

Countries Around the World™

Argentina

Program Summary

Meet 10-year-old Gala. She and her family live in Buenos Aires, the capital city of Argentina. Join Gala as her father teaches her the tango, a dance invented in Argentina. Next, Gala and her mother tour Buenos Aires while introducing students to Argentina's official language, currency and government. As they stroll around the city, learn about some of the things Argentina is known for, like scrumptious empanadas, silver jewelry and alpaca clothing. After attending a polo match held at an *estancia* in the countryside, Gala returns to Buenos Aires to cheer on her hometown soccer team — an extremely popular pastime in South America. Then, travel with Gala, her mother and her cousin on a riverboat as they head to their vacation home at El Tigre. Experience the ways people live on the delta as Gala pulls up to a boat filled with groceries and stocks up on supplies without ever setting foot on land. Once Gala's father joins them at El Tigre, share in some Argentine customs like grilling beef over a *parrilla* and drinking a type of tea called *maté*.

Country Information

- **location:** southern South America, along the South Atlantic Ocean; bordered by Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia
- **capital:** Buenos Aires
- **official language:** Spanish
- **government type:** republic
- **total area:** approximately 2,766,890 sq km
- **climate:** mostly temperate; arid in the Southeast; sub-Antarctic in the Southwest
- **terrain:** rich plains of the Pampas in the northern half, flat to rolling plateau of Patagonia in the South, rugged Andes along the western border
- **natural resources:** includes fertile plains of the Pampas, lead, zinc, tin, copper, iron ore, manganese, petroleum, uranium
- **industries:** includes food processing, motor vehicles, consumer durables, textiles, chemicals and petrochemicals, printing, metallurgy and steel
- **agricultural products:** includes sunflower seeds, lemons, soybeans, grapes, corn, tobacco, peanuts, tea, wheat and livestock

Vocabulary

tango — A ballroom dance from Argentina, danced by couples, that has many varied steps, figures, and poses.

Cabildo — Spanish for "town hall." It once served as the center of government for Buenos Aires, but is now a historical museum.

El Tigre — A large delta located near Buenos Aires. Literally means "the tiger" in Spanish, but also means "the jaguar," for which the delta and resort town found there are named. El Tigre is also known as the "Paraná Delta" for the main river that feeds it.

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alpaca — A South American mammal related to the llama that has fine, long wool.

empanada — A Latin-American turnover with a flaky crust and a spicy or sweet filling.

pampas — An extensive treeless grassland area.

estancia — A ranch used to raise cattle, horses, etc.

fútbol — Spanish for "soccer."

tributary — A smaller river or stream that flows into a larger body of water.

delta — A large area of fertile land at a river mouth where deposits of eroded materials build up.

parrilla — Spanish for "grill."

maté — A tea-like South American beverage made from the dried leaves of an evergreen tree.

bombilla — A straw used for drinking *maté*.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Provide students with an outline map of South America. Students can locate and label Argentina, its capital, other major cities, bodies of water and land formations in addition to the other countries in South America. For reference, visit tfk.factmonster.com/atlas/country/argentina.html. Have students answer questions such as: Which countries touch Argentina? What do you think the climate of Argentina is like based on your observations of the map? Why do you think the cities are located where they are?
- Argentina is located in the Southern Hemisphere. Have students investigate the differences between the Southern and Northern Hemispheres (reversed seasons, more or less land mass, Coriolis effect, etc.). Ask them how their lives might be different if they lived in the Southern Hemisphere and how, if at all, they would have to alter their routines to accommodate the differences. Have students look for evidence of this as they watch the program. After viewing, students can share their observations.
- The official language of Argentina is Spanish. Students can learn basic Spanish words and phrases by visiting www.languagehelpers.com/words/spanish/basics.html. This site includes phonetic pronunciations. A significant portion of the site provides words and phrases dealing with money, shopping and traveling. Have the students write and perform a skit using these phrases as if they were traveling in Argentina. For a classroom with fluent Spanish speakers, encourage them to share their knowledge with the class and serve as class leaders in pronunciation and alternate ways of saying things.

Follow-up Activities

- Empanadas are a popular dish in Argentina and can be made with many different fillings. Have the students write their own empanada recipes, using their favorite ingredients, along with a side-dish and drink to complement their creation. Share the recipes with the class. If possible, have the students make samples of their empanadas and bring them to class to have a tasting. For a math extension, have students write the exact measurements they would use and the number of empanadas their recipe would yield.
- The tango is a famous dance and style of music that has origins in Argentina. In fact, the tango is more than just a dance for Argentines; it is a source of national pride and part of the country's identity. Ask students to share any music or dance that they feel is representative of who they are. As an extension, have the class work collectively to write a song or create a dance that encapsulates them and perform it.
- Gala and her mother shop for silver jewelry, an Argentine specialty made famous by indigenous peoples. Students can design their own jewelry using their knowledge of the metals and gemstones most commonly found in Argentina. Using craft supplies, students can make a model of their jewelry design as a gift or for display in the classroom.

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- Soccer and polo are popular sports in Argentina. Create your own soccer or polo team by choosing an Argentine city, team name and design for your team's uniforms. Share your designs with the class. Write a "fight song" for your team and role-play as fans singing it at an important game or match, keeping in mind how soccer fans might behave differently than polo fans.
- Argentina got its name from a Latin word meaning "silver." Have students investigate how some of the places they are familiar with got their names. As a class, brainstorm a list of place names (school, towns, cities, states, etc.) and discuss their possible origins. Assign each student a place name and have him or her research it. Students can present their findings to the class.
- Argentina's climate ranges from tropical in the North to arctic in sections of the South. Have students research the major areas and their subsequent climates in Argentina (Andes Mountains/cold and snow; Pampas/temperate, etc.) and prepare a travel itinerary as if they were traveling from the South of the country to the North on a five-day trip. For each day, students should include what they plan to visit, the clothing they would take to accommodate the weather and what type of plants and animals they would expect to see.

Suggested Print Resources

- DeSpain, Pleasant L. *The Emerald Lizard: Fifteen Latin American Tales to Tell in English and Spanish*. August House, Little Rock, AK; 1999.
- Quesada, Maria Saenz. *Estancias: The Great Houses and Ranches of Argentina*. Abbeville Press, New York, NY; 2007.
- Shields, Charles J. *Argentina*. Mason Crest Publishers, Broomall, PA; 2003.

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Suggested Internet Resources

- www.cia.gov
The CIA World Factbook web site presents detailed and up-to-date information on Argentina and many other countries. Topics include geography, people, government, economy, transportation and communication. On the main page of the CIA site, click on the "World Factbook" link.
- www.geographia.com/argentina/index.html
This web site provides information about Argentina, including geography, history, culture, weather and travel destinations. Also includes more detailed looks at places such as Buenos Aires and Mar del Plata.
- www.worldalmanacforkids.com/explore/nations/argentina.html
This site offers detailed information on topics such as natural resources, education, culture, economy and history for Argentina. Each main topic is divided into several categories for more exact searches.

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