

# iChe Boludo!

A gringo's guide to understanding the Argentines



James Bracken



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Tengo que decir... muchísimas gracias a Alicia y Kevin por prestarme las máquinas. Muy buena onda! También, un abrazo fuerte al Capitán, Gabi, Tomás, Nico, Silvia, Gatito, mis viejos, el clan Frey y locos patagónicos. Todos son "re aparatos" y los quiero mucho! Gracias Martin por los dibujos buenísimos...y Bariloche, flashero!... y vos, corazón de arroz, la maestra más hermosa en el planeta. Tu paciencia no tiene fondo y no lo podría haber hecho sin vos.

Jaime

## PRÓLOGO

Argentines love to talk. They communicate directly, openly and often loudly. In Argentina there is no taboo in the use of foul language. A respectable old woman will swear like a sailor and no one bats an eye. Fools are not suffered lightly and anyone behaving in a pretentious or obnoxious manner will be sharply reprimanded, sometimes with just a simple gesture of the hands. Political correctness does not exist in Argentina because it would only impede getting your point across. If you are a little overweight your nickname might be 'el Gordo', or if you have a dark complexion they might call you 'Negro' or if you happen to be of Polish descent, 'el Polaco'. No offense is intended, none is taken and there is no false morality to confuse the issues. It is evident when Argentines communicate with one another that their freedom of speech is real. Although Argentines are extremely patriotic and will not hesitate to tell you that their country has the tallest mountains, the tastiest beef, the most beautiful women, the finest wine and the best soccer players in the world, they will also be quick to point out that their country is run by corrupt politicians and is full of bullshitters and crooks. The truth is "which country isn't?", but Argentines in particular always seem to be just as aware of their own shortcomings as well as they are of other's. This keen sense of discernment is illustrated by the vast quantity of words used to accurately describe an idiot, a

braggart, a liar, a scam or the quality of anything from personal character to household appliances. The Argentines use these words with such frequency and passion that the unsuspecting foreigner will eventually have to ask "what is a 'boludo' and why can't I find it in my Spanish dictionary?"

The unique form of Spanish spoken in most of Argentina today is most accurately called Rio Platense. Rio Platense is commonly identified by its use of the pronoun 'vos' instead of 'tu' or 'usted' as well as a shh or a soft jj sound when pronouncing ll or y (eg. pollo-*posho*, yerba-*sherba*). Rio Platense is named for the Rio Plata which, as it drains into the Atlantic Ocean, borders the province of Buenos Aires and defines the most populated part of Argentina. Uruguay is located on the other side of the Rio Plata from Argentina and is also home to Rio Platense Spanish. Although geographically a massive country with an incredibly diverse population, Rio Platense has had the strongest cultural and lingual influences in most of Argentina due solely to the sheer number of those who speak it. The majority of this population is descended from the huge influx of immigrants that arrived, from all parts of the world, to the port of Buenos Aires in the early 20th century. The particular language and slang that evolved in the streets of Buenos Aires at this time is referred to as Lunfardo and is directly related to Tango music and culture. Lunfardo has its own vocabulary and word play such as syllable inversions (pizza - zapi, cafe-feca) that some say originated as a way for folks to communicate beyond the understanding of the police and prison guards. Much Lunfardo reflects a life of crime and could be why most Argentines appear to be so streetwise when speaking their native tongue. Although a great deal of Lunfardo has found a permanent

place in the Argentine vocabulary, "Che Boludo!" is not a dictionary of Lunfardo but a comprehensive guide to understanding the slang, expressions, gestures and Rio Platense Spanish that is used throughout most of Argentina today. Everyone from the celebrated Tango singers to the infamous gauchos to the youth of today has made their contributions. Many words and expressions vary from province to province and person to person. To cover them all would be impossible as language is constantly crossing borders and evolving through the generations. In any case, it is important that this book is used wisely and you are among good friends before you go spouting out its contents. Certain colloquialisms are only appropriate in certain situations and a failure of good judgment could likely result in embarrassing yourself or, worse yet, offending someone and promptly receiving a *trompada*.



## “Vos”

With the exception of a few other specific parts of Colombia, Bolivia and Central America, Rio Platense is unique in its use of the pronoun ‘vos’ (you). Whether or not ‘vos’ comes from Portuguese ‘vôce’, from Español ‘vosotros’ or an antiquated form of addressing someone of the utmost importance such as god or the king, its place in Rio Platense is accepted, by those who speak it, as legitimate Castellano. In Rio Platense, ‘vos’ also has its own form of conjugation. The only differences between the conjugation of ‘vos’ and ‘tu’ are found in the simple present tense and imperative form and are usually only a matter of an accented syllable. If you speak using ‘vos’ instead of ‘tu’ or ‘usted’, however, it is important that you recognize these conjugations and use them accordingly. The examples given are to illustrate the differences between conjugating ‘tu’ and ‘vos’. Rio Platense, like common Spanish, also uses ‘usted’ in cases where respect is shown such as when speaking to an elderly with whom one is not intimate.

verb	vos	tu	imperative vos
<b>ser</b> (to be)	vos sos	tu eres	se!
<b>estar</b> (to be)	vos estás	tu estás	está!
<b>caminar</b> (to walk)	vos caminás	tu caminas	caminá!
<b>tener</b> (to have)	vos tenés	tu tienes	tené!
<b>querer</b> (to want)	vos querés	tu quieres	queré!
<b>subir</b> (to go up)	vos subís	tu subes	subí!
<b>venir</b> (to come)	vos venís	tu vienes	vení!
<b>pensar</b> (to think)	vos pensás	tu piensas	pensá!
<b>decir</b> (to say)	vos decís	tu dices	decí!
<b>contar</b> (to tell, to count)	vos contás	tu cuentas	contá!

