South America, standing at about 120m (400 ft.) with over 30 stories. Designed as a residential structure, it took more than 16 years to sell the apartments in this Art Deco building. Now it is only the third-tallest building in the city.

Turn to your right and walk a few meters up the park (you'll be making a circle around the plaza) until you see the:

2) Marriott Plaza Hotel The pride dame of BA's hotels, the Marriott Plaza Hotel, opened in 1908, is among the city's most traditional hotels. At the time it opened, the hotel was considered so far from the main hotel district (along Av. de Mayo) that many assumed the hotel, now approaching its 100-year anniversary, would fail. Numerous famous guests and royalty have stayed here. The Facade of the hotel will soon undergo a much needed cleaning and face-lift.

TAKE A BREAK If you have the time, check out The Marriott's Plaza Grill to get an idea of the old-style dining once common throughout the city. If you're here in the middle of the day, check out the cigars in the adjacent Plaza Bar, where local businesspeople often puff away over business strategy meetings.

****Prune** Calle Florida 963, at Plaza San Martín
Cardon, Calle Florida 986 Plaza San Martín, La Recoleta

Continue to walk toward your right around the plaza, with Calle Florida to your left shoulder. Stop when you get to where Calle Santa Fe hits the park and look at the:

3) Circulo Militar & Palacio Paz Perhaps the most beautiful of the Beaux Arts mansions in BA, the Circulo Militar looks plucked from the Loire Valley. It was the home of the Paz family and took almost 12 years to build; the patriarch who commissioned it died waiting. The Family owned the *La Prrensa* newspaper. The Palacio Paz is now home to the Circulo Militar, an elite organization for retired military officers that bought the building in 1938. The Museo de las Armas, which sheds light on the Islas Malvinas/ Falkland Islands conflict, is also in the building.

Continue walking around the plaza to your right. Stop at the:

4) [General Jose de San Martin Monument](#) This fantastic monument celebrates General Jose de San Martin, who battled against Spain in the wars of independence and is known as the founder of the Argentine nation. Though the statue was originally designed in 1862, it was expanded in 1900 into the over the top spectacle you see here, with San Martin atop his horse in the middle on a raised platform, surrounded by soldiers and their women seeing them OK before battle. The statue is a favorite hangout spot for the young, and it's where visiting dignitaries from other countries usually leave a ceremonial wreath.

****[Casa Lopez](#)** Widely considered among the best *marroquineria* (leather goods shop) in BA. Marcelo T. de Alvear 640, at Maipu, near Plaza San Martin.

Turn around so that the statue of San Martin is to your back and cross the very wide Calle Maipu, being careful of traffic in this chaotic intersection. Walk up Calle Arenales, toward the grand marble building slightly to your right, which is known as the:

5) [Palacio San Martin](#) Another of the grand mansions that line Plaza San Martin, this was the home of the powerful Anchorenas family whose prestige dated to colonial times in Argentina. In 1936 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took over the building. From the street, you'll nlostly be able to see its enormous French gates, although these do have intricate grillwork from which you can look through and see the large circular courtyard. The building is open periodically for free tours.

Retrace your steps from here, and head back to the Plaza San Martin, in front of the San Martin monument. Once you reach the plaza, turn to your left and continue walking forward through the expanse of the plaza, following the balustrade, until you come across a large set of stairs cascading down a hill. This is one of the favorite city tanning spots in warm weather. Try not to gawk too much at the bathing-suit-clad locals-you have other things to do! At the bottom of the stairs, to your right side, you'll come across the:

6) [Islas Malvinas-Falkland Islands Memorial](#) This monument honors the more than 700 Argentines who died in the war over the Islas Malvinas Falkland Islands chain in the brief war with Great Britain in early 1982. The war was treated as almost silly by most English-speaking countries who sided with Great Britain, including the United States. Argentina lost the war, but became a democracy once again in the process. The war and sovereignty over the islands still remains a sore point among Argentines, and

it is best to treat the topic delicately in discussions. The three branches of the military, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, take turns guarding the monument, and the changing of the guard here is worth seeing.

Turn your back to the Islas Malvinas-Falkland Islands Memorial and head to the crosswalk across Avenida Libertador. Carefully cross this very wide street and head to the middle of the plaza, to the:

7) [Torre Monumental \(British Clock Tower\)](#) This 1916 gift from the British community in BA, along with all other things British, was renamed in response to the Islas Malvinas/Falkland Islands War and is called the Argentine Big Ben by some. Decorated with British royal imperial symbols, the base was partly destroyed by an angry mob during an Islas Malvinas-Falkland Islands memorial service. Inside the tower you'll find a small City Tourism Information Office as well as an elevator you can ride to the top for an excellent view of the city. The tower was placed here to celebrate the completion of the nearby Retiro station, which was built with British technology.

Walk out of the Torre Monumental and walk to your left in the direction of the:

8) [Retiro Station](#) was opened in 1915 and built with British technological assistance. Four British architects designed it, and the steel structure was made in Liverpool, England, and shipped to Argentina to be assembled. For years, the station was the main entry point into BA before the advent of the airplane. It's still very busy with trains to the suburbs and the resort area of Tigre. A few other train stations are in this complex-Bartolomi Mitre and Manuel Belgrano among them, as well as the modern Retiro Station Bus Depot.

Enter the station and its main hall. Turn to the left and continue to the end of the hall. Look for signs to the left for the:

9) [Cafe Retiro](#) opened in 1915 along with the station. For years it sat empty until recently being restored and reopened. Its interior is historically listed and this is one of the *cafis notables* protected by law in the city of BA. The ornamentation includes massive bronze chandeliers, stained glass, and columns with gilded capitals. The food here, a branch of the chain Café Café, is basic, simple, and Argentine, with coffee and pastries as the main highlights.

When you want to leave, the subway Retiro Station is just outside the door.

