



Eric Anderson. Swarthmore Program in Buenos Aires, 2^o semester 2009.

The Swarthmore in Buenos Aires program offers a singular experience. The merits of living in the city with a host family scarcely need to be mentioned. To feel the pulse of the street downtown, to lounge in a park in Palermo, to explore the diverse neighborhoods north and west of the center—those images make up some of my fondest memories of my abroad experience. Sitting at the dinner table with my host family discussing differences in national culture and politics while enjoying a bowl of *locro*, too, is one of the experiences that stick out as I think back to Argentina.

My abroad experience was an unequivocal success. In large part, I think this was the result of a particular mindset I had going into the program. Swarthmore in Buenos Aires offers an academic and social experience you won't find in any other abroad program, but that doesn't mean that it is a fit for everyone. I was looking for full cultural immersion with a high-quality academic experience. Swarthmore in Buenos Aires delivers on these two elements. The program consciously puts academic rigor first and foremost; moreover, it encouraged us to develop our language skills and engage in the myriad cultural activities at our disposal in the community. I arrived in Buenos Aires excited to learn about the academic topics that I had chosen while honing my Spanish skills. I came away from the program with a much greater level of fluency, armed with new knowledge in content areas that informs my academic work back in Pennsylvania.

The corollary to tutorial-based learning is that it is more challenging to meet

people outside of the program. Arriving in Buenos Aires cognizant of this fact, I was proactive in seeking out new contacts. For me, finding a local Ultimate Frisbee group was critical for developing a social life in the city. I got to play on a team of Americans, Colombians and Argentines, many of whom became great friends over the course of the semester. Prospective students should take note of two things: (1) you will have to actively seek out friends, and (2) there are thousands of ways to do so in Buenos Aires. It is incredibly easy to find groups of young people of similar interests: sports, arts, dance, film, music or food.

I loved my time in Buenos Aires. I tried a lot of new things, and I tried a lot of new things on my own. For me, exploration was my primary motive to go abroad in the first place. The greatest strength of Swarthmore in Buenos Aires is that it provides an incredible opportunity for individual exploration in a city that knows no limits. I come away with new academic knowledge, an Argentine accent, new friends, and an unrelenting desire to go back soon.

—Eric Anderson