



Argentina

Argentina

Capital

Buenos Aires

National Symbols

The Flag

The national flag of Argentina dates from 1812. It is composed of three equal horizontal stripes alternating cerulean blue and white. In 1818, an emblem known as the Sun of May was added to the center. The Sun is modeled after the symbol of Inti, the Incan god of the Sun. The sun is a replica of an engraving on the first Argentine coin, approved in 1813.



Myths about the flag

The popular interpretation of the flag is that it represents the sky, clouds and sun. However, there are several theories about the colors of the flag. One says that the blue symbolizes the clothing of the Virgin Mary and the white symbolizes silver (the name "Argentina" comes from the Latin word for silver, *argentum*). Another story states that the colors are based on those of the House of Bourbon, and a third suggests that they are derived from the Río de la Plata (literally "River of Silver").

National Flower

The Erythrina crista-galli is a flowering tree of the family Fabaceae, native to Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and Paraguay. It is known by several common names within South America: ceibo and bucaré, to name a few. In English it is often known as the coral tree. In urban settings, it is often planted in parks and gardens for its bright red flowers.

The tree's flower is the national flower of Argentina and Uruguay. It is also the official city tree of Los Angeles, California.



History

Declaration of Independence

The Independence of Argentina was declared on July 9th, 1816 by the Congress of Tucumán.

The May Revolution of 1810 followed the deposition of the Spanish king Fernando VII by

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Napoleon. The revolution terminated the authority of the Viceroyalty of the River Plate and replaced it with the "Primera Junta". When the king returned in 1814, Spain was determined to recover control over its colonies in the Americas. The royals were victorious at the battles of Sipe-Sipe, Guaqui, Vilcapugio and Ayohuma, in what had been the Viceroyalty of Peru. From there they planned to attack the bases of José de San Martín, and to make their way to Buenos Aires.

On April 15th, 1815, a revolution ended the mandate of Carlos María de Alvear and demanded that a General Congress be summoned. Delegate deputies, each representing 15,000 inhabitants, were sent from all the provinces to the sessions, which started on March 24, 1816. However, several territories that had until then belonged to the Viceroyalty of the River Plate did not send delegates: the Banda Oriental ("Eastern Bank", today Uruguay), which was faithful to Artigas; Paraguay, which had already proclaimed its independence; and the Gran Chaco, still fighting the aboriginal resistance.

The congress was inaugurated in the city of Tucumán, with 33 deputies. The presidency of the congress would be rotated monthly. Because the congress had the freedom to choose topics to debate, endless discussions ensued.

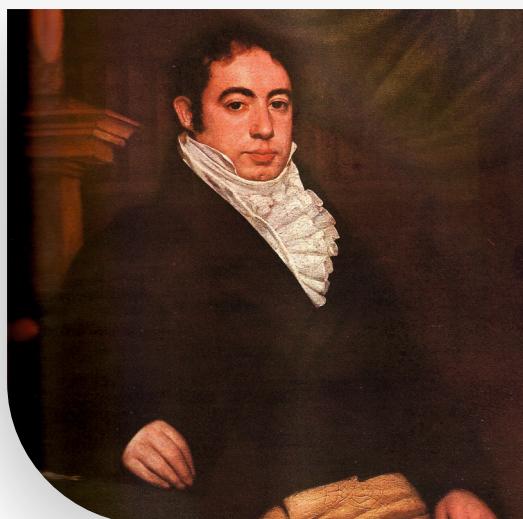
After its independence in 1816, Argentina was a federation without an effective central government. In those years, it was first known as "Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata". After an unsuccessful attempt of establishing a constitution in 1819, a new constitution was established in 1826, the

first one creating a figure of a President for the executive power of the country.

Through the history of Argentina, the office of the Head of State has undergone many changes, both in its title as in its features and powers. According to the constitution, the President of Argentina is the head of state of the nation. Under the national Constitution, the President is also the chief executive of the federal government and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

First President

The first president of Argentina was Bernardino de la Trinidad Gómez Rivadavia.



Government

The Republic of Argentina is a South American country, second in size to Brazil in the continent and eighth in the world. Argentina occupies a continental surface area of 2,766,890 km²—between the Andes mountain range in the west and the southern Atlantic Ocean in the east and

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south. It is bordered by Paraguay and Bolivia in the north, Brazil and Uruguay in the northeast, and Chile in the west and south.

The country claims the British controlled territories of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), South Georgia, and the South Sandwich Islands. Under the name of Argentine Antarctica, it claims 969,464 km² of Antarctica, overlapping other claims made by Chile and the United Kingdom.