Walking Tour 1: Historical Calle Florida



Start: Corner of Calle Córdoba and Florida. Public Transportation: Metro: San Martín. Finish: Calle Florida at Diagonal Norte.

Time: 2 hours, not including eating or shopping stops.

Best Times: Daylight hours in the mid-afternoon, when you can see the buildings most clearly and mostly all are open.

Pedestrianized Calle Florida mostly has a reputation as a shop-till-you-drop destination. However, there is superb architecture and history here as well. While at storefront level many of the buildings on this street have been modernized, the remainder of the facades often remain exquisite. The last portion of this trip along Calle Florida also takes you into BA's bank district nicknamed "La City" after London's financial district.

To start the tour, begin at the northeastern corner of Calle Florida, where it hits Calle Córdoba. You will be in front of Córdoba 810, which is the:

1) Centro Naval This is one of the city's most exquisite buildings, a masterpiece of cast stone architecture. A nude sea god in a Spanish galleon, announcing triumph through a conch shell, oversees its corner doorway. Naval themes continue along the upper balustrades. The building was opened in 1914 and was designed by Swiss architect Jacques Dunant. It's not generally open to the public, but sometimes they let you into the circular lobby. If you ever get invited to an event here, make sure to go.

Cross Calle Córdoba heading south and stop just after crossing the street, at the:

2) Galerías Pacifico The most famous shopping mall in BA, Galerías Pacifico was opened in 1891. An economic crisis shortly after its opening, however, meant that it was converted into office space for the Pacifico Railroad Company. Enter into the building and see the central staircase, where all the halls meet. In 1945, while still an office building, paintings about the history of mankind were installed under the main dome, and the shopping center has daily information sessions explaining the history of the paintings. In 1992 everything old became new again, and the building was converted back into a shopping center.

Rossi & Caruso Galerías Pacifico

****Prune** Galerías Pacifico Open daily from 10-11

****Casa Lopez** Galerías Pacifico – store 241

Rapsodia Galerías Pacifico

TAKE A BREAK If you're hungry, make a pit stop in the food court at the *Galerias Pacifico*. Try a fast-food asado (Argentine grill), and finish your meal with a Patagonian chocolate treat-you won't be sorry!

Chabeli Calle Florida 702.

When you're finished shopping here, head back out the door facing Calle Florida and turn left, staying on Calle Florida and proceeding to the block between Viamonte and Tucuman to:

3) Harrods The British once had such a strong presence here that they brought not only railroads and technology with them but their favorite department stores as well. Harrods closed in the early 1990s, was revived, and then closed for a second time. For now, all you can do is stare inside through the enormous plate glass windows. You will notice that for a long-closed building, the interior is rather well maintained. Every so often, there are art exhibitions inside, so if you hear of one, come to see it and the inside of this once-important shopping landmark.

***Ashanti Leather Factory.** Calle Florida 585, at Lavalle.

Continue walking south on Calle Florida until you get to Lavalle, another pedestrianized street. After crossing Lavalle, stop midblock and face the building at Calle Florida 460 on your right, or west, side. It's the:

4) Sociedad Rural Argentina Surrounded by modern shop fronts, this small, ornate rococo building seems out of place among its ordinary neighbors. The people working inside almost undoubtedly feel the same way, for this is the headquarters of the Sociedad Rural Argentina, an organization created in the mid-1800s by the country's wealthiest oligarchs. This society was integral to the creation of Argentina's great agricultural wealth. The door to this important institution is almost always closed, but if you find it open, take a chance and wander in to see the Belle Epoque interior. There are, however, no official visits to the building.

Continue walking south on Calle Florida until you get to Avenida Corrientes. Cross the street and stop in front of Burger King, which was once the site of the:

5) Ana Diaz Historical Homestead Women's-history buffs take note: While men usually get all the credit for founding cities, Spanish explorer Juan de Garay's 1580 expedition, which

permanently founded BA, was not without a lady's touch. Ana Diaz, whose house was located on the property where Burger King now sits, came along with him. The first rime that the Spanish tried to settle the city of BA in 1536, it was an all-male group of explorers and the settlement failed. Who knows how many times it might have taken to settle BA if a woman hadn't been around to take care of things the second time around. Ana Diaz's original home is long gone, but was located on this corner. A stunning rum-of-the- 20th-century home was later built here and was intact until Burger King got its hands on it. Still, enter the hamburger joint and take a walk up the staircase to your left. Try not to gasp in awe as you head upstairs to the colonnaded rotunda, stained glass ceilings, and various rooms with their ornamental plaster ceilings. Imagine what the ground floor looked like before ground meat took over. This is one of the most stunning hidden gems of Calle Florida. On the Corrientes side of the building, you can read plaques that explain more about Ana Diaz and her unfortunately often-overlooked importance to the founding of BA.

Upon leaving Burger King, turn to the right and continue up Calle Florida. Don't stop until midblock between Corrientes and Sarmiento. Then face the east side of the street to see the:

6) Galeria Mitre This is one of the most visually impressive and unusual buildings on Calle Florida. It was designed in a robust Spanish colonial style, imitating the Argentine missions along the Paraguayan border. The most unique feature is the ornamentation around the doorway and the frieze above it, with men in 16th-century Spanish clothing, executed in a rustic manner. This crude but ornate ornamentation mimics art created by Indian slaves for their Spanish masters in that region of Argentina during the early colonial period in the late 1500s and early 1600s. The building had been closed for a few years but is now undergoing a renovation for use as office space.

Continue in the same direction on Calle Florida, crossing Sarmiento. Stop mid-block before Peron, this time facing the west side of the street, so that you're looking at the:

7) Banco Frances-Optician Store At street level you'll wonder why you've stopped here (no, I don't want you to use the ATM). But look up and you'll see a beautiful 1920s-era building that was once an optician's headquarters. Notice the bronze eyeglasses ornamenting the windows and the beautiful maidens surrounding them.