## DICCIONARIO

[m] masculine noun  
[f] feminine noun  
[v] verb  
[adj] adjective  
[antiquated] used by older generations  
[excl] exclamation  
[aug] augmented  
[dim] diminutive  
lit. literal meaning of the word

**abrochar** [v] lit. to button up; to fuck (vulgar)

**abollado** [adj] lit. dented; someone who appears to be in rough shape or abused

**achaparrada** [adj] short and stubby, used to describe vegetation

**afanar** [v] to steal, to rob; to over charge; to win by a large difference

**alcahuete** [m] Arabic in origin, from al-qawwd which means 'word'; 1) narc, informer to police;  
2) tattler tale; someone not to be trusted with a secret 3) [antiquated] pimp; **alcahuetear** [v] to betray a secret, to be a tattler tale

**amarrete** [m] a haggler, a cheapskate

**aparato** [m] lit. apparatus; a real character of a person; a strange, eccentric person

**apolillar** [v] to sleep. \*from a **polilla** [moth] sleeping in the cocoon

**atorrante** [m] 1) someone who is worthless, a lazy bum \*this term originated in the early part of the century when large drain pipes, manufactured by the company Tarrant, were used by the homeless as a place to sleep; 2) sometimes used affectionately for men or children; 3) a whorish woman

**baboso/a** [adj] drooling; used to describe someone who is lusty, with sexual desire 'very horny'  
**babosear** [v] to drool with desire

**bacán** [adj] someone with expensive tastes, who lives luxuriously and enjoys the finer things in life

**baqueteado** [adj] lit. a reamed musket; worn out, used to the point of disrepair

**bagayo** [m] 1) an ugly person, a dog of a woman;  
2) baggage, luggage

**bajón** [m] lit. a decline, a drop; 'a downer', a disappointment or a bummer

**banana** [f] someone who thinks they are really cool but is never taken seriously by others

**bancar** [v] 1) to tolerate, to bear, to accept 2) to support, to help; to support financially

**baranda** [f] lit. a railing; a stench, a foul smell

**bárbaro/a** [adj, excl] 1) excellent, great;  
2) "que bárbaro!" 'wow!'

**bardo** [m] chaos; a crazy, annoying or problematic situation. **bardear** [v] "to make a bardo" to cause trouble

**barullo** [m] a noisy disruption

**bicho** [m] lit. a bug, a small animal, a 'critter'. "mal bicho" 'bad bug' used in reference to Argentina's corrupt politicians

**bife** [m] lit. a beefsteak; a slap in the face

**birra** [f] {Italian} beer

**bizarro/a** [m,f] bizarre, strange

**bocha** [f] a large quantity of something

**bocho/a** [m,f] smart, quick witted

**bola** [f] lit. ball; testical \*also **"dar bola"** 'to give the ball' to pay attention to; eg. **"no me dan bola"** 'they don't give me the ball' they don't pay attention to me \*this probably comes from soccer, the number one sport in Argentina also: **"romper las bolas"** 'to break one's balls' **"hinchar las bolas"** 'to swell one's balls' to be annoying, a pain in the ass **"en bolas"** 'to be in balls' to be naked; to be in a bad situation without protection, as if you were naked and exposed



**"no me dan bola"**

**bolazo**[m] a gross lie or exaggeration

**boleado** [adj] to be dizzy

**boleto** [f] lit. a receipt; a lie

**boleto** [m] lit. a ticket (bus, plane, etc.)  
**"sos boleto"** 'you're dead'

**bólido** [m] an automobile

**bolita** [f] derogatory for a Bolivian

**boludo/a** [m,f] lit. one with large testicles but not used to describe someone who is brave or 'ballsy'; used alike for men, women and children; 1) fool, idiot; 2) same definition but also used casually among friends thus **"che boludo!"** could be anything from 'you idiot!' to 'hey buddy' depending on the context of the situation \*historical fact: **"boludos"** or **"pelotudos"** were 'cannon fodder', the first troops to be sent into battle and thus the first to be killed \*see: **pelotudo**

**"hacerse el boludo"** [v] to play dumb, to act as if you don't know

**boludez** [f] any matter easy to solve, something that can be done by any boludo

**buenuedo/a** [adj] someone who is kind of dumb or naive but a good person

**bombacha** [f] a traditionally baggy pants worn by the Argentine gauchos; **bombacha** is now more commonly used for women's panties

**chabomba** [lunfardo]

**bombo** [m] lit. a big drum; an unexpected and/or undesired pregnancy, a big belly

**bombón** [m,f] lit. candy, usually chocolate; hey gorgeous!, an attractive man or woman

**bondi** [m] public bus \* this word comes from the English 'bonds' that were used to fund the installation of the famous trams, called 'bondes', of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**bonete** [m] lit. a pointed hat "del bonete" crazy

**bosta** [f] horseshit; someone or something that is very ugly

**borrego** [m] a kid \*see: **pibe**

**botón** [m,f] lit. a button; a tattle tale [antiq.] police; informer to the police \*see: **buchón**

**brasuca** [adj] a Brazilian; sometimes derogatory

**brutal** [adj, excl] lit. brutal; great, awesome; 'wow!'

**buchón** [m] a tattle tale; an informer to police, 'narc' \*see: **alcahuete**

**bulín** [m] lit. lathe used in a plaster wall; a room or place used to have sex

**bulto** [m] lit. package; penis and testicals

**buzarda** [f] a big belly

**cábala** [f] a gesture that brings good luck, eg. An old Italian tradition still observed by older generations in Argentina, is to eat gnocciis on the 29th of every month. It is a **cábala** to put coins under the plates of the gnocciis

**caber** [v] lit. to fit into; to like someone, to get along well with someone, eg. "**me cabe el chabón**" 'I really like that guy'

**cachengue** [m] a great party, usually with good music and lots of dancing

**cacho** [m] a piece or chunk of something "**un cacho de carne con ojos**" 'a piece of meat with eyes' an idiot; [dim] "**cachito**" a small quantity of something "a tiny bit"

