

Come on home

Whether you plan to stick around, or you just like to feel at home away from home, renting an apartment for anything from a week upwards is easy in Buenos Aires. Just pick the area and your pricerange, says **Katie Buckland**, and hit the web.

The swankiest spots to slumber on the BA circuit might well be the stylish hotels of Recoleta and Palermo, but for many longtime travellers – not to mention those of us on a budget – a hotel is nothing more than... well, a hotel. From executive suites to hostel dorm rooms, the appeal of hotels can fade when you're far from home for any length of time, and at those moments when a home cooked meal is all you really want. The idea of renting an apartment in any major city might be enough to heighten your blood pressure and send nightmares of pesky, overprotective landlords and outrageous deposit requests swimming into your mind. But it's *al contrario* in BA, where finding a home away from home is a pleasure – browsing lovely apartments online ready for a comfy stay is hardly arduous – and where dozens of companies have the rental process down to a fine art.

Visitors who'd like to settle in BA in true *porteño* style can easily find fully furnished apartments or homes to

rent, typically snagging better deals than they would if they were paying for a week-long stint in the average hotel. And since most of the best companies offering short-term rentals have detailed websites that specify most of what you might care to know, photographs, list of amenities and location descriptions are all there right at your fingertips. From quick, three day stays to six-month leases, and from pet friendly homes to kitchens kitted out for babies (and their parents), it's just a question of time before you find what you're looking for. You might even get distracted en route by a rooftop terrace or a private swimming pool and find yourself somewhere you'd never have dreamed of. Prices vary according to the location and the size of the property, obviously; but rest assured, most agencies have options ranging from the highly economical to the positively grandiose.

OasisBA (4831 0340, www.OasisBA.com) offers luxury vacation rentals throughout the city, plus complimentary concierge

services and guest list and table reservations at BA's hottest night spots. Oasis even launched one recent new property (see *photos below*) with a party, so swish was the pad. Efficient agency **Byt Argentina** (4876 5000, www.bytagentina.com) has a plethora of rentals available in Capital, and an online option to narrow your search down to budget apartments. ByT can also arrange tours in BA and beyond. **Home in Argentina** (4772 4303, www.homeinargentina.com.ar) is another recommended agency, as is **International Nest** (www.internationalnest.com), which specialises in unique and stylish urban retreats. For those who have come to Argentina to learn Spanish and immerse themselves in the living abroad experience, **Road2Argentina** (6379 9391, www.road2argentina.com) arranges accommodation in student residences, with host families or in shared and private apartments, and can also arrange Spanish immersion programmes as well as work and volunteering opportunities.

and stay put to enjoy the pool and garden, or make like the locals and sizzle up a steak on the rooftop terrace *parrilla* (barbecue).

La Otra Orilla

Julián Alvarez 1779, entre Costa Rica y Soler, Palermo Viejo (4863 7426/ www.otraorilla.com.ar). Subte D, Plaza Italia/bus 39, 60, 152. Rates US\$85-\$133 single/double; US\$140 suite. Credit AmEx, MC, V.

La Otra Orilla is a classic B&B in a converted rustic house on a charming, cobbled Palermo cobbled street. The seven homely rooms are spread over two floors, five of them with an ensuite bathroom. Each is fitted out according to a slightly different theme, reflected in the room's name: Bamboo, Verde, Violeta. The highlight, however, is the suite with a view of the garden that will almost make you forget that you're in the heart of Buenos Aires. La Otra Orilla is quiet and warm, with a relaxing patio on which you can linger happily over the substantial breakfast.

Budget

Che Lulu Trendy Hotel

Pasaje Emilio Zola 5185, entre Justo Santa María de Oro y Godoy Cruz (4772 0289/www.luluguesthouse.com). Subte D, Palermo/bus 39, 55, 111. Rates US\$40-\$65 double. No credit cards.

Hidden down an inconspicuous side street in one of the most authentically *porteño* bits of Palermo, Che Lulu is a pioneer of the area's guesthouse scene. All areas, including the eight bedrooms, are air-conditioned and benefit from abundant light, while works by local artists and plentiful plant life provide extra splashes of colour. The hotel's dining area, which doubles up as the TV room, is the perfect spot for planning the day's excursions to nearby Buenos Aires Zoo and the neighborhood's golf course, racetrack and plentiful parks.

Cypress In

Costa Rica 4828, entre Borges y Thames (4833 5834/www.cypressin.com). Bus 34, 36, 55, 93, 161. Rates US\$79-\$90 double. Credit AmEx, MC, V.

Aptly named for its cypress trees, one of the few features that remain from the original old house once owned by tango musician Juan D'Arienzo, Cypress In is a quaint B&B in the heart of Palermo. Located on an atmospheric cobbled street just minutes from Plazoleta Cortázar, the newly remodeled hotel has 13 minimalist rooms at bargain rates. There's a cosy dining area, a living room complete with plush leather couches and plasma TV, and a rooftop terrace. While the rooms (each named after a Zen garden element) are a little on the small side, they have all the necessities for travellers who don't plan on spending all their time holed up in the hotel. With the countless number of surrounding shops, restaurants, bars and clubs, you won't find yourself missing the extra space.

Hotel Costa Rica

Costa Rica 4137/39, entre Gascon y Acuña de Figueroa (4864 7390/www.hotelcostarica.com.ar). Subte D, Scalabrini Ortiz/bus 15, 39, 57, 110, 141, 160, 188. Rates US\$89-\$144 double. Credit AmEx, V.

Light and airy Hotel Costa Rica is an affordable option for those wishing to get away from the headache of downtown traffic and noise. The rooms are basic but clean, and if you don't mind sharing a bathroom, your budget might stretch to that extra two days, two pizzas more. There's a rooftop terrace that's perfect for sunbathing on, or enjoying a glass of wine from the bar with other guests; but unfortunately, there's no wheelchair accessibility. The staff is unerringly friendly, and can arrange excursions to and from football games as well as city tours.