Continue up Florida in the same direction. stopping just as you hit Calle Peron, and look to the corner opposite. on the west side, to see:

8) Gath & Chaves You'll notice the BANCO MERIDIEN sign under a glass-and-wrought-iron doorway simulating old Parisian subway entrances. Look above and you will still see the old name of this one-time British department store on the corner tower-Gath & Chaves. Like Harrods, it shows the former importance of British culture on Argentina. Inside, only hints of the former beauty remain in the bank lobby.

Continue up Florida to Peron, but do not cross it yet. Instead, face your left, or east, side for a glimpse of the:

9) HSBC Building This ornate Spanish Gothic building, one of my favorites, is faced with travertine marble and the corner entrance is covered with heavy bronze doors.

Cross Peron and walk half a block on Florida, stopping on the east side in front of Florida 165, the:

10) Galeria Guemes The Calle Florida entrance of this turn-of-the-20th-century shopping gallery is nothing special, and the most interesting thing is the sign for Piazzolla Tango, held in the basement theater. However, step through the threshold and you'll find one of the city's most exquisite buildings. It was designed by Francesco Gianotti, an Italian architect who also designed the now-closed Confiteria del Molino. At night the gallery is not open to the public except for those seeing the tango show. However, you can still wander in, as the entranceway is not locked. No matter what time you go, don't miss the ornamental elevator bays with their bronze details while inside.

Continue south on Florida and cross Calle Bartolome Mitre. Stop immediately, facing the wedge-shaped building on your left, or east, side at Calle Florida 99. This is the:

11)Bank of Boston This is another ornate Spanish colonial building, even more exquisite than the HSBC bank, full of exquisite details on its facade and within the interior. Much of the limestone and structural steel necessary to make this building came from the United States. The 4-ton bronze doors were made in England. Since the peso crisis, the building has often been a flashpoint for anti-American sentiments and is at times covered with YANKEE GO HOME graffiti. If the building is open, enter its spacious lobby, with its slender columns supporting an ornate gilded and coffered ceiling. The building is topped by an

enormous and ornate cupola, part of the row of them on Diagonal Norte, marking each intersection with the connecting streets. (This pattern begins at Plaza de Mayo and continues up Diagonal Norte, where it intersects with Av. 9 de Julio, forming the vista point for the Obelisco.)

When leaving the building, face the plaza and look at the:

12) Roque Saenz Pena Monument Inaugurated in 1936, this Art Deco monument is to Roque Saenz Pefia, president of Argentina in the early 1910s, who died while in office. It overlooks Diagonal Norte, which is also sometimes known as Avenida Roque Slenz Pefia. The construction of Diagonal Norte was part of a plan to rebuild BA with vista points along the lines of Haussmann's redesign of Paris. Diagonal Norte was completed in the mid-1930s.

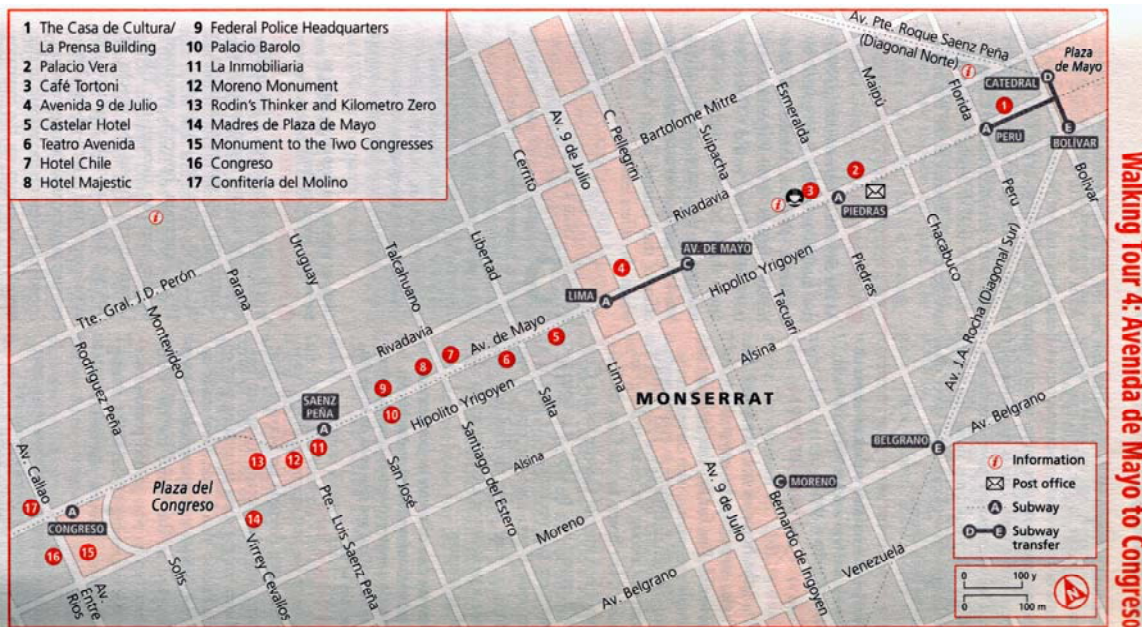
This statue marks the end of this walking tour. During the daytime you can head across the street to the BA City Tourism Kiosk, the modern metal structure with a winged cover, if you need any kind of information or help. If you just want to head home after the tour, the D line Cathedral subway station is here, or walk a little toward Plaza de Mayo for more subway line access (lines A and E).

From Plaza de Mayo walk down Defensa—you've got a few options for lunch Burzako (great price fix lunch menu) on Mexico—but it's inside and it might be really nice out—or maybe too hot and you will want to eat inside? Another choice is somewhere on Chile St. When you reach Chile St. (it intersects Defensa) you will see your options most are outdoors. A third choice is Plaza Dorrego in the heart of San Telmo (there will be lots of outdoor tables) which you will eventually reach as you walk down Defensa.