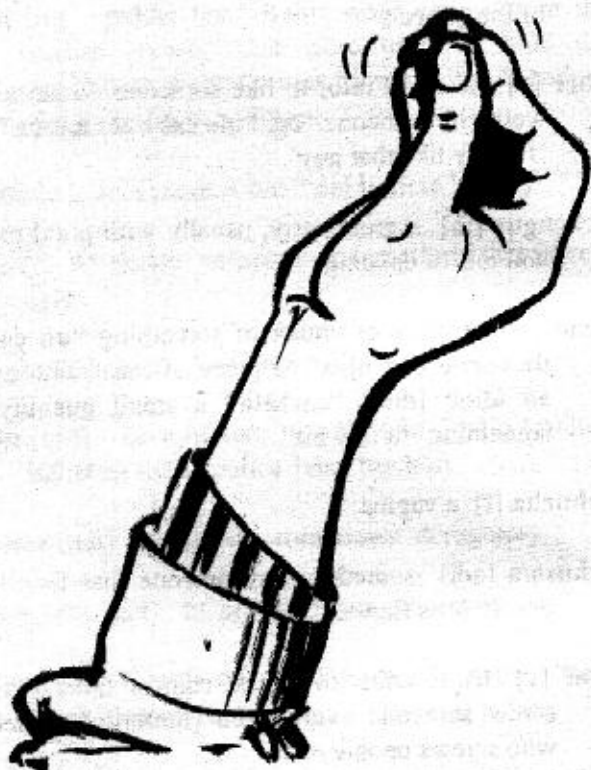
**cachucha** [f] a vagina

**cachuso/a** [adj] something or someone that functions poorly or is flawed

**cagar** [v] lit. to shit; to wreck, ruin or fall apart; to screw someone over **garca** [lunfardo] someone who screws people over

**cagarse** [v] to break down, to fall apart also: "**estar cagado**" lit. 'to be shitted'; to have big problems, to be fucked

"**cagar a palos**" lit. 'to shit to the sticks'; to beat the shit out of



**"cuiqui"**  
'to be afraid'

**"cagar la fruta"** lit. shit the fruit; to die; **"tener un cagaso"** lit. to have a huge shit; to be very scared

**"cagón"** lit. big shit; a coward

**"caga de risa"** lit. a shit of laughter; hilarious

**"cagar de frío"** lit. to shit from cold; to be freezing your ass off

**cana** [f] 1) police: 2) jail

**canchero** [m] a smooth talker, a know it all \*from **"cancha"** the horse tracks, a canchero would be someone who knows "the tracks" thus which horse to bet on

**caño** [m] lit. a pipe, a tube; 1) pipe used to smoke marijuana or also marijuana cigarette; a joint; 2) **"dar con un caño"** lit. 'hit with a pipe'; to deal someone a heavy verbal blow, to publicly criticize or denounce someone such as a politician; 3) a pistol

**canuto/a** [adj] originally a lock pick used by thieves, something hidden **encanutar** [v] to hide something, generally illicit

**capo/a** [m,f] 1) a popular person, someone who is well liked due to a generous nature; 2) boss, chief, someone that has control on the situation

**careta** [adj] lit. 'wearing a mask'; pretentious, snobbish; used to describe fashion conscious people or expensive restaurants and neighborhoods  
[aug] **caretón**

**caretear** [v] to act falsely

**carucha** [adj] a good looking person

**cascote** [adj] lit. a piece of stone; someone who is hard headed thus slow to learn

**catrasca** [f] “cagada tras cagada” lit. ‘one shit after another’; one disaster after another; a klutz

**catrera** [f] a bed

**cebar** [v] lit. to choke the carburetor of an auto; to serve mates. \*see: **mate culture**

**cepillar** [v] lit. to brush; to fuck (vulgar)

**chabón** [m] guy, man

**chacota** [phrase] “a la chacota” ‘slapped together’ put together in haste

**chamuyero** [m] a smooth talker, a bullshitter, a know it all, someone with the characteristics of a used car salesman; **chamuyar** [v] to bullshit, to smooth talk somebody

**chanfleado** [adj] bent, curved; from the curve ball effect sometimes used when kicking the soccer ball

**changa** [f] temporary work, an ‘odd job’



“la posta”  
‘without question, the absolute best’

**changüi** [m] a needed advantage or opportunity;  
'a break' eg. "**dame un changüi**" 'give me a  
break'

**chanta** [f] a smooth talker, a liar, someone who talks  
shit

**chantajear** [v] to be a chanta \*see: **chamuyero**

**chapa** [f] lit. sheet or flat piece of metal "**a las chapas**"  
to go very fast

**chata** [f] lit. a bed pan; 1) pickup truck or van;  
2) a boring person

**che** [exl] 1) hey!, hey you! 2) also used as a  
meaningless interjection in whatever context  
\*The origins of this catchy expletive are debated.  
The most popular theory is that che comes from  
the Mapuzungun language spoken by the native  
Patagonian Mapuche. In Mapuzungun, **che** means  
'people'. **Che** also means 'I' in the language  
spoken by the Guaraní, natives of the Paraná River  
basin of northern Argentina. Considering the roots  
of Rio Platense, **che** could also come from 'tse',  
an old Spanish expletive used to get someone's  
attention or tell them to 'shut up' or the Italian  
'che' which in Spanish would be '**hay**' (there are)  
\* It is also to be understood that che was not  
adopted into Argentine vocabulary from Argentine  
revolutionary hero Ernesto 'Che' Guevara. Che  
Guevara received his nickname because the  
Argentine's frequent use of '**che**' often distinguishes  
them from other Latin Americans

**cheto/a** [adj] fancy, expensive, wealthy

**china** [f] a gaucho's woman

**chinchudo/a** [adj] nervous, hysterical, short tempered

**chirimbolo** [m] random objects, watchamacallits;  
see: **huevadas**

**chirimbolear** [v] to fix something accordingly with  
creativity and whatever is at hand, 'jerry rig'

**chirola** [f] spare change

**chocho/a** [adj] [antiq] ok!, great, happy, satisfied

**chorro/a** [m,f] a crook, a thief, a suspicious character

**chorongu/a** [adj] of poor quality, shitty

**choto/a** [m,f,adj] penis; of bad quality, shitty

**chuchi** [adj] a heavily groomed woman; lots of makeup,  
big hair, long, painted fingernails, poodle with a  
ribbon, etc.