Provinces

Argentina is subdivided into twenty-three provinces and one federal district. The federal district and the provinces have their own constitutions, but exist under a federal system. Provinces are then divided into departments.

They are Buenos Aires, Catamarca, El Chaco, El Chubut, Cordoba, Corrientes, Entre Rios, Formosa, Jujuy, La Pampa, La Rioja, Mendoza, Misiones, Neuquen, Rio Negro, Salta, San Juan, San Luis, Santa Cruz, Santa Fe, Santiago del Estero, Tierra del Fuego, Antartida e Islas del Atlantico Sur, Tucuman.

Social Recognition

Important Figures in Argentina



Eva Peron
(June 1946–July 1952)

Maria Eva Duarte de Peron was the second wife of National President Juan Domingo Peron (1895–1974) and the First Lady of Argentina from 1946 until her death in 1952. She is often referred to as simply Eva Peron, or by the affectionate Spanish language diminutive "Evita", which literally translates into English as "Little Eva".

Born out of wedlock in rural Argentina in 1919, at age 15 Eva Duarte made her way to the nation's capital of Buenos Aires where she pursued a career as a stage, radio, and film actress. Eva met Colonel Juan Peron in 1944 at a charity event in San Juan, Argentina. The two married in 1945. Eva Peron became involved in politics in 1946 shortly after Juan Peron's first election as President of Argentina. Over the course of the next six years, Eva Peron became powerful within the Pro-Peronist trade unions. Eventually, she founded the charitable Eva Peron Foundation, and the nation's first large-scale female political party, the Female Peronist Party.

In 1951, Eva Peron expressed a desire to be allowed to run for the office of Vice-President of Argentina. In this bid she received great support from the Peronist public, or "Descamisados". However, opposition from the nation's military and elite, as well as her declining health, ultimately prevented Eva Peron's candidacy. In 1952, shortly before her death, Eva Peron was given the official title of "Spiritual Leader of the Nation".

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Diego Maradona
(October 1960)

Diego Armando Maradona was born on October 30th, 1960. He is an Argentinean former soccer superstar. He played in four World Cups and received a FIFA award: FIFA Player of the Century, after being voted in an international internet fan poll organized by FIFA in 2000 to choose the best soccer player of all times.

Maradona won many trophies with Boca Juniors, FC Barcelona, and SSC Napoli over years. During his international career that included 91 caps and 34 goals, he played in four FIFA World Cup tournaments, leading the Argentina national team to its victory over West Germany in the 1986 World Cup, in which he collected the Golden Ball award as the tournament's best player. His second goal against England in the quarter-finals of the '86 tournament -- a spectacular 60-meter weave through six England players -- is commonly referred to as "The Goal of the Century."

He is also considered one of the sport's most controversial figures. Maradona was suspended for 15 months in 1991 after a failed doping test for cocaine in Italy, and then again for ephedrine during the 1994 World Cup in USA.

After retirement from professional soccer on October 30th, 1997, he had a health and

weight problem, along with ongoing cocaine abuse. Since overcoming his cocaine addiction, he has become a TV host in Argentina.

Tourist Sites

The Obelisk

The Obelisk of Buenos Aires is a modern monument placed at the heart of Buenos Aires, Argentina. "Porteños" refer to it simply as "El Obelisco".

The obelisk was built in May 1936 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the first founding of the city. It is located in the center of the "Plaza de la República" (Republic Square), the spot where the Argentinean flag was flown for the first time in Buenos Aires, at the intersection of Nueve de Julio and Corrientes Avenues. Its total height is 67 meters (220 feet) and its base area is 49 square meters (530 square feet). It was designed by architect Alberto Prebisch, and its construction took barely four weeks.



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The obelisk is one of the main icons of the city, and a place for various cultural activities, usually sponsored by the city government. It is the traditional gathering spot for sports fans to celebrate when their favorite team wins, especially the national soccer team, often resulting in colorful events that attract media coverage. It was also used by several acrobatic troupes to perform high-wire acts.

Throughout its history, the obelisk has suffered vandalism, especially politically-oriented graffiti. In the 1980s, an activist group broke in and spilled paint from the top windows, causing the city government to erect a fence around its base. This move stirred controversy, but eventually proved effective in reducing the number of defacing incidents.

For some time during the 1970s, during the Peronist government of Isabel Martínez de Perón, a ring-shaped sign was hung around the obelisk, with the motto "El silencio es salud" (Silence is health). Although it was allegedly geared against motorists creating excessive noise, it was widely interpreted as a statement calling Argentines to refrain from expressing their political views.

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the "La Noche de los Lápices", the monument was converted into a giant pencil.