After lunch wander around San Telmo. There are some really cool shops on both Defensa and Bolivar.

From there head down to Puerto Madero and walk along the water (if you walk down Avenida San Juan you will eventually hit Puerto Madero.

Head to the Nature Reserve which is located behind Puerto Madero. It will be bustling with Argentine's playing futbol and drinking mate. There are places to rent bikes (warning they will be old and shitty) if you want to ride around the reserve.



Walking Tour 4: Avenida de Mayo to Congreso

Start: Casa de Cultura. at Av. de Mayo 575.
 Public Transportation: Metro: Bolivar, Peru, Catedral, or Plaza de Mayo.
 Finish: Plaza Congreso.
 Time: 2 hours, 5 if buildings and museums are entered
 Best Times:.. Monday through Saturday between 11 a m and 4pm.
 Worst Times: At night when things are closed.

Avenida de Mayo opened in 1894 and was meant to be the Gran Via or Champs- Elyse of BA. The design of the street was part of an even grander plan to rebuild BA in preparation for the 1910 Independence Centennial and to declare to the world that BA was a city to be reckoned with. Some of the greater concentrations of Beaux Arts and Art Nouveau buildings in the city are along this route, which connects Plaza de Mayo in the east to Congreso in the west. This is the historical processional route both for grand parades and for when people have something to protest to the president and to Congress. While many buildings along this route are badly in need of repair, it is not hard to imagine how glorious this street must have been in its heyday at the beginning of the 20th century.

Start in Plaza de Mayo, at the end of the square that has a big statue of a guy on a horse (Manuel Belgrano, for the record), and first look back down the square to get an overall view of it...

[Plaza de Mayo](#) Since **BA** was successfully founded in 1580, Plaza de Mayo ('May Square') has been the center of city life. From the early days it was surrounded by government (the Cabildo - colonial government HQ), religion, (the Cathedral), and military (the BA fort, which used to stand where we now see the Pink House).



Plaza de Mayo was originally called *Plaza Mayor* ('Main Square'), and then later went through a few more name changes due to it being split into two squares in c.1800

when a colonial market building known as a Recova was built, running across the width of the square, at approximately where you can see the metal barriers today. The Recova was demolished in 1884 by Mayor Alvear as part of his modernization of BA, and only at that point did the whole square become known as Plaza de Mayo, as it is today.

OK, now turn around and stand with Argentina's government house facing you across the road.

A. [Casa Rosada](#): The '**Pink House**' succeeded the *Cabildo* as government house in 1873. There are many theories as to why it is pink, a favorite being that there was a white paint shortage, so men mixed the paint with cows' blood to make it last longer, giving the striking shade of pink. The balcony to your left (not the center) was where **President Peron & his wife Evita** gave speeches to crowds of up to 200,000 in *Plaza de Mayo*.

Now turn back around to face the rest of the plaza, and walk past the fountains and keep going to the center of the Plaza until you are facing the tall white monument in its center...

B. **Pyramide de Mayo**: The 'May Pyramid' was built in 1811 to celebrate the 1st anniversary of the "May Revolution" on 25th May 1810. The white scarf symbols on the ground circling the pyramid represent the **Mothers of Plaza de Mayo**, an association of mothers whose children were "disappeared" (i.e. murdered) by the Argentine military dictatorship of 1976-83. Each **Thursday** at **3:30** since 1977 the *madres* have formed a protest around the pyramid, wearing white scarves representing the diapers of their lost children.



Keep walking in the same direction, past the pyramid, to the other end of the square, and stand looking at the *Cabildo*; a simple, white arched building across the road...



C. [The Cabildo](#): A rare example of colonial architecture left in the city, the *Cabildo* was the original colonial government building from 1609-1810. Around the turn of the 20th century, 6 of its original 11 colonial arches were demolished to make way for the building of Avenida de Mayo (1894) & Diagonal Sur (1930s). Yet it still contains some of its original foundations/walls, and therefore lays claim to being the oldest building left standing in BA.

- **Changing of the guard on the hour**
- Craft fair is held on Thursday and Friday from 11am to 6pm in the small garden patio behind the Cabildo.

Now turn right from where you were facing and walk over to the corner crossing, facing the Cathedral, which with all those classical columns might have you thinking it is actually a Greek Temple...

D. **Cathedral (Exterior)**: The most important Catholic building in Argentina, and so one of the most important buildings here period, as Argentina is a Catholic state. The Cathedral was built at the same time as the Cabildo, using the same weak adobe. However, the Cathedral fared even worse than the Cabildo, suffering 7 total collapses in 200 years. In 1827 this sturdier neo-classical stone construction was completed. The 12 Corinthian columns represent the apostles; the facade engraved with a scene from Genesis, where Joseph is reunited with his father and brothers in Egypt.



Carefully make your way over the two stage road-crossing to your right, head up the steps at the front of the Cathedral and walk a few steps to the right until you get to the central entrance. Before you go in, note the eternal flame down the far end of the external wall, burning in memory of General San Martin, the independence hero whose tomb you will see inside. Go in the door and turn right to enter the main cathedral...



E. [Cathedral \(Interior\)](#): The Cathedral interior is beautiful and peaceful, but the main attraction is found in the fourth small altar along the right-hand corridor. Here lies the remains of General San Martin, who led Argentina's revolutionary troops to victory over the Spanish loyalists in the 1810-16 wars of independence, before proceeding to help liberate Chile, Peru & Ecuador between 1817-22, as can be seen on the plaque fronting his magnificent tomb. The two scary guys with swords are *Granaderos*, the regiment San Martin created, and guard his body Mon-Sat.

