

# TRAVEL INSIDER

## SOPHIE LLOYD, BUENOS AIRES

### Why is Buenos Aires a good destination for shopping?

Due to high import taxes, Argentina imports very few international brands and designers, and so there is a vibrant local design scene in Buenos Aires. You can shop for local Argentine brands and designers that you won't find elsewhere in the world. Most of these local designers and artisans produce only small collections and focus on handmade, artisan techniques, be it leather goods, fashion, textiles or homewares. You're sure to pick up some one-of-a-kind, made-in-Argentina pieces.

### What are your favourite places to shop?

There are a lot of cool, independent boutiques around the city, often housed in cool design spaces or buildings. The city also has a unique shopping scene behind closed doors. Due to rising overheads, a lot of emerging designers and artisans prefer to sell their collections from their private workshops or appointment-only showrooms, which is a more personal, fun way to shop, and something I provide access to in my bespoke shopping trips around the city.

### What should Kiwis know about shopping in Buenos Aires?

Have plenty of cash to shop with (in US dollars or pesos) as a lot of the smaller workshops and showrooms accept only cash or will give you a 10 per cent discount when paying in cash. And always have your ID handy when paying on credit card. Watch the quality of some of the clothing and leather goods you find too (check the seams and stitching). It's always better to shop in recommended places.

### What should we make sure we buy while in the city?

Argentina is famous for its leather so shopping for it is a must in Buenos Aires, from custom-made leather jackets to handmade handbags and shoes from local Buenos Aires designers. Argentina also has some beautiful textiles in llama wool, baby alpaca, sheep wool and other materials, all handspun by native communities in the north and south of Argentina. Local Buenos Aires designers work with these communities to keep their artisan crafts alive.

### Who are some local designers or labels to look out for?

Min Agostini is a longstanding local womenswear designer who recently opened an appointment-only concept



Sophie Lloyd

boutique in San Telmo, which is well worth a visit. Her architectural designs are like works of art. Animana is a local label focused on beautiful handwoven and hand-knitted clothing and home accessories in baby alpaca and llama wool with a stunning design headquarters and showroom in the lesser-known Boedo neighbourhood. And Apuesto in Palermo Hollywood is a must for men with a weakness for leather shoes.

### What else does the city have to offer Kiwi visitors?

Juicy steak and fine Argentine red wine are of course in abundance but there are also a lot of other great dining options in the city. There is a vibrant street art scene to discover and some beautiful architecture and museums.

### What's the best neighbourhood to be based in?

Palermo or Recoleta as they are the safest, and close to lots of restaurants, bars, shops, parks and museums. Palermo is the young, hipster neighbourhood, while Recoleta is a bit more polished and sophisticated.

### What's the easiest way to get around?

Taxis or Uber. It's easy to hail taxis on the street (they're available if the light in the window is illuminated) and they're affordable. Braver souls could try the subway and buses but just watch your belongings on the subway.

### Where's the best place to get a steak?

My personal favourite is La Carniceria in Palermo Soho for a fabulous sit-down meal with great wine. For something more local and "hole-in-the-wall" style, Don Niceto also does a great steak. El Obrero in La Boca is a bit of an institution and great for a lively steak lunch on the weekend.

### Will vegetarians starve in this city?

The vegetarian options have definitely improved and most restaurants usually offer some kind of vegetarian option (try Ninina Bakery in Palermo Soho or Farinelli in Recoleta). There are also quite a few vegetarian restaurants now around Palermo.

### What are some of your favourite cafes and restaurants?

Las Pizarras is a great little bistro for dinner. I love Pain et Vin for a sourdough sandwich and a glass of wine at lunch, and the strip of cafes down Republica Arabe Siria are great for people watching.

### Best place for icecream?

Rapanui in Recoleta. Try the dulce de leche flavour or the Nutella flavour.

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