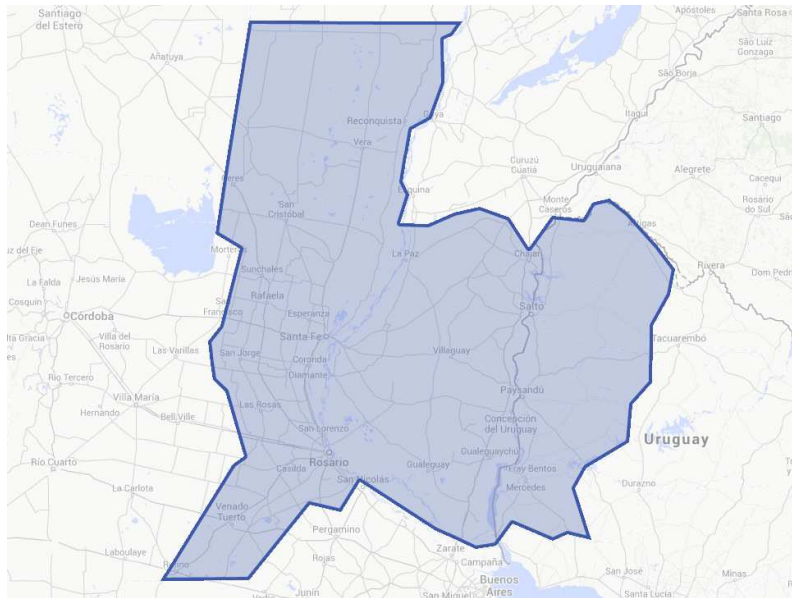


# **BINATIONAL DISTRICT 4945** **ARGENTINA/URUGUAY**

## **2014-2015 Recommendations:**



### **For the students and their families:**

Our District is divided into two geographical regions. Santa Fe and Entre Ríos provinces (Argentina), and the Southwestern part of Uruguay (Fray Bentos, Salto, Young and Paysandú, bordering cities over Entre Ríos province). Both regions are really beautiful with rivers, beaches, and a great deal of vast vegetation. They also have plains of uneven landscapes, and very old cities, especially in Entre Ríos and Uruguay.

Most of the Rotary Clubs are placed in small towns of about 5,000 to 40,000 inhabitants and the distance among them is about 100 to 200 kilometers most of the time. There are also clubs in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants.

The usual means of transport is the car or the bus. We don't have trains: our railway became old and useless. Within the towns, students usually travel by bike because distances to school are not longer than 1,500 meters.

Our diet is based on red meat. That's why we don't recommend pure vegetarians to come to our country. We also eat a lot of chicken meat and not much pork. A typical meal would be a steak with potatoes or salad. We also eat a lot of pasta and our pizzas are very tasty.

The usual meal times are very different from other countries. Breakfast is usually small, based on a cup of tea or chocolate and a croissant or a toast. Lunch is very big, usually at 12.30pm–1pm. Dinner is also big, usually after 9pm and before 11pm.

The typical citizen who lives in small towns is used to having a little nap after lunch, which we call “siesta.” This is usually between 2pm and 3.30pm, not more than an hour or an hour and a half.

Summer in our district Region, very close to the sea level, is very intense with high temperatures during the day and night. Winter in this area is mild, with a frost mean of 20°C. It’s rare to have temperatures below -5°C.

Most of the time, Argentines are not very punctual, not even with important events. It’s common for the Argentinean to be an hour or half an hour late. Nobody gets upset or bothered about it, it’s just like that. There are exceptions, too, of course. It’s also usual for the public transport to be late, but they are trying to get better.

**In Argentina, it’s not common for people to speak another language but Spanish. At school we have English lessons, but they are pretty basic. Common people may not understand English.**

### **What’s not recommended to do:**

#### **In the cities:**

We don’t recommend students to be alone at night hours. They should travel by taxi or a recommended “remise.”

Do not leave your belongings by themselves in the public street, such as your bike without a lock, etc. There are lots of occasional robberies.

Do not go to the disco by yourself, it’s recommended to be always in the company of an Argentinean friend from the place. Be careful with the drinks you are offered at the disco. It’s always better to ask for the bottle to be opened in front of you.

About the traffic, it’s not unusual for people not to respect the signs, like STOP, zebra crossings, etc. Be aware of that.

From a foreign point of view, the Argentinean driver is reckless. We are the country with most traffic accidents per inhabitant in the world. So be careful and watch both sides before crossing the street.