Exit the Cathedral again through the main entrance, and first cross over to the central traffic island, before crossing over to your right. Once safely over, go left and walk towards the next street corner, which is the start of Avenida de Mayo (you will see a street sign on this corner). At this corner, turn right to begin walking down this wonderful avenue...

Avenida de Mayo was opened in 1894, built to be BA' grand boulevard, like the *Champs-Elysees* in Paris or the *Gran Via* of Madrid. BA looks to Europe for much of its culture, often being labeled the "Paris of The Americas". This isn't surprising when you consider that Argentines are largely descended from recent European immigrants, mainly from Italy, but also Spain, France & Germany among others. They arrived between 1880 & 1930, when Argentina had one of the fastest growing economies in the world. With immigration came foreign investment, enabling extravagant **Avenida de Mayo** to be built with no expense spared...



Due to its construction at the turn of the 20th century, the avenue contains a fair amount of beautiful Parisian-inspired Art Nouveau and Beaux Arts buildings, when these over-the-top architectural styles were at the height of their popularity. These days, while the street and many of its buildings are in desperate need of repair, it's not hard to imagine how glorious it was during its heyday, especially if you look up at the beautiful architecture that lines the avenue.

Now walk down Av. de Mayo a little and cross over at the first crossing. When you get to the other side, turn around and look back across at the former La Prensa building - it has it's name in front of a large statue up on the roof...

1) Casa de Culturalla Prensa Building Once the home of the newspaper La Prensa, owned by the very wealthy and powerful Paz family, this building is simply sumptuous, with carved granite, bronze ornamentation, and sinuous lanterns among its most striking features. Now home to the Casa de Cultura (the Office of Culture for the City of BA, it is open for **tours on the weekend**). The tour is a must-do if you have the time. If you don't, at least enter the building and take a peek at the lobby to get an idea of its splendor.

Looking back at street level, you should now be standing next to the steps down to Peru subway station on the A Line. Go down the steps for a trip back in time...

G. Peru Subte Station: When it was built in 1913, BA subway Line A became the first subway in the southern hemisphere, and also within the Spanish speaking world. Peru is the best preserved station



on the whole line, like descending into a time capsule of BA city life almost 100 years ago, with its atmospheric dim lamp lighting, period kiosk stalls, hand painted wall adverts, colorful tiling, and most interestingly of all, the original wooden subway cars with manual sliding doors. With a bit of luck, you'll get to ride one of these in a moment.

Turn to the booth selling subway tickets, queuing if needs be, and when at the ticket window say "uno" or "dos" or "tres" etc (depending on how many tickets you want, silly) - the tickets cost 70 centavos each and they will give change, but it is probably not advisable trying to pay with anything over a 10 peso note. Once you have the tickets, use them in them automatic turnstile to get through onto the station platform...



H. Riding the A Line: You'll probably want to ride in an old restored wooden subway car, so wait until one arrives, as some of the trains are new. Get on and ride one stop up to Piedras station. The line runs the length of Avenida de Mayo and beyond, and when it was built in 1913 (for any Brits or Anglophiles out there, it is British built) the trains were hurtling

along underground while horse-drawn carriages still ran on the street above. The creaky old ride is often a bumpy one, so make sure you hold on tight, but still take the chance to survey the all-wooden interior.

Once you've survived the short ride to Piedras station, go straight through the turnstiles and up the steps on your left hand side to



exit back on to the avenue. Once there, walk a few steps to where you can cross over to the other side of the avenue. Cross Calle Peru and Calle Maipu and stop at Av. de Mayo 769, location of the (this might actually be behind you):

2) Palacio Vera One of the best examples of Art Nouveau along Avenida de Mayo is right here, and the derails along its balconies are the most interesting part of the Palacio Vera facade. Now made up of businesses and apartments, it was designed as the home for the Diaz Velez family, who gained prominence at the beginning of the 1800s during the British invasion, just before independence.

Continue walking up Avenida de Mayo, cross Calle Esmeralda, and stop when you've reached Av. de Mayo 825, home of the:

3) **Cafe Tortoni** As the city's most famous cafe, this establishment has been graced by numerous political, intellectual, and historic figures from Argentina and from around the world. There are tango shows here every night, but the real treat is the ornate interior of the building itself. Above the cafe is the office of the National Tango Academy, which also offers lessons.

TAKE A BREAK As long as you're here, you might as well sample the atmosphere and have a bite to eat. Don't expect excellent service, as the waiters seem to ignore the customers. Still, the food is inexpensive, and a tea or coffee with croissants, known here as medialunas, makes an excellent snack for more energy along the way. Continue walking up Avenida de Mayo to the world's widest boulevard:

From Cafe Tortoni, keep walking in the same direction to the end of the block (the cross-street is Tacuari), and before you cross look down to your left where you will see a somewhat makeshift plaque resting on the floor...



J. Plaque to Gaston Riva: Gaston Riva was shot dead by the police on this spot during the riots that occurred during Argentina's economic meltdown in December 2001. After the government froze all bank accounts, there was widespread rioting and looting on the 19th - 20th December in this area around Plaza de Mayo, and across the rest of the country, and when the police were dispatched to deal with it they sadly ended up shooting dead 26 people, including poor Gaston Riva here. Adding insult to injury, the memorial plaque has clearly been broken from its former vertical position.

Cross over Tacuari and keep walk the length of the next block, noticing the interesting modern mural of BA across the street, until you reach a huge intersection of traffic that you probably heard coming. Wait here before you start the long staged crossing

4) **Avenida 9 de Julio** It will probably take you a few traffic light cycles to cross this massive street. Construction on this avenida began in the 1930s, with its inauguration in 1937. Expansion, however, continued decades later, up through the 1960s. Unfortunately, during the process of making this boulevard, much of the city's beautiful turn-of-the-20th-century architectural heritage was lost. The only two that survived along the route were

the large and ugly government communications building to the south, and formed the small but perfectly French Embassy to the north. Spend some time on the avenida in this area, and be sure to see the fountains and the Don Quixote monument inaugurated by Queen Sofia of Spain.