**chumbo** [m] a pistol

**chupamedias** [m,f] lit. a sock sucker; ass kisser, brown  
noser, boot licker

**chupar** [v] lit. to suck; to drink alcohol, generally in  
large quantities



“coger”

**ciruja** [f] a beggar, a bum

**coger** [v] lit. to grab, to get, to collect; to fuck

**colgarse** [v] lit. to hang one's self; to be spaced out, to be flaky or a slacker; to hang out and do nothing; to concentrate heavily on something

**comerse** [v] lit. to eat; used to describe one's involvement in a situation, generally with negative connotations such as: “**comerse una película**” ‘to eat yourself a film’; to be involved in a complicated situation, generally negative “**comerse la cabeza**” ‘to eat your head’; to be worried or have problems

**concha** [f] lit. shell; vagina, pussy, cunt

**conchuda** [f] a cunt of a woman; common expressions “**la concha de tu madre!**” ‘your mother's pussy’ “**la concha de la lora**” ‘the parrot's pussy’ (in the old days prostitutes were called ‘loras’) these are used as general insults or exclamations such as ‘goddammit!’  
[lunfardo] **chacón**

**copado/a** [adj] a cool friendly person; anything that is cool or agreeable

**cotorra** [f] lit. parakeet; vagina, pussy “**picar la cotorra**” lit. to have an itchy parakeet; when a woman is sexually stimulated or horny

**corchito/a** [m,f] lit. a little cork; a short person

**cortado** [m] a coffee expresso with a shot of milk

**cosa** [f] lit. thing; used as 'watchamacallit' or 'whats-his-name, whats-her-name'

**cornudo/a** [adj] lit. to have horns; used for someone who's partner is sleeping around on them, also used as heavy insult

**crepar** [v] to die, to pass away

**cualquiera** [exl; adj] lit. whatever; used to describe someone or something that is not to be taken seriously, kind of ridiculous

**cuero** [m] lit. leather 'sacar el cuero' to talk badly behind someone's back, to gossip

**culo** [m] ass, buttocks [phrase] "que culo!" 'what luck!'

**culiado** [m] reciever of anal sex; used as an expletive, as an insult or among friends to address one another

**curro** [m] a scam or fraud;

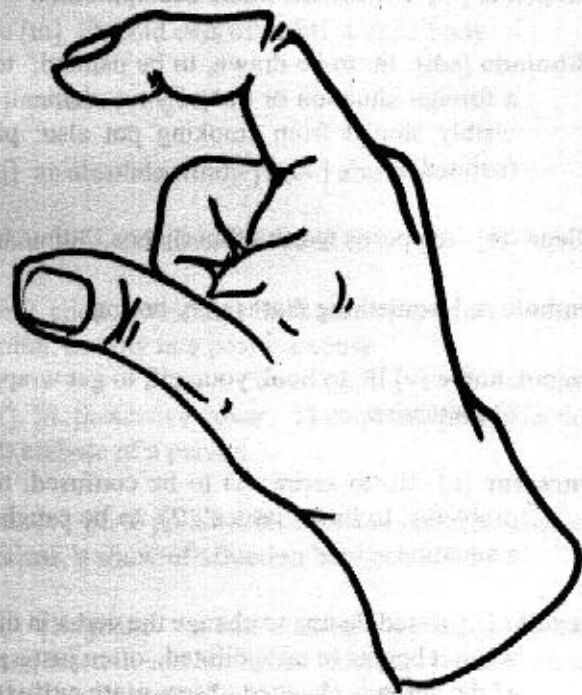
**currar** [v] to scam; to earn big by working little, often in reference to politicians

**cursi** [adj] in bad taste, cheap, generally refers to women

**curtir** [v] lit. to tan hide into leather; 1) to use accordingly, to settle into a good situation or place; 2) to date or sleep with someone; 3) to steal

**denso/a** [adj] lit. dense, thick; someone who is boring to the point of being annoying

**deriva** [adj] lit. to be adrift "a la deriva" to be wandering, without direction; usually implies a state of happiness



"un cortado"

**desaparecidos** [m] the disappeared ones; This refers to the victims of past military regimes in Argentina. The most recent and horrific period of human rights violations occurred between the years of 1976-1983 in which more than thirty thousand students, intellectuals and activists were kidnapped, tortured and murdered. These desaparecidos are far from forgotten and many of their families currently continue seeking their justice.

**despelote** [m] a mess, disorder; see: quilombo

**dibujado** [adj] lit. to be drawn, to be painted; to be in a foreign situation or out of your element, to be visibly stoned from smoking pot also: **pintado** (painted)

**diego** [m] ten pesos worth of marijuana, 'dime bag'

**embole** [m] something that is very boring

**engancharse** [v] lit. to hook yourself; to get wrapped up in a situation

**enroscar** [v] lit. to screw; 1) to be confused, to have problems, to have 'issues'; 2) to be caught up in a situation

**ensillar** [v] to saddle up; to change the yerba in the mate when it begins to taste diluted, often just a portion of the yerba is changed \*see: **mate culture**

**escabiar** [v] to intoxicate with alcohol

**falopa** [f] drugs

**falopera /o** [f,m] a drug addict

**fanfarrón /a** [m,f] smooth talker; know it all

**faso** [m] 1) [antiq.] cigarette; 2) marijuana

**fiaca** [f] tiredness, laziness; to have fiaca is to feel like doing nothing at all

**fiambre** [m] lit. cold cuts of meat; a dead body

**fifar** [v] to fuck (vulgar)

**fija** [adj] an absolute truth; [excl.] absolutely!

**fisurado/a** [adj] exhausted, dead tired

**flash** [exl] cool!, awesome! **flashearse** [v] to blow ones mind, usually in a positive sense

**forro** [f] lit. protective cover; 1) condom, prophylactic 2) asshole of a person

**franclear** [v] lit. to polish with a flannel cloth; to kiss, to caress, a show of affection between lovers

**full** [adj] {English} 'a full' to be very busy, to be engrossed in something, to be complete; also used like 'totally' or 'fully'

**galán** [m] winner, ladies man **langa** [lunfardo] someone who thinks they are a ladies man but is really a fool

**gamba** [f] {Italian} leg; “**meter la gamba**” ‘to put in the leg’ to make a mistake, to screw up a situation “**hacer la gamba**” to help someone out

**garcha** [f] something that really sucks; from **garchar** [v] to fuck (vulgar)

**Gardel** [n] lit. famous singer who brought Tango from the underground to the mainstream; the best, “**Sos Gardel!**” ‘You’re the man!’