### **What’s good about us:**

The best thing is the People, who are very kind with the exchange student. At school everyone wants to know about him/her, they get close to him/her and the student makes friends easily.

Families are very nice, but they control the student a lot, as well as their own children. All the decisions are made with the parents until the student (or their own child) is 21. Children must and are used to helping with the housework, such as making their own bed, setting the table, doing the dishes, etc. This happens in almost every family.

It’s very common for children to stay at their parents’ house until they start university classes or even longer, when they get married.

It’s also important to have lunch with the family. Sometimes you are more than 10 or 12 people for lunch.

Our typical Mum tries to know at anytime when and who their children are with, no matter their age. It’s not common for children to go and live by themselves.

Another thing that may seem strange for the foreign student is that there is neither

racism nor segregation.

Argentina is also a very wide country. Except from the Pampa zone, the rest of the country doesn't have a high population density. It's not strange to go 300 kilometers without seeing anyone in the Southern Highways.

Argentina has all the different types of weather, landscapes, rivers and lakes that you can imagine.

Usually, families travel within the country, they do national tourism, but they don't go overseas that often. In summer, it is common to go to the beach or the mountains. During winter they usually choose the mountains.

There are a few families who practise winter sports. Argentina has a few ski centers: one being the international center "Las Leñas" while Uruguay has mostly beaches.

### **Communication among people**

One of the things that turn out to be strange for the Exchange student is that people say "hello" with a kiss on the cheek, it doesn't matter if it's between a woman and a man or even between two men or two women. Only when there is a lot of respect, or a wide difference of age, you say "hello" by shaking hands.

Among men they might shake hands, but if they are close, it's common for them to kiss on the cheek and hug.

Don't be surprised or upset, it's the regular way of saying "hello," even from the first time you meet each other.

### **Very Special Customs:**

One custom that is very popular among Argentineans, Paraguayans and Uruguayans is "mate." It's made with the leaves and branches of a tree called *Ilex paraguarienses*, which grows in the Northeast of Argentina. There are a lot of artificial plantations because of the high demand of this product.

"Mate" is an infusion, which is similar to tea, but you can drink it at anytime in a recipient with a straw. Everyone drinks from the same recipient: it's a way of sharing.

You can drink it sweet or without sugar, alone or with other people and it's a drink that many students use during exams time. It has a similar effect to that of drinking coffee.

**Houses:** It's not common for the houses to have a room for every child; they share a bedroom, often with kids of the same gender. Most commonly, in the host families you will find a kid of about the same age and gender of the student that will share the bedroom with.

### **School Year:**

Our District is very wide. Usually it is not possible to live in a city and study in another one because of the long distances. In every town or city where there's a Rotary Club, there's a high school. Most of the clubs that are in the Exchange Program are in small towns where there are no universities.

The school year in Argentina starts approximately on 1<sup>st</sup> March and finishes on 30<sup>th</sup> November. Summer holidays are pretty long, about 3 months, but winter holidays are only 15 days. There is no other holiday time such as Spring Break.

The Traditional School, not the technical one, has 7 years of primary school and 5 years of secondary (high) school. Students finish high school with 17 or 18 years old,

depending on their date of birth. When students finish high school, they usually go to University to the big cities, away from their family, renting a room in pension houses or sharing an apartment with another family member or friend.

**FOR LONG TERM EXCHANGES:**

The date of arrival for the North Hemisphere students should be around the end of July or August, in our winter holidays, which would be the **middle of our school year.**

That's why we recommend the North Hemisphere District to **avoid** sending students older than 17.5 years old, because if they do, we would have the problem that the friends they make in that half a year would go to University and the student would have to start making new friends again or **be a bit alone** for the rest of the year. They should also start a new school year with kids younger than them.

On the other hand, if you send a student of between 16.5 to 17.5 years old, we could place them into the 11<sup>th</sup> year and the next year they will stay at the same school with the same friends in the 12<sup>th</sup> year.

**It's because of the education issue that we recommend the Districts to send kids younger than 17.5 years old by the time they arrive in Argentina.**

**REMEMBER!** You must not forget to bring: a flag of your country, a blazer, pins, cards, your sponsor club pennant, the printed and signed regulations, gifts to your counselor and your host families. It's a good gesture to thank those who will help you have a good exchange year in our country.

*Victor Javier Mercado-Chairman 2014-2016*  
*Randolfo Hoffmann (Randy)-Co-Chairman*  
*District 4945*