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Like any big (very big!) city, Buenos Aires can be intimidating at first. It's geographically huge, and full of people rushing around all the time, and so on - it doesn't exactly slow down around you and wait for you to make friends. That said, there are so many ways to find a social space for yourself within it.

One thing I learned during my semester there was how to make the city smaller for myself. If I stumbled upon a cafe or bar or bookstore I particularly liked, I went back -- and went back again, and again. You really can meet people this way, just by showing up and getting to know a small place and the faces that frequent it. Likewise, it makes an enormous difference to \*have\* such places in your daily life, places to feel familiar with and comfortable in. But there are a lot of other ways -- more regular and deliberate ones, too -- to find a social life in Buenos Aires. It's a vibrant place, full of young people and music and things to do at all hours of the day and night (very literally all hours). If you choose to take part in them, you'll immediately be surrounded by a distinct and lively social scene. Many scenes, really. And finally, there are scores of classes and cultural centers and so on -- all separate from the academic program as such - that you can opt to take advantage of. (I wish I had, in fact, much more than I actually did.) There's a wonderful cultural center fairly near the SWBA office called Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas where you can take art classes and things like that; you can sit in on classes at the UBA; there are lots of places for yoga or sports or most other things you can think of . . . all of these things are opportunities not only for meeting people to begin with, but also for creating some genuine social continuity in the middle

of an experience that's transitory by nature.

It takes real initiative on your part to do it in the first place, because no one's going to make you -- not SWBA, and not Buenos Aires, either! But they're all ways to feel and truly \*be\* much more connected to your (vast, rich) environment, and I think they can be deeply satisfying.