**garrón** [m] a bummer, a pain in the ass

**gatillar** [v] lit. to pull the trigger; to pay the bill, to spend money rapidly

**gil** [m] an idiot; “**gil de goma**” a complete idiot

**guampudo/a** [adj] to have horns; \*see: **cornudo**

**grasa** [f] lit. grease; cheesy, of poor taste and quality

**groncho/a** [adj] 1) derogatory for negro; 2) cheesy

**groso** [m] {Portuguese} lit. large; an important person, someone outstanding their field eg. “**Mick Jagger es un grosol!**”

**guacho/a** [m,f] lit. orphan; 1) son of a bitch; 2) also used affectionately “**que guacho!**” ‘that rascal!’

**guarango/a** [adj] gross, disgusting

**guasol/a** [m,f] a rude and tasteless person

**guita** [f] money, cash

**guitarrear** [v] lit. to play the guitar; to talk in circles, never getting to the point

**gula** [f] lit. greed, gluttony; extreme hunger resulting from smoking marijuana, ‘the munchies’

**hecha mierda** [phrase] lit. made of shit; broken, fucked up, screwed, exhausted, depressed or general bad state \*also “**hecha percha**” lit. ‘made like a coat hanger’

**hostia** [f] lit. sacrificial victim; the wafer eaten as the body of christ; of huge or excessive proportions

**huevos** [m] lit. eggs; testicals  
\*also **huevo/a** [m] fool, idiot; see: **boludo**;  
**huevo/a** [f] a random and useless object

**jamón!** [excl] ‘what a beautiful woman!’

**joya!** [excl] lit. gem, jewel; excellent, great!, OK!

**laburar** [v] {Italian} to work

**lacra** [f] scum, bottom feeder, lowlife; refers to the character of a person rather than financial or social standing

**lastrar** [v] to cat

**larva** [f] larva; worthlessly lazy, someone who does nothing

**lavado** [adj] lit. washed; used to describe the state of the mate when the **yerba** has become diluted and no longer desirable \*see: **mate culture**

**lenteja** [adj] lit. lentil; slow \*from **lento**  
[lunfardo] **jalente**

**lienzo** [m] pants

**lija** [f] lit. sandpaper; hunger  
“**tengo una lija terrible!**” ‘I’m starving!’

**limado/a** [adj] lit. filed, dulled; someone who is burned out or slow witted, usually from excessive drug use

**locachi** [adj] a bit crazy; from **loco**

**lompa** [f] pants

**lomo** [m] lit. a cut of beef, loin; used to describe a nice body

**luca** [f] an amount of one thousand, usually money

**lungo/a** [adj] a tall and thin person; lanky; also “**hacer lungo**” to be annoyingly slow

**macana** [f] a mistake, an error \*also: “**que macana!**” ‘what a shame’

**macanudo/a** [adj, excl] [antiquated] 1) someone agreeable, a friendly person; 2) ‘sounds good’ positive response to an deal or arrangement

**machazo** [adj] 1) large, huge; 2) very masculine, macho

**malco** [m] from “**mal cogido**” ‘badly fucked’ used for someone who is in a bad mood assuming because they are not getting laid properly

**mamarse** [v] lit. to breastfeed; to get very drunk  
**mamado/a** [adj] to be drunk

**mambo** [m] lit. African rhythms used in Latin American music; used to describe someone or something with bad vibes, issues or problems; an undesired situation

**mamerto /a** [m,f] a complete idiot

**manducar** [v] to eat quickly, to wolf down food

**manguear** [v] to ask for money  
**manguero** [n] someone who always asks for something, a mooch

**mango** [m] lit. a handle; a tropical fruit; 1) a peso unit; eg “**diez mangos**” ten pesos; 2) “**al mango**” full volume, full speed

**masa** [f] lit. dough; awesome, terrific

## MATE CULTURE



“tomando unos mates”

**Mate** is THE traditional beverage of Argentina. For the Argentines, ‘los mates’ are a fundamental part of life. **Mate** is a strong, caffeinated tea drunk from a hollow gourd about the size of an apple. The gourd is filled with an herb and hot water and then drunk through a metal straw called ‘la bombilla’ that has a filter on the end. **Mates** can be fashioned out of anything from wood to a bull’s horn and intricately ornated with silver and traditional carvings, a common gourd or small metal cup is more commonly used. Upon first glance, a mate session can appear to be some sort of tribal drug ritual and a few uninformed gringos have even been known to try to ignite and smoke the contents of the mate when passed their way. **Mates**, like coffee or tea in most other countries, are drunk in the morning to help wake up as well as anytime of the day between friends who want to relax and speak frankly about matters. It must first be made clear that **mate** is the drink itself as well as the gourd it is drunk from. The actual herb placed inside the mate is **yerba**. Not hierba nor mate, but **yerba** or **yerba mate**. This **yerba** is grown in the northern, warmer and more fertile provinces of Argentina such as Corrientes and Misiones. Mate customs vary from person to person and place to place but some fundamental practices are important. There is one server (**cebador**) who must take charge of serving the **mates**. It is traditionally the chore of the youngest person present to serve the elders the mates. The server must begin by heating the water in the kettle (**pava**) and filling the mate with an appropriate portion of **yerba**. It is important that the water does not reach a boil. Most experts agree that 82 C is optimal.

