

Private Shopping In Buenos Aires

By Leah Walker



When thinking of Buenos Aires, Argentina, thoughts of the tango, Parisian-style architecture, polo and prime beef come to mind. But if you visit the capital of Argentina without an empty suitcase and an abundance of US dollars, I can promise you'll leave with a pang of regret.

Not only is Buenos Aires an outstanding shopping city, but thanks to a favorable exchange rate, especially with the blue dollar rate, visitors can leave with incredible deals on fine, handcrafted Argentine products. From custom leather items to jewelry to home goods, Buenos Aires is a treasure trove for even the most casual shopper.

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With limited time in the city and a specific list of items I wanted, I took to Google for a Buenos Aires shopping expert. Who I found was Sophie Lloyd, founder of Shop Hop BA. I left the city with a custom-made leather jacket, a custom-made pair of leather boots, Patagonia-inspired perfume and leather bag from a local designer. Had I more time, my suitcase surely wouldn't have shut.

After my shopping high wore off, I sat down with Sophie for some insight into the shopping scene of Buenos Aires.



Leah Walker: You're from York, England. How did you end up in Buenos Aires?

Sophie Lloyd: I came to Buenos Aires in 2010 out of wanderlust, and I'm still here four and a half years later. I'd been living and working in Shanghai as a fashion journalist for five years previously and wanted a change of scenery. My experience in China was amazing (and I really miss the food), but it wasn't somewhere I wanted to live forever. I love to travel, and I wasn't really ready to return to England. I'd never been to South America, and I'd heard great things about Buenos Aires, so I just took a chance and booked a flight. Like most, I fell in love with the city, and now it feels like home.

LW: What led you to create Shop Hop BA?

SL: I've always wanted to have my own business, and I've always loved shopping for myself and for others. When I arrived in Buenos Aires, I was a little overwhelmed by the shopping scene and didn't really know where to start as the city is so big and there are so many distinctive neighborhoods. I decided to set up Shop Hop BA to offer private shopping tours and personal shopping services to help tourists and expats in their shopping quests. I also offer personalized shopping itineraries for those who would like some shopping tips, but don't want to hire a shopping assistant.

LW: What makes Buenos Aires a great shopping city?

SL: Buenos Aires has a very unique shopping scene dominated by local designers and brands. I love the boutique shopping culture and many of the boutiques are housed in beautiful old houses and buildings.



There's also a growing trend of hidden, private appointment-only showrooms and artisan workshops that you wouldn't come across on your own, unless you are in the know. A lot of the local designers and artisans only produce small limited edition collections, so you'll come away with something special that you won't find anywhere else.

LW: When potential clients contact you, how do you go about customizing their shopping experiences? What are some of the benefits of using a private shopping guide?

SL: I start out by sending a questionnaire by email to the client that gives me a better idea of their tastes, personal style and if they're looking for anything specific. I'll then create an itinerary based on that. Every client is different and shops in a different way, so I try to remain as flexible as possible. I also offer personal styling and wardrobe advice for more fashion-focused tours.

Having a private shopping guide saves a lot of time and helps distinguish the good from the bad. It enables shoppers to find exactly what they're looking for at the best prices and gives insight into the local design scene from someone in the know.

LW: What items should shoppers not leave Buenos Aires without?

SL: Visitors should not leave without a custom-made leather jacket, leather handbag, a pair of handmade leather shoes, ceramic penguin wine jug and a statement piece of clothing or jewelry from an Argentine designer.

LW: How do stylish Argentine men and women dress?

SL: It depends where you are in the city, but the majority dress quite classically. They're not as experimental with their looks as people are in New York or London, for example, but they always look smart. The women are very feminine and like boho chic wearing tight jeans, heels and feminine tops. The men tend to dress in a preppy way. You will find a more hipster crowd



hanging out in Palermo Soho who are a bit more experimental with their look.

LW: What are some of your personal favorite shops?

SL: I don't want to give away all my shopping secrets, but here are some of my favorite boutiques in the city:

Pehache

This concept design boutique is one of my favorites in the city for its housewares collections and interior design
pehache.com

Tramando by Martin Churba

One of Argentina's most talented and longstanding designers celebrated for his experimental textiles and printing techniques
tramando.com

JT by Jessica Trosman

A new line by designer Jessica Trosman currently only available in an impressive concept space in Villa Crespo
www.jtbyjt.com

Patron

Multi-designer boutique focused on handmade jewelry, crafts and housewares
patronba.com.ar

Fueguia

Perfume laboratory that creates its own fragrances inspired by culture and history of Argentina
fueguia.com

