

Title:

Vegetables Or Cows - Eating Vegetarian In Argentina

Word Count:

647

Summary:

Argentina: meat central, right? This is not necessarily so anymore. As a committed vegetarian (that means I do eat dairy products) unlike vegans (no dairy or eggs) I feared moving to Argentina and being deprived of vegetarian options. I would be in carnivore heaven and starve, well maybe not. What could I eat except for deep fried cheese, pizza and be completely deprived of nutrients. (and about 25 pounds heavier)

I was surprised! There are many vegetarians in Buenos Aires...

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Article Body:

Argentina: meat central, right? This is not necessarily so anymore. As a committed vegetarian (that means I do eat dairy products) unlike vegans (no dairy or eggs) I feared moving to Argentina and being deprived of vegetarian options. I would be in carnivore heaven and starve, well maybe not. What could I eat except for deep fried cheese, pizza and be completely deprived of nutrients. (and about 25 pounds heavier)

I was surprised! There are many vegetarians in Buenos Aires (compared to the USA its not that high) and numerous vegetarian dining and cooking options.

My top restaurants for a guaranteed healthy and tasty meal include:

Pura Vida Restaurant on Uriburu 1489 and Pena (look for the bright orange awning). This is a juice bar that also serves soup, sandwiches and salads. It has been open less then a year ago by two expats from the United States. One owner is a strict "raw foodist" (nothing baked) and the other is a vegan. At Pura Vida you will have delicious liquados (smoothies) or jugos (juices). My favorite smoothie is the "Strawberry Fields Forever" which has banana, blueberry, raspberry, apple juice and I request spirulina to be added.

The other option although not solely vegetarian but carnivore friendly is

California Burrito Company in Microcentro on Lavalle 441 and San Martin (4328-3056). This restaurant was also opened by three expats from the United States. This restaurant has an assembly line system to ordering your meal. They claim 15,000 variations can be created for a fajita, burritio or taco. As a vegetarian, you choose from either pinto or black beans, various salsas, spicy mole, guacamole, sour cream (non-vegan), and vegetables. The burrito also includes a beverage of your choice all for under the price of \$20 AR.

In the Collegiales neighborhood, you will find Verde Llama on Jorge Newbery 3623 (4554-7467). This is a raw foods restaurant run by Diego, an Argentine and staunch believer of the "life foods philosophy." If vegetarianism is radical in Argentina then raw foodism is sacrelegous. At Verde Llama nothing is cooked. The base of the foods is made from cracker like food made from sprouts processed in a "dehydrator."

The menu includes salads, lasagna, coconut curry, and an extensive juice and wine list. They also have a mate mousse for dessert. Diego is very passionate about "life foods" and gives classes at the restaurants on preparing raw food dishes at home. One of the chefs at Verde Llama is also a baker and sells his wares for \$10 AR at the restaurant along with some other ready made products.

As a vegetarian, its easier to prepare meals from home then scout out what I can and cannot eat from a menu. (Its also more cost effective to eat in!) The supermarket chain, Jumbo in Palermo (near the mosque) is a good resource for buying vegetables, soy sauce and some other staples. For more extensive shopping its worth a trip to Barrio Chino in Belgrano.

Barrio Chino is made up of about 2 or 3 blocks and there are many restaurants (some vegetarian) and shops crammed into this little area. You can always find soy milk in Barrio Chino. At Asia Oriental Market on Arribenos you will find an extensive supply of baked tofu, silken tofu, prepared foods such as vegetarian sushi, vegetables and fruits.

I have seen on expatriate websites in Buenos Aires people searchin for coconut oil, sesame milk and other items easily found at The Whole Foods market chain in the USA. However, these products are not easy to find here. The solution? People are learning to make their own almond, and sesame milk. There is clearly a market for a Whole Foods market here in Buenos Aires. There is a growing market to accommodate vegetarians and with all of these people opening up restaurants and markets the demand will increase. Perhaps, Argentina land of carnivores will become famous for vegetarian living too!