Make your way over the many crossings in front of you, until you reach the traffic island in the very center. While you are waiting for the traffic lights to turn in your favor, here's a bite size piece of Argentine history to digest...



K. Argentine Independence: Avenida 9 de Julio is so named to mark the date when Argentina (then known as the "United Provinces of the River Plate") declared official independence from its former colonial rulers, Spain. This occurred on the 9th July, 1816, at the "Congress of Tucuman". However, this date is not the most important on the

Argentine calendar... independence was really gained in the "May Revolution" of 25th May, 1810: it just took six years for things to become 'official' (even then, this was not recognized by world powers for a few more years).

Once in the central traffic island of Avenida 9 de Julio, turn to your right and look down the avenue where you will notice a very conspicuous looking large white monument standing proudly erect a few blocks away...

L. El Obelisco: The Obelisk has been dominating the skyline of this area since it opened in May 1936 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the (supposed) 1st attempt to found BA, by Spanish sailor Pedro de Mendoza. It also stands in the spot where the Argentine flag was raised for the first time. At 68m tall, the Obelisk is a pretty obvious meeting place. In fact, after important sporting victories, it is the place to meet for a rowdy, traffic-halting celebration. Recently, on World AIDS Awareness Day, a giant pink condom was placed over the Obelisk for a day. I kid you not.



Continue the long journey over 9 de Julio until you are on the last traffic island, where you can glance over to your left to see an interesting modern sculpture...



M. Don Quixote de la Mancha

Sculpture: This sculpture was a gift from Queen Sofia of Spain to mark the 400th anniversary of the successful founding of BA by the Spanish in 1580. Many say that one reason this founding was successful where previous attempts had failed was that it brought along one vital magic ingredient... a woman! Her name was Ana

Diaz, and she is credited with playing an important role in the settling of BA.

Cross Avenida 9 de Julio completely and continue on to Av. de Mayo 1152, location of:

5) Castelar Hotel One of the jewels of Avenida de Mayo, this hotel opened in 1928. One of its most notable features is its extensive Turkish bath on its basement level; it's worth stopping in to get a treatment or even just to view the space. The eccentric Italian architect Mario Palanti, who also designed the nearby Palacio Barolo designed the Castelar.

Continue walking up Avenida de Mayo and cross Calle Salta to Av. de Mayo 1222, site of:

6) Teatro Avenida This theater, opened in 1908, is largely dedicated to Spanish productions. It presented material by Lorca when he was living in the Castelar down the street in the 1930s. Many other artists from Spain also had their work presented here at the time, and the theater was an integral part of making BA the center of Spanish-language literature and culture while Spain was engaged in its civil war. After a fire in the 1970s, it was partly rebuilt.

Cross the Avenida de Mayo and head to the corner of Santiago del Estero, to the:

7) Hotel Chile This is a very unique Art Nouveau hotel which has Middle Eastern elements. Take special note of the windows, with their round tops and faience ornamental tiling. The hotel was designed by the French architect Louis Dubois and opened in 1907. Like many other hotels on Avenida de Mayo, Hotel Chile was once luxurious and the utmost in style, but it is now a rather down-on-its-luck site, in which the facade remains the only clue to its former glory.

Cross Santiago del Estero, staying on Avenida de Mayo, and stop immediately on the corner of the next block to see the:

8) Hotel Majestic Opened in 1910 in time for the Centennial celebrations, this is one of the city's most famed hotels, though it no longer operates as such. Most Portefios point to it with extreme pride as the place where Infanta Isabel stayed to represent Spain at the celebrations. It was also where the Russian ballet star Vaclav Nijinsky spent his wedding night after getting married in Buenos Aires in 1913. The hotel is now home to the Tax Museum, one of only three such museums in the world. The lobby is sumptuous but extremely dark and badly in need of repair.

Continue walking up Avenida de Mayo and stop at the next building, no. 1333, home of the:

9) Federal Police Headquarters Ornate Art Deco buildings are a rarity in BA, which did not take to the style in quite the same way as New York, Los Angeles, and Paris did. The Federal Police Headquarters, however, is one of the best that you'll find in the city. Take note of the way the windows are treated, with their faceted frames, and the statues adorning the facade. The building was originally opened in 1926 for the *Cn'tica* newspaper, for which Argentine literary giant Jorge Luis Borges had worked. The building is not generally open to the public, unless you have been the victim of a crime or committed one, but try wandering in and see what happens.

Stay on this block but walk across the street to Av. de Mayo 1370 to reach the:

10) Palacio Barolo This is, in my opinion, the most unusual building in all of BA. Designed by the eccentric Italian architect Mario Palanti, who also designed the nearby Hotel Castelar, this building is meant to recall Dante's *Inferno*. The lobby symbolizes Hell, with its bronze medallions representing fire and male and female dragons lining the walls. The scale of the building is massive; in fact, it was once the tallest building in South America, though Palanti later designed a similar, taller structure in Montevideo. Originally, a statue of Dante was in the lobby, but it was stolen in the 1955 revolution deposing Juan Perón. Guided tours take you through the building to the lighthouse tower representing God and Salvation, from where you'll get an excellent view up and down Avenida de Mayo and of other parts of the city.



Continue walking up Avenida de Mayo and cross Calle San Jose. Stay on this block (between San Jose and Luis Saenz Petia) and take in:

11) La Inmobiliaria Taking up this whole block, La Inmobiliaria was designed as the office for a real estate and apartment agency. Today it houses apartments and offices, but the tiled Art Nouveau sign indicating its former use still remains along the top of the facade.



