



Friday, April 6, 2018

*The flight is non-stop: L.A. Story*



<p><b>Miami</b></p> <p>New service to: Georgetown, Guyana (GEO) Pereira, Colombia (PEI) Cordoba, Argentina (COR)</p> <p>Increased service to: Caracas, Venezuela (CCS) Antigua, Antigua and Barbuda (ANU)</p>	<p><b>Dallas/Fort Worth</b></p> <p>New service to: Oaxaca, Mexico (OAX)</p> <p>Increased service to: Cancun, Mexico (CUN) San Jose del Cabo, Mexico (SJD) Torreon, Mexico (TRC)</p>	<p><b>Philadelphia</b></p> <p>New service to: Mexico City, Mexico (MEX)</p> <p><b>Los Angeles</b></p> <p>New service to: Buenos Aires, Argentina (EZE)</p>
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Beginning December 19, American Airlines will offer the *first non-stop flight* from Los Angeles to Buenos Aires, dedicating a Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner to the route. The early evening flight will be available three days a week. In a March 27 [announcement](#), the airline evidenced notable confidence in Argentina, also noting the launch of a *second* new route: Miami to Córdoba. “*Estamos muy contentos de que grandes aerolíneas como American acerquen los destinos de nuestro país, donde los esperamos con los brazos abiertos,*” Argentina’s tourism minister, Gustavo Santos, [said](#) at the time.

Major U.S. cities such as New York and Washington, D.C. already offered non-stop flights to Buenos Aires, but American’s announcement shaves hours off the journey for West Coast travelers. For its part, United Airlines last May said it would add [non-stop service](#) between

Newark and Buenos Aires. (United had already operated a non-stop flight from Houston to the Argentine capital.) The Argentine government hopes the new routes will encourage foreign investment, boost tourism and lead to “*más mesas llenas en los restaurantes, más camas ocupadas en los hoteles, más entradas vendidas en los teatros, peñas y espectáculos,*” as President Mauricio Macri recently put it in his March 1 state of the union [address](#). Last year, Argentina set a record for hotel stays, up eight percent, according to government figures. In the other direction, travel between the United States and Argentina has been increasing in recent years, and the consular section at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires is now among the busiest in the world.

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***You can't buy it off the shelf: You got to grow it from the seed***



In a major development for Argentina's agriculture industry, Argentine farmers have settled a long-running dispute with international biotechnology companies regarding royalties for seed usage. In late February, the farmers agreed to pay perpetual royalties to companies like Monsanto that develop new seed varieties.

The agreement is significant, given the size of Argentina's agriculture sector – it is among the world's top producers of soybeans and corn – and its previous intransigence on this intellectual property rights issue. Previously, under a [1973 law](#), Argentine farmers planted seeds collected from their own harvests without paying royalties. That practice generated tensions with powerful U.S. biotechnology firms, and contributed to persistent criticism from the U.S. State Department over lax intellectual property rights protection in Argentina. Argentina regularly appears in the U.S. Trade Representative's “notorious markets” report, and its treatment of intellectual property rights delayed its readmission to USTR's Generalized System of Preferences program. In the State Department's latest Investment Climate Statement on Argentina, it [dinged](#) Buenos Aires for “long-standing and well-known deficiencies” in intellectual property rights protection and enforcement, singling out Argentina's agricultural, chemical, biotechnology and pharmaceutical sectors.

The new industry agreement on royalties, however, marks a significant advance. Argentine farmers will now regain access to the newest seeds from Bayer, Dow and Monsanto, as Argentine lawmakers continue to debate reforms to the 1973 seed law.

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### ***Murder, She Wrote: Nisman on Netflix***



Netflix is reportedly producing a miniseries on the mysterious death of Alberto Nisman, the Argentine prosecutor who had been investigating the 1994 Hezbollah bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires. Mr. Nisman died in January 2015, in his Puerto Madero apartment, of a gunshot wound to the head, just hours before he was scheduled to testify before congress about allegations that Argentina's president at the time, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, helped Iran cover up its role in the massacre.

The Netflix murder mystery, set in Buenos Aires and expected to include four to six episodes, will be styled as a documentary. Filmmakers have reportedly interviewed Mr. Nisman's two daughters, Iara and Kala. They have also asked to speak to Ms. Fernández de Kirchner. The former president used to freely share her thoughts on the issue. Immediately following Mr. Nisman's death, she published a lengthy Facebook post, positing that he had taken his own life. But just days later, she floated a new hypothesis, suggesting on her Web site that Mr. Nisman was likely murdered. Later, she mused about Mr. Nisman's death with The New Yorker magazine. These days, however, Ms. Fernández de Kirchner, now a senator, might be more reticent, given renewed scrutiny by prosecutors.

Earlier, a separate group of filmmakers looked at Mr. Nisman's death in a feature length [documentary](#), "Los Abandonados," which premiered at the Newseum in Washington in September 2015.

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### ***Locro in every pot: Pobreza cero***



In Mr. Macri's 2015 presidential campaign, the pro-business millionaire surprised observers by focusing heavily on anti-poverty initiatives. His goal, he said repeatedly, would be "pobreza cero," and he called on critics to judge his future administration on its impact on the poverty rate. It was an audacious bet; the Argentina Mr. Macri inherited had an enormous informal sector, low growth, high inflation and one-in-three of its people living in poverty. Opponents warned that Mr. Macri would actually impose fiscal austerity, enriching corporations and immiserating the working class.

Today, Mr. Macri's commitment appears genuine, and his performance looks promising. After two years in office, poverty in Argentina is at *its lowest level since 2003*. By the end of 2017, 25.7 percent of Argentines were living in poverty, down from 30.3 percent the previous year, a decrease of 1.6 million individuals.

Three major factors have helped reduce poverty: employment growth, lower inflation and sustained social spending. First, employment grew by 433,000 jobs last year, increasing the

labor force participation rate and pushing the employment rate near historic highs (see chart). Second, inflation – albeit still sky high – declined sharply in 2017, especially in the second half of the year, helping real wages rebound. Finally, the government has maintained social spending, through means-tested subsidies for utilities known as the *tarifa social* and an expansion of the conditional cash transfer program, the Asignacion Universal por Hijo.

Higher employment, lower inflation and targeted social programs provide succor to Argentina's poor, even as Mr. Macri's economic program is still widely regarded as a boon to business elites and foreign investors. Indeed, last year, wages in the informal sector – dominated by the poor – increased *faster* than in the formal sector. These higher wages, coupled with the *tarifa social*, means that real incomes for Argentina's poorest are likely increasing at a much faster rate than for other workers. In that light, Mr. Macri's unexpected inroads in Peronist strongholds are less surprising. Over all, his approval rating among the poor has increased by 11 percentage points since December, even as support from other demographics decreased following controversial, year-end pension reforms.

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