Once the water is properly heated the server will pour himself the first as to be sure it is suitable for consumption. Sometimes the server will spit out the first few as they tend to be quite bitter. Some servers will place a spoonful of sugar in the mate to curb the bitterness and sweeten the **yerba**, this depends on the personal tastes of those drinking the mates. The **mate** is then passed from person to person. Each person drinks the entire contents of the mate and passes it back to the server who refills the mate and passes it to the next. Often the yerba will become diluted or 'washed' (**lavado**) before the kettle is empty and it will be necessary to change a portion (**ensillar**) or all of the yerba in the mate. When the kettle is drained the entire process is repeated and continues on until the last person decides that he or she has drunk enough mates. This can sometimes last the good part of a day. Serving mates is a big responsibility and it is important that the server is attentive to the quality of the mates as well as the continuity and fluidity of their service. One will be sharply reminded that the mate '**no es un microfono!**' if he or she hangs on to it for too long while prophelizing about this or that. **Mate** is serious business in Argentina.

**milonga** [f] a type of Tango with a faster beat

**mina** [f] [lunfardo] a lady; lacks respect

**minga!** [excl] no way!, of course not!, fuck you!

**mocazo** [m] lit. a large snot; 1) a big mistake;  
2) sometimes used to adress children

**morfa** [f] food; **morfar** [v] to eat

**morocho/a** [adj] someone with dark hair and complexion;  
'**moreno**' in common Spanish

**morondanga** [f] [antiq] worthless objects, anything of poor quality

**mosca** [f] lit. mosquito; money, cash

**mufa** [f] bad luck, a bad omen

**mozzarella!** [exl] 'quiet, don't say a word!' This incongruous exclamation comes from a secret code once used by an Argentine president to silence a reporter who was writing unsavory things about the government

**nabo** /a [m,f] lit. a raddish; an idiot, a fool

**napia** [f] the nose

**ñoqui** [m] lit. gnocci; someone who earns money without working, on the job but worthless \*this popular term came into use after the discovery of false government salaries that had been arranged by workers who did nothing but collect the checks. These checks were received on the 29th of every month, the same day that gnocci are traditionally eaten

**ojete** [m] 1) ass; 2) good luck \*see: orto

**onda** [f] lit. waves, vibes eg. **micro onda** 'microwave'; somebody or something with "**buena onda**" would be really cool and with good vibes; to do something '**de onda**' 'is to do someone a favor; '**tirar una onda**' is to help somebody out

**orto** [m] ass, buttocks; 1) "**que orto!**" 'what good luck!' or 'what a nice ass!' depending on the context; 2) "**cara de orto**" lit. 'ass face', a sour face; 3) "**a la loma del orto**" lit. 'the hill of the ass' the middle of nowhere

**pachanguear** [v] to party; **pachanga** [f] a fiesta

**pachorra** [f] laziness, to feel like doing nothing

**pajero/a** [m,f] a jackoff; from "**hacer la paja**" lit. to make straw; to masturbate

**pajerto/a** [m,f] an idiot

**palo** [m] lit. stick "**al palo**" 'to the stick', to have an erection

**palo verde** [m] lit. a green stick; million dollars

**papear** [v] 1) to talk shit; 2) to eat

**papelón** [m] an embarrassing situation

**parir** [v] lit. to give birth; to struggle incredibly as if giving birth

**patovica** [m] a weight lifter, body guard or bouncer

**pava** [f] kettle \* see: **mate culture**

**pedigüeño/a** [m,f] someone who is always asking for something, a mooch

**pedo** [m] lit. a fart; \*common expressions 1) '**cagar a pedos**' lit. 'to shit farts', to scold, to berate; 2) '**al pedo**' for nothing, a waste of time, money or energy; 3) '**en pedo**' lit. 'in farted', to be intoxicated, to be drunk '**ni en pedo**' 'no way', 'not even if I was drunk'; 4) '**de pedo**' by chance; 5) '**a los pedos**' lit. to the farts to go very fast; 6) **pedorro** lit. 'farty', shitty, of poor quality

**la vida regida por los pedos** - life ruled by farts

0-20 años	se vive al pedo
20-40 años	se vive a los pedos
40-60 años	se vive en pedo
60-80 años	se vive de pedo
80-100 años	ni en pedo!

\*also: '**pedo con caldo**' lit. 'fart with broth' to follow through on a fart, to 'draw mud'

**película** [f] lit. a film; a problematic, annoying or amusing situation

**pelota** [f] a ball "**dar pelota**" lit. 'give the ball'; to pay attention to '**hinchar las pelotas**' lit. to swell one's balls; to bother or annoy, to be a 'pain in the ass'



**“no me hinchés las pelotas”**

**pelotudo/a** [m,f] lit. one with big balls; idiot or fool.  
\*see: **boludo**

**peluca** [f] lit. a wig; cottonmouth received from smoking pot, as if you had a wig in your mouth

**pendejo** /a [m,f] a pubic hair; an adolescent, a youth  
\*also: **pendevieja** [f] from pendejo; an older woman who tries to keep up with youthful fashions

**pepa** [f] a pill; a hit of LSD

**pesado/a** [adj] lit. heavy; boring, annoying

**pescado/a** [m,f] lit. fish; an idiot

**pesto** [m] wind, rain, snow, threatening weather

**petar** [v] to fall apart physically or mentally;  
**petado** [adj] in a bad state \*see: **hecho mierda**

**pibe/a** [m,f] a kid, a guy

**pifiar** [v] to make a big mistake **“pifiaste!”** ‘you really screwed up!’

**pijotero/a** [m,f] a cheapskate, a haggler

**pilas** [f] lit. batteries; this refers to the energy of a person, someone **“muy pilas”** would be motivated and positive **“ponete las pilas!”** ‘put in your batteries!’, get going! **“sacate las pilas”** ‘take your batteries out!’ chill out!, take it easy

**pilcha** [f] clothes

**pintar** [v] lit. to paint; to appear a situation or opportunity, to come up; *pinta*, appearance  
“**que pinta!**” ‘it looks good!’