Continue walking up Avenida de Mayo, crossing into Plaza Congreso, to see the:

12) Moreno Monument This statue, in the first part of Plaza Congreso, quite overgrown by large trees, is of Mariano Moreno, the secretary of the First Government Assembly following independence from Spain. He was also an important journalist who founded both the Argentine National Library and the BA Gazette. Moreno is memorialized elsewhere in the city, with a street name and a subway stop.



Turn around and with Moreno behind you, walk forward to the central walk in the middle of the plaza. Then turn to the left and walk to the next statue:

13) Rodin's The Thinker & Kilometro Cero This is a copy of Rodin's famous statue The Thinker, and it's a favorite play area for children. Just next to it is a block marking Kilorrletro Cero, the point at which all distances from BA are marked.

Continue walking through the plaza, but veer toward your left. Cross Calle Yrigoyen and head to Yrigoyen 1584, near the corner of Ceballos, home base of the:

14) Madres de Plaza de Mayo march every Thursday at 3:30pm in the Plaza de Mayo in honor of their missing children, have their main headquarters here.. You might also get a chance to talk with one of the by now very old Madres about this heart-wrenching period in Argentina's history, when nearly 30,000 young people were tortured and killed by the military government.



Cross the street and head back into Plaza Congreso, heading toward the enormous no-longer-working fountain in front of Congreso itself, to view the:

15) Monument to the Two Congresses This enormous monument celebrates the two congresses that were held in the aftermath of independence from Spain. This multileveled structure has stairs that lead to a fantastic view of Congreso, where you can snap pictures of the building or pose with it behind you. The fountain no longer operates and is in need of some renovation, but the overall effect of this monument is very impressive. The central figure represents the Argentine Republic, holding a laurel branch for victory (over colonial Spain) and resting on a plow, for the hard work of those that built the country. The statues each side represent the two key congresses in Argentine history: May 1810 and July 1816, that saw independence gained. The fountain symbolizes the main rivers of Argentina's plains, all flowing into a pool that is the River Plate estuary.

Leave the Two Congresses monument and walk toward the Congreso building. Cross the street, being very careful at the crazy intersection, and head to the:

16) Congreso The most imposing building in all of BA, this structure opened in 1906. It combines influences from some of the world's most famous structures, from the U.S. Capitol to Garnier's Opera House to Berlin's Brandenburg Gate. Tours will take you through both chambers of the hi-cameral legislature and are available by asking at the Rivadavia entrance.



Walk to your right (north). Cross Calle Rivadavia and stop on the corner to view the:

17) Confiteria del Molino This fantastic structure, in a terrible state of disrepair and closed to the public, was the creation of Francesco Gianotti, an Italian who also designed Galeria Guemes and its theater housing the Piazzolla tango show. Once the formal meeting place of politicians from the nearby Congreso, the confiteria (cafe) closed in 1997, though there are plans to eventually renovate and reopen it.

I recommend continuing to walk north along Avenida Callao, which was rebuilt in an almost imperial style after the opening of Congreso. Congreso has a subway stop for the A line and the C and D lines have nearby stops along Callao.

Walking Tour 3: Plaza Lavalle & the Tribunales Area



Start: Teatro Cervantes, overlooking Plaza Lavalle.

Public Transportation: Metro: Tribunales.

Finish: Obelisco.

Time: 1 1/2 hours; 3 to 4 hours if you go inside all buildings mentioned.

Best Times: Monday through Saturday between 1 am and 4pm.

Worst Times: At night when things are closed.

Plaza Lavalle is in some disrepair, but scaffolding around the plaza seems to indicate that in a few years, all will be good as new again. The area represents the heart of the country's judicial system, taking its name from the Supreme Court, or Tribunales Building, which is the focus of the plaza. This was also one of the city's main theater districts before the widening of Avenida Corrientes in the 1930s. Teatro Cervantes and the world-famous Teatro Colon testify to this thespian grandeur.

Start at the northeast corner of Libertad, where it hits Cordoba, at the:

1) This theater, which opened in the 1920s, was the project of Spanish actors working in BA. It went bankrupt and was bought

by the government, however, and became a national theater. It is designed in a Spanish Imperial style with the Habsburg double eagles as its main decoration on the outside of the building. The sumptuous interior uses materials from Spain such as imported carved-wood ornamentation and colorful Seville tiles on many of the walls and surfaces.

Standing on Cordoba with the Teatro Cervantes behind you, cross Cordoba and walk along Libertad, stopping one building in at Libertad 785, site of the:

2) **Templo Libertad & Jewish History Museum** This Byzantine-style temple was constructed in 1897 by CIRA (Congregacion Israelita de la Republics de Argentina). Next door you'll find the Jewish Museum, also known as the Kibrick Museum, which contains religious and historical items related to BA's Jewish community.

Continue to walk south along Libertad and cross Calle Viamonte. Stop at Libertad 621, between Viamonte and Tucuman, to see the:

3) **Teatro Colon** The Teatro Colón will soon celebrate its 100th anniversary to mark its 1908 opening. It took over 18 years to build, largely because of the dramatic tragedies that befell its various architects, especially Victor Meano, who was murdered in a love triangle gone wrong. Materials for the theater came from all over Europe, and the building functioned as BA's aria to the world, proving that it was a city of culture to be reckoned with. Tours and a show are a must while you are in BA, but be aware that an ongoing renovation means that this temple to opera will be closed during 2006 and 2007. But if you're on this walk and the building is open, don't delay going inside, where you'll be able to see marble from all over the world lining the lobby and making up the grand staircase; the wooden and bronze seating area, which soars five levels to an immense chandelier; as well as the underground storage and practice areas where ballerinas improve their craft.

