

Send me to Argentina. I want to grab a couple of gauchos and fly across the countryside on horseback. I want to wander through a vineyard and sample malbecs until I feel warm and fuzzy. I want to go ice hiking on a glacier. I want to eat beef and watch fútbol. I want to pop over to Easter Island and learn to surf under the gaze of great stone heads. Send me to Argentina, already.

I don't even need a translator. I already speak Spanish and – that reminds me – I want to talk to people. I want to hear the stories of ethnic Germans whose fathers were Nazi war criminals. (History major – I can't help it.) Maybe I'll be so fascinated that I'll write a book. It could happen. But it can't happen without help. I need money. I need the Goliard.

I've been craving picturesque landscapes and wild places for a while now, ever since I registered for Dr. Brinkley's U.S. Conservation Movement class. It's even stronger now that I'm actually taking that class. The past three years at Rice have been the best of my life, but as much as I love Houston and city living, I need to escape for a while. I grew up in the country. I need blue skies, open plains and fresh air. I need sunsets that are beautiful for their own sake, not because the setting sun reflects off the pollution in the air in weirdly pretty ways.

South America beckons to me. I've never been to that continent, and the more research I do, the more convinced I am that it needs to be the next place I travel. I've studied Spanish for seven years now. It's time I really get down to challenging myself and traveling to Spanish-speaking countries that aren't Spain. Argentina is the first place on my list because it has so many different things to offer

- cultural, natural, and otherwise. Furthermore, my history classes have remained more or less focused on Europe, and I feel as though I have neglected South America in my studies. I want to remedy that. I want to do an experiential study of Argentina - in Argentina. It reminds me of America in a lot of ways, as different as the two countries are. I'm curious about Argentina the great melting pot of South America, and the villages that look like they belong in the Swiss Alps instead of the Andes. I want to learn more about how and *why* people emigrated from Europe to Argentina. I just want to get to know the place, the culture, the food, the wine, the horses, the people, the cows, the mountains, the lakes... is that too much to ask?

Expense	Cost	Details
Flight	\$1,527.55 (roundtrip)	Delta Airlines from Houston to Buenos Aires
Entry fee	\$131.00	US citizens flying into Argentina must pay an entry fee as of 20 December 2011
Food & Lodging	AR\$150/day = US\$31.5/day x 21 days = \$661.50	Using estimates from http://www.lonelyplanet.com/argentina/practical-information/money-costs
Transportation (internal)	- Flight to Easter Island: \$789.15 (round trip) - Flight from Buenos Aires to Ushuaia: \$648.10 (round trip) - Taxis & misc: \$300.00 (Total: \$1,737.25)	
Miscellaneous costs	\$1,000	For any additional entrance fees, activities, and unexpected expenses.
Total:	\$5,000	