**piola** [adj] 1) clever, intelligent; an agreeable person  
2) “**quedarse piola**” to hang out and do nothing

**pintado/a** [adj] lit. painted; crazy

**pipón** [adj] to be full from overeating

**pirar** [v] to go crazy **pirado** [adj] to be crazy

**pirucho/a** [adj] crazy

**piturrear** [v] to smoke a joint

**plomo** [m] lit. lead; someone or something that is very boring

**pocilga** [f] a rat's hole, a dirty and disgusting place

**pornoco** [m] a zit; from “**por no coger**” ‘by not fucking’ zits as if recieved due to a lack of sexual activity

**poronga** [f] a penis; someone or something that really sucks

**porro** [m] marijuana, a joint

**porteño/a** [m,f] lit. someone from the port; anyone from Buenos Aires

**posta** [excl.] the truth ‘seriously!’

**pucho** [m] a cigarette

**pro** [adj] {English} from professional; something well done, in a professional manner

**putear** [v] from ‘puta’ ‘whore’; to use foul language

**querusa** [adj] someone or something of lower quality, cheap, scruffy

**quilombo** [m] a mess, disorder, chaos \*originally, quilombos were the slave's quarters in Brazil's sugar plantations. The brothels of Buenos Aires were also referred to as quilombos. also:  
**quilombero/a** [m,f] someone who creates quilombos, a troublemaker; **bolonqui** [lunfardo]

**rajar** [v] to crack, to tear; used like ‘to split’ eg. “**rajemos**” ‘let's get out of here’

**rascar** [v] lit. to scratch; to do nothing at all “**rascar las bolas**” ‘scratch your balls’

**raviol** [m] a small packet of cocaine



“tacaño”

**rolinga** [adj] Rolinga is in reference to the Rolling Stones and Argentina's rock and roll youth which strongly identifies with the Stones' flamboyant, badboy style. The Rolling Stone's trademark lips and extended tongue can be seen throughout Argentina on T-shirts, tatoos, stickers, and graffiti.

**sacado/a** [adj] lit. removed; intently crazy, a state of insanity, as if all reason has been taken (**sacado**) from from your mind

**salame** [m] an idiot, a fool

**sanata** [f] an embellished and exaggerated story that is generally far from the truth

**sopapo** [m] a slap in the face

**sorete** [m] a turd, a log of shit

**tacaño** [m] a cheapskate, someone who always haggles for a bargain

**taco** [m] the high heel of a shoe; to do something 'al taco' is to do it with ease and flair as a football player would score a goal with a touch of his heel

**tano/a** [m,f] an Italian

**tapera** [adj] 1) a modest house; 2) in ruins, abandoned.

**tipo** [m] [lufardo] a man, a guy

**toque** [m] lit. a touch; 'a little bit'; "**al toque**" quickly, instantly

**tornillo** [m] lit. screw; cold "**que tornillo barbaro!**" 'it's damn cold!'

**tortillera** [f] a lesbian, also: **torta** [f]

**transar** [v] 1) to french kiss; 2) to make an illegal deal or agreement

**traste** [m] ass

**travesaño** [m] a transvestite

**trola** [f] a promiscuous woman

**trolo** [m] a homosexual man

**trompa** [f] mouth **trompada** [f] a punch in the mouth

**trucho/a** [adj] lit. trout; fake, false, of poor quality

**tubazo** [m] a telephone call **tubo** [m] lit. a tube; 1) a telephone; 2) a big bicep

**viste** [exl.] past tense of the verb ver, 'did you see?'; used frequently like "you know?" or meaningless interjection

**yapa** [f] a monetary tip; '**de yapa**' besides, also

**yuta** [f] [antiq.] police

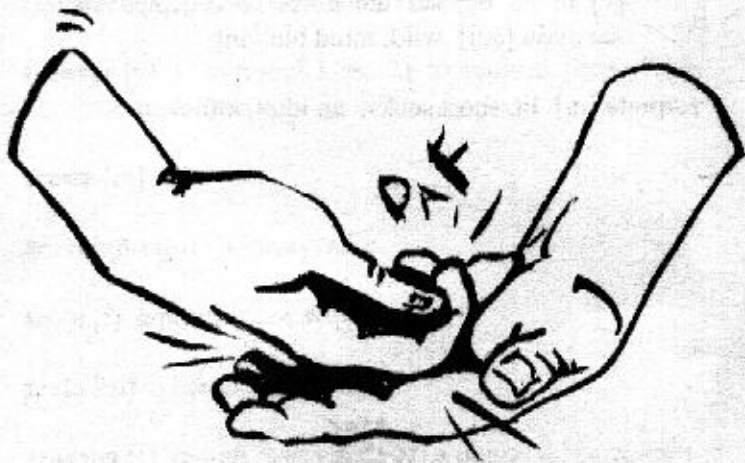
**zafar** [v] lit. to get away with something, to slip, to untie; to be acceptable, not great but okay

**zafarrancho** [m] a mess, disorder \*see: **quilombo**

**zarpar** [v] lit. to weigh anchor and set sail; **zarpase** [v] to go beyond the norm or accepted limits; **zarpado** [adj] wild, mind blowing

**zoquete** [m] lit. short socks; an idiot, a fool





**“¡hay que pagar!”**  
‘you must pay’

## LOS DICHOS

**“a las chapas”** to go very fast.

**“estar en el horno”** lit. to be in the oven; to be highly stressed or in a bad situation.

**“me quema la cabeza”** lit. it burns my head; it makes me crazy, used mostly in the negative sense.

**“tirar para arriba”** lit. to throw in the air; to have an excess of something.

**“un pelo de la concha tira más que una yunta de bueyes”** ‘one pussy hair pulls more than a team of oxen’.

**“echar un polvo”** lit. to throw a dust; to fuck.

**“chiva como puto nuevo”** ‘sweat like a new fag’.

**“renegué como puto nuevo”** ‘complain like a new fag’.

**“tirar las chancletas”** lit. throw off the sandals; used for women who are on a sexual rampage.

**“tirar la casa por la ventana”** ‘to throw the house out the window’; to go wild and out of control.

**“tirame la goma”** ‘pull my rubber’; suck my dick.



**“¿qué te pasa?”**  
‘what’s your problem?!’  
‘what’s up with that?!’

**“mojar la chaucha”** ‘to get the peapod wet’; to get laid

**“meter la mula”** ‘to put in the the mule’; to trick someone, rip someone off

**“echando putas”** ‘throwing out the whores’; to go very fast

**“para atrás”** ‘to go backwards’; used for someone or something that is dysfunctional.

**“la sacaste barata”** ‘you got it cheap’; you got away with murder, it could have been worse.

**“le faltan algunos jugadores”** ‘he’s missing some players’; he’s a bit crazy or dumb.

**“lo atamos con alambre”** ‘we tie it with wire’; to jerry-rig it, to get the job done with whatever resources are at hand.