Continue walking along Libertador and cross Calle Tucuman, stopping at the building on the corner, at Calle Libertad 581, site of the:

4) **Escuela Presidente Roca** The employees of this beautiful Greek revival structure say people often wander in thinking it is

the Teatro Colbn. And it's no wonder, with its Doric colonnade and ornamental statues along the central pediment, but this is actually a local school. Technically, it is not open to the public, but polite people will be allowed in the courtyard and maybe even upstairs to see the beautiful ceiling with painted acanthus leaves. The school turned 100 years old in 2004 and expects to undergo a renovation in late 2005 or 2006.

Turn around so that the Escuela Presidente Roca is to your back, and face Plaza Libertad. Head to the column in the center of the plaza, the:

5) **Lavalle Monument** Juan Lavalle fought along with San Martin in the wars for independence as a very young man, and continued in the Argentine military, becoming a general. His statue, on a slender column, is the main focus of the center of this plaza. As of this writing, the area around the monument is undergoing extensive renovation, so it might be hard to see the statue up close. Wander around the plaza, though, and take a look at the various other monuments. Be aware that an underground parking garage was built under the plaza, so you have to watch out for cars, especially at the corner of Libertad and Tucumin, where the entry ramp is located. The plaza, like many in BA, is often taken over by protestors who are coming to make their views known to the people in the next building on this tour.

From the center of the plaza, face west, toward the Supreme Court building, an enormous structure on the southwest corner of the plaza, also known as:

6) **Tribunales (Palacio de la Justicia)** The Tribunales neighborhood takes its name from this building: the Supreme Court, or Tribunales building (also called the Palacio de la Justicia). It is immense and hulking, with strong Greek elements. If you are here during the day, try to enter. It used to be fully open to the public, but due to the peso crisis and numerous protests, police barricades often surround it; try to look like you have a reason to enter the building for your best chances when trying to walk in. Inside, the central courtyard is lined with columns and pilasters. Ornamentations on the walls and between the columns includes symbols imitating the smiling sun from the center of the Argentine flag.

Turn your back to the Supreme Court building and walk along the edge of the plaza in an eastern direction. Look to your right at the edge of the plaza toward the pedestrianized section of Diagonal Norte, also known as Avenida Roque Saenz Pena, with a vista to Avenida 9 de Julio and the:

7) **Obelisco** The Obelisco was inaugurated in 1936 and built to honor the 400th anniversary of the first (unsuccessful) founding of the city by Pedro de LVendoza. (The second, permanent, founding was in 1580.) This towering structure marks the intersection of Avenida 9 de Julio and Corrientes. Diagonal Norte stretches behind the Obelisco with links to the monument to Plaza de Mayo. The Obelisco sits in the round Plaza de Republics. This plaza has plaques that celebrate the various provinces that make up the country. Unfortunately, most of them have been stolen.

This pedestrianized area of Diagonal Norte is lined with cafes and little restaurants, so take a break here if you like. Otherwise walk up toward the Obelisco itself. If Argentina has won an international event, join the flag-waving crowds here and cheer the country on. Underneath the Obelisco, you have access to three subway lines (B, C, and D), so it is easy to get back to hotels in many parts of the city from here.



La Boca

The La Boca neighborhood was so named for its position at “the mouth” of the Riachuelo, and its role as the port of call for thousands of immigrants from Italy, Spain, and other European countries. Those settlers struggled, starved, hoped, and celebrated in this rough-and-tumble *barrio*. Today, La Boca is the domain of the working class, bohemian artists, rabid soccer fans, and tango artists. (Tip: This tour is advised during daylight hours for safety.)

Start your tour at the

(1) Casa Amarilla (the yellow house) (401 Almirante Brown and Avenida Martin Garcia), a replica of the home of Argentine war hero Admiral Guillermo Brown.

Two blocks away is the

(2) Nuestra Señora de los Inmigrantes Church (312 Necochea) dedicated to the immigrants of the city.

Wander down Avenida Almirante Brown to the

(3) Tower of the Ghost at the corner of West Villafañe. Legend has it that a painter who killed himself still haunts the upper levels of the tower.

For a quick snack, stop at

(4) Banchero Pizzeria (www.bancheropizzerias.com.ar), which opened in 1932 and claims to be the creator of BA style “fugazza” pizza, topped with cheese and onions.

Walk straight to the end of Almirante Brown to the

(5) Riachuelo, a brown, polluted river with a stench that has become as characteristic to this neighborhood as the Boca Juniors’ soccer jersey.

There you’ll see the

(6) Puente Transbordador (Old Ferry Bridge), an iron bridge that was built in 1914.

Head southwest along the water on Avenida Pedro de Mendoza, to the

(7) Teatro de la Ribera at 1821. This city-run theater features murals by artist Benito Quinquela Martín.

On the same block at 1835 Avenida Pedro de Mendoza, stop at the...

(8) Museo de Bellas Artes Benito Quinquela Martín. Open from Tuesdays through Sundays, the museum includes a school, displays of Argentine art, and an unrivaled view of La Boca neighborhood from its highest balcony.

Just beyond the steps of the museum, at

(9) del Valle Iberlucea and Pedro de Mendoza (a plaza known as Vuelta de Rocha, which is shaped like a ship deck)

....begins the famous

(10) Caminito, a heavily touristy stroll into this area's past. You can see restored "conventillos," shared homes made of wood and

corrugated zinc and painted in bright primary colors. On any given day, there will be several tango singers and dancers performing in the cafés and artists hawking paintings and sketches.

There, you also can visit the

(11) Caminito street museum and

(12) wax museum (Del Valle Iberlucea 1261).

(13) La Perla Café (Magallanes and Del Valle Iberlucea), once a brothel but now one of the city's historic cafés, is worth a glimpse, though prices are pumped high for tourists.

Beyond Caminito, down Valle Iberlucea, you will come to the social centerpiece of the neighborhood, the

(14) Stadium of the Boca Juniors (805 Brandsen; the most popular soccer team in Argentina. Known as the "Bombonera" (the candy box) with a capacity of more than 49,000, a game here is an unforgettable experience.