**“hasta las manos”** ‘up to the hands’; to have your hands full \*also ‘hasta las bolas’.

**“calienta la pava pero no ceba los mates”** ‘he/she heats the kettle but doesn’t serve the mates’; he/she’s a prick tease

**“al pedo como teta de monja”** ‘useless like tits on a nun’ \*see: pedo

**“la noche está en pañales”** ‘the night is in diapers’; ‘the night is young’

**“marca cañón!”** ‘cannon brand’; used like ‘totally’



“¡tomátela!”

“**media naranja**” ‘half orange’; affectionate for one’s lover, spouse or partner

“**tomatela!**” ‘take it’; get out of here!, fuck you!

“**mandar fruta**” ‘to send fruit’; to lie, to talk shit \*see: **chamuyar**

“**caer como peludo de regalo**” ‘to fall like the gift of an armadillo’; a surprise visit by an undesired guest

“**tener una vena**” ‘to have a vein’ to be pissed off angry, as if the veins in your neck and head were showing

“**ponerse la camiseta**” ‘to put on the jersey’; to be a team player or ‘company guy’

“**comerse un huesito**” ‘to eat a little bone’; to sleep with a beautiful woman

“**hacer una vaquita**” ‘to make a little cow’; to put money in a communal pot

“**no da**” ‘it doesn’t give’; 1) unacceptable, ‘that doesn’t fly’ 2) the opportunity is not given

“**ni a ganchos!**” ‘not even by the hooks!’; no way!

“**ni a palos!**” ‘not even by the sticks!’; no way!

“**cerrado como culo de muñeca**” ‘closed like a doll’s ass’



**“¡ni idea!”**

**“que parte la tierra!”** ‘how the earth splits!’ ‘what a beautiful woman!’, as if the earth parts beneath her feet

**“moco de pavo”** ‘turkey snot’; something very easy to do

**“hacerse la manuela”** to masturbate

**“no le llega agua al tanque”** ‘water doesn’t get to his tank’; someone who is bit dim.

**“te fuiste a la mierda”** ‘you went to the shit’; ‘you’ve gone too far’, ‘you outdid yourself’.



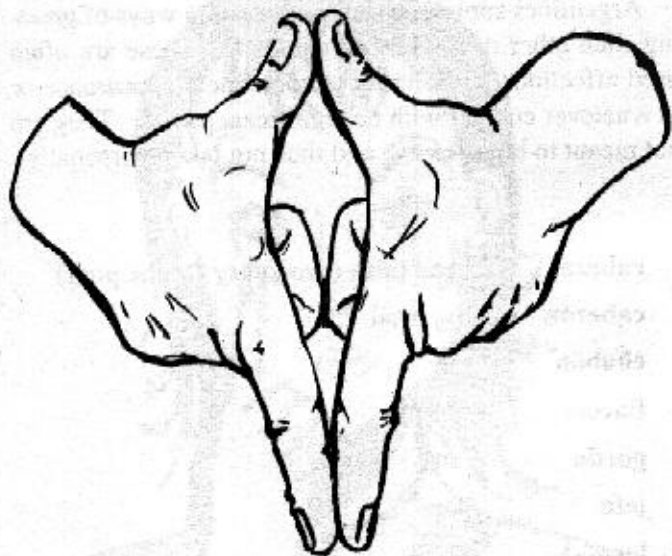


“¡ojo!”  
‘be careful!’  
‘watch out for ...’

## GENTE

Argentines sometimes have interesting ways of greeting each other or referring to someone. These are often used affectionately referring to someone's appearance or in whatever context with no significance at all. They are not meant to be offensive and thus not taken personally.

<b>cabeza</b>	head (also derogatory for the poor)
<b>cabezón</b>	big head
<b>chabón</b>	guy
<b>flaco/a</b>	skinny
<b>gordo</b>	fatty
<b>jefe</b>	boss
<b>loco/a</b>	crazy
<b>maestro</b>	master
<b>morocho/a</b>	one with a dark complexion
<b>negro/a</b>	black one
<b>papá</b>	father
<b>pelado</b>	baldy
<b>vieja</b>	old woman (used by guys)
<b>winner</b>	winner



**"la concha"**



**Algunos Títulos Publicados**

Crónica Histórica del Nahuel Huapi  
Toponimia del Parque Nacional Nahuel Huapi  
Diccionario Mapuche-Español  
El Mate  
Antártida: descubriendo el continente blanco  
El Gran Lago  
El Cabo Savino  
Flora y Fauna Patagónicas  
Mountain Bike en Bariloche  
Las Montañas de Bariloche  
Pescando Truchas  
El Corredor de los Lagos Andino Patagónicos  
Panes, pizzas y tartas  
La Soja y el Tofu  
Talasoterapia  
Andinismo y Esquí

**Guías**

Patagonia 2005 (37a. edición)  
Patagonia Austral  
Patagonia: Corredor de las Playas  
Salta  
El Noroeste  
La Rioja  
Miniturismo  
La Costa Verde Argentina  
Pinamar y Villa Gesell  
Playas Patagónicas  
Rutas Argentino-Chilenas (Andino-Patagónicas)  
Parque Nacional Los Glaciares  
Mapa Patagonia



When your Argentine friend shows up late to meet you and tells you "Che chabón, no sabés! se cagó la chata en la loma del orto y nos quedamos en bolas!" Do you wish you had paid more attention in Spanish class? No worries, it wouldn't have helped you anyway. This book will. Argentines speak a different type of Caste-shh-ano that can leave even the most fluent of gringos struggling to keep up. "Che Boludo!" will not only provide a few laughs but really help you understand just what all of these chamuyeros are